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Khaleda may fly to London today

Zubaida arriving in Dhaka
to accompany her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is likely to fly to London for advanced medical treatment today.

Her medical board made the decision after a team of foreign and local doctors, including Dr Richard Beale from the United Kingdom and four specialists from China, reviewed her condition and deemed her fit for the journey.

The 80-year-old former prime minister has been undergoing treatment in the Coronary Care Unit of Evercare Hospital since November 23.

An air ambulance provided by the Emir of Qatar will take her to London.

"If everything goes well, we will leave with Begum Khaleda Zia for London on a Qatari air ambulance by Friday morning," her personal physician, AZM Zahid Hossain, told reporters outside Evercare yesterday afternoon.

However, the BNP Media Cell last night reported that the air ambulance was running behind schedule due to some technical issues.

Khaleda's daughter-in-law, Dr Zubaida Rahman, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka from London this morning and travel with the BNP chief.



Party sources said Zubaida, who is also a member of the medical board, will head directly to Evercare.

Once the final health check is complete, Khaleda is expected to board the air ambulance from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The flight will make a stopover in Qatar before reaching Heathrow airport, London.

Khaleda's son and BNP acting chairman, Tarique Rahman, who has been living in the UK with his family since 2008, will receive his mother at Heathrow.

The BNP chairperson is supposed to be taken directly to London Bridge Hospital.

Earlier this year, Khaleda spent four months in London for treatment. She returned home on May 6.

She was admitted to Evercare on November 23 with infections in her heart and lungs. She has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis. She has a pacemaker and has previously undergone stent implantation in her heart.

A 12-member medical board comprising foreign and local specialists is overseeing the former prime minister's treatment.

The party and Khaleda's family selected 14 members to accompany her on her trip.

Her daughter-in-law Syeda Sharmila Rahman; her adviser Anamul Haq Chowdhury; Tarique's assistant Md Abdul Hai Mollick and his personal secretary Mohammad Masudur Rahman; two Special Security Force (SSF) officers Hasan Shahriar Iqbal and Syed Samin Mahfuz; and two caregivers Fatema Begum and Rupa Sikder, will be travelling with her.

AZM Zahid Hossain, also a BNP Standing Committee member, said several local specialists and two foreign physicians will also accompany Khaleda.

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Diesel-Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) trains are left to the elements near a shed at the Kamalapur Railway Station. The government had bought 20 sets of these in 2013 spending over Tk 600 crore. Over the years, the trains appeared problematic for Bangladesh Railway and were taken off service one by one. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Police commission okayed, but minus independence

Provisions on recommending recruitment, posting and shielding the force from interference omitted

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The government yesterday approved the Police Commission Ordinance 2025, but the commission will not have the authority to recommend the recruitment, promotion, or posting of officers, including the inspector general.

The commission's power to recommend measures for ensuring skilled officers in the force, free of external influence, was also removed from the ordinance, while the word "independent" was omitted from the title.

Officials with knowledge of the approval process, however, told The Daily Star that all these provisions were in the primary draft of the ordinance.

A former police official, preferring anonymity, said the approval means these specific powers will remain with the home ministry, potentially allowing political influence within the force to continue.

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan detailed the objectives and functions of the five-member Police Commission while announcing the ordinance's approval at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shaiful Alam and Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad

Majumder also attended the briefing, which followed a meeting of the advisory council chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

... The control of the commission will come from the government and political parties. The influence will continue.

M Akbar Ali, president of the Retired Police Officers' Welfare Association

The commission, which will be set up through the ordinance, will comprise a retired Supreme Court judge as its chief, a retired government officer who served as district magistrate not below Grade 1, a retired police officer with the rank of additional inspector general not below Grade 1, a university professor either retired

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BNP finalises its candidates for key battles

Picks 36 more runners,
including 4 for Dhaka seats

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has announced candidates for 36 more constituencies, including several in Dhaka, where the National Citizen Party is holding its top leaders as contenders in the upcoming national elections.

The party gave a ticket to Reza Kibria, son of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria from the previous Awami League government. Reza joined the BNP just three days ago.

However, Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho, brother of July uprising martyr Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho, is not among the new candidates. Snigdho had joined the BNP on November 3.

Announcing the candidates at a press conference yesterday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said the party would announce the candidates for its alliance partners at the right time.

On November 3, BNP released a preliminary list of candidates for 237 constituencies. A day later, the ticket for Madaripur-1 was suspended. In total, the party has

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Tk 35,000cr more needed to revive the fragile banks

Says BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An estimated Tk 70,000 crore, along with time and careful management, would be needed to solve the crisis in the banking sector, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

Speaking at a dialogue hosted by the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority in Dhaka yesterday, he said, "We have already started addressing the issues of five weak banks and provided Tk 35,000 crore. But several others remain at risk. Resolving their problems will require another Tk 35,000 crore, bringing the total cost to around Tk 70,000 crore."



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Amid cold and foggy weather, labourers huddle on a three-wheeler, as they head to Rajshahi city in search of work. The chill has already gripped the northern region. The photo was taken around 8:00am yesterday in Paba upazila of Rajshahi.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

EC plans to unveil polls schedule on December 10 or 11

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission is likely to announce the election schedule on December 10 or 11, setting the stage for the much-anticipated national polls and the referendum on the July charter in mid-February.

The commission is expected to hold a meeting on Sunday (December 7) to finalise preparations ahead of the announcement.

In keeping with tradition, it has sought an appointment with President Mohammed Shahabuddin for a briefing before formally announcing the schedule. Before meeting with the president, the commission will also meet with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Speaking to reporters at a workshop organised by the Election Training Institute yesterday, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said they have written to the president seeking an appointment on December 10 or 11.

Mohammed Shagor Hossain, assistant private secretary to the president, confirmed the request and said, "The president will meet with the EC at 12 noon on December 10."

Meanwhile, two senior election officials confirmed that the commission would meet with the chief adviser before meeting the president.

One commissioner, speaking anonymously, said, "If there's no major change, there's a high possibility that we'll announce the [election] schedule the same day after meeting the president or the day after."

Earlier on Wednesday, Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarkar told this newspaper that the schedule is likely to be announced between December 8 and 14, with the polls and referendum expected between February 8

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