



**"To all Airlines, Pilots, Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers, please consider THE AIRSPACE ABOVE AND SURROUNDING VENEZUELA TO BE CLOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY."**  
Donald Trump

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## Khaleda's condition 'unchanged'; still not fit for travel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remained under close observation at Evercare Hospital in the capital yesterday, with doctors reporting no change in her condition.

Her medical team believes that advanced treatment abroad would be in her best interest. However, as her current condition does not permit travel, the board will make a decision once her health improves.

The former prime minister's treatment is being overseen by a medical board comprising specialists from Bangladesh, Johns Hopkins Hospital in the US, and The London Clinic in the UK.

"For the last three days -- the 27th, 28th, and today the 29th -- Alhamdulillah, her



condition has remained unchanged. In medical terms, we would say she is able to receive the treatment the doctors are providing," Khaleda's personal physician, Prof AZM Zahid Hossain, told reporters outside Evercare Hospital around 9:00pm last night.

Sending her abroad now depends on the improvement of her overall condition and the recommendation of the medical board, added Zahid, also a BNP Standing Committee member.

Earlier in the day, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that at a long meeting on Friday night, the board concluded that Khaleda needs advanced treatment abroad.

"She is not well enough to travel abroad

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Decision to return not solely in my hands

Tarique explains; govt says no bar to his coming back

STAR REPORT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said he longs to be by his ailing mother Khaleda Zia in this hour of crisis, but returning to Bangladesh is not entirely in his hands.

"At such a moment of crisis, like any child, I too have a strong longing to feel my mother's loving touch. But unlike others, the opportunity for me to make an independent decision in this regard [returning] is neither unrestricted nor fully within my control," he wrote on his verified Facebook page yesterday.

"The sensitivity of this matter also limits the scope for detailed explanation. Our family remains hopeful that once the current political realities reach the expected stage, my long and anxious wait to return to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



## BNP activists wait outside Evercare for updates

Defy party plea not to crowd hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders and activists continued to gather outside Evercare Hospital in Dhaka yesterday to enquire about the health condition of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, despite repeated instructions from the party not to crowd the hospital premises.

Party men began arriving at the hospital gate from Friday midnight, with small groups standing near the entrance to seek updates from Khaleda's family members and medical team.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

PHOTO ON PAGE 2



FROM LEFT... Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank; AKM Fahim Mashroor, CEO of Bdjobs; Ambareen Reza, managing director of foodpanda Bangladesh; Wahiduddin Mahmud, planning adviser; and Kamal Quadir, CEO of bKash pose for a photo at the 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards at Sheraton hotel yesterday. Four companies and three individuals were honoured for their contributions to Bangladesh's technology sector.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Laurels for tech powerhouses

4 companies, 3 individuals recognised at 10th BRAC Bank-

The Daily Star ICT Awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four companies and three individuals were honoured yesterday at the 10th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards for their contributions to Bangladesh's technology sector.

The annual event, which marks a decade of celebrating excellence in ICT, highlighted achievements in digital finance, e-commerce, entrepreneurship, health-tech and innovation.

The winners were selected for their leadership, impact and ability to scale technology-driven solutions that are shaping the country's economic and social landscape.

Kamal Quadir, founder and chief executive officer of bKash, received the ICT Business Person of the Year award, his second

in five years, for his role in revolutionising digital financial services in Bangladesh.

With over 82 million users, bKash has expanded financial inclusion, reduced dependence on cash and strengthened the digital economy. Under his leadership, the company has attracted major global investors and positioned Bangladesh as a model for mobile financial innovation.

AKM Fahim Mashroor was awarded the ICT Pioneer for his long-term contribution to the country's ICT sector.

As co-founder of Bdjobs. com, he transformed digital

recruitment and widened access to employment for young people. His advocacy as a former BASIS president helped shape key ICT policies, while his continued engagement makes him one of the sector's most influential voices.

Pathao received the Special Recognition Award for its contribution to the country's digital and gig economy. Starting with delivery services in 2015, it has grown into Bangladesh's first super-app, offering ride-sharing, courier services, food delivery and digital payments.

With over 10 million users

and hundreds of thousands of drivers and merchants, Pathao has become a key player in connecting people and businesses nationwide.

Daraz Bangladesh, a concern of Alibaba Group, received the Digital Commerce Award for its role in expanding e-commerce nationwide.

Since 2014, the platform has grown into the country's largest online marketplace, supporting more than 70,000 sellers. Its integrated services -- including logistics, digital payments and training -- have strengthened the digital retail ecosystem and boosted online entrepreneurship.

TallyKhata (Progoti Systems) received the ICT Start-up Award for its impact on small businesses across Bangladesh.

Launched in 2020, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The road from Golap Shah Mazar to Gulistan Square in Dhaka is completely occupied by vendors selling clothes, footwear and other items. Only a narrow lane is left, with which even rickshaws struggle to move. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Parties vow focus on employment, education

At Bonik Barta conf'ce, they also stress equal opportunities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP, Jamaat e-Islami, and National Citizen Party yesterday outlined their plans focusing on fairer economic and education systems, as well as increased employment opportunities.

Leaders of the three major parties shared their ideas at the fourth edition of the "Bangladesh Economic Conference 2025", organised by Bangla daily Bonik Barta at a city hotel. "Future Roadmap of the Economy and

Political Commitment" was this year's theme for the conference.

BNP presented a detailed economic plan promising inclusive growth and job creation.

Its Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "We have seen that the benefits of economic growth have not reached the people. Political alignment and proximity to power have created a privileged economy. BNP seeks to bring economic democracy to everyone.

"Poor people have worked for

generations, but their products and lives have not improved. We must provide loans, inputs, skill development, design support, branding, and internet access..."

He said investing in people's skills and quality products will create demand, increase employment, and contribute to the GDP.

Regarding digital infrastructure, Khasru said, "Power and internet must reach everywhere so that ordinary people can access call centres, data centres, and online

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Polls schedule likely in 2nd week of Dec

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday that the schedule for the upcoming general election will likely be announced in the second week of December.

The schedule will include the voting date, the nomination deadline, and the last date for withdrawal of candidacy.

"Preparations for the next general election are nearly complete, and we hope to deliver a fair election and referendum to the nation."

The CEC was speaking to reporters after inspecting a mock voting exercise conducted at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Girls High School in Dhaka.

The Election Commission held the exercise from 8:00am to 12:00pm for both the national election and referendum, which are to be held simultaneously on a single day in early February next year.

CEC Nasir said the mock voting was organised to identify the requirements for a fair and participatory election.

"We wanted to observe everything -- what the atmosphere should be like, how the queues of voters should form, how polling officers and presiding officers should operate, how the overall

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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