



Ukraine is prepared for any possible developments. Of course, we will work... to ensure peace is achieved, and that it is a dignified peace."

Zelensky on Ukraine peace plan

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snacks you
shouldn't miss
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Stories from
the hanging
village
WR 2



A Dhaka weekly
that died without
a bang
WR 3



The lifeline
Bangladesh
must win before
2029
WR 4

KHALEDA'S TREATMENT IN UK Health concerns, air ambulance delay stall plan

Medical board keeping her under 48-hour observation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The plan to send BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to London for advanced treatment has faced a setback following a slight deterioration in her health on Thursday night and a delay in the arrival of an air ambulance.

The medical board overseeing Khaleda's treatment met at Evercare Hospital last night to review her condition.

During the meeting, local and foreign specialists decided to keep her under close observation for 48 hours to assess whether she is stable enough to travel abroad. Prior to reaching this decision, the team conducted several tests and evaluations, according to board sources.



- Khaleda's condition remains critical
- Qatar to rent air ambulance for her
- Zubaida Rahman in Dhaka
- Special prayers held countrywide

Besides, the air ambulance arranged by the Emir of Qatar, scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Friday night, failed to do so due to technical issues.

Qatar is now supposed to send another air ambulance rented from a German company.

Meanwhile, Dr Zubaida Rahman, wife of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, arrived in Dhaka from London yesterday morning and visited her mother-in-law at Evercare.

She held a meeting with doctors before heading to her Dhanmondi residence. Hours later, she returned to the hospital to attend last night's medical board meeting.

On Thursday, Khaleda's personal physician, AZM Zahid Hossain, said she would leave for London on a Qatari air ambulance by Friday morning.

After it failed to arrive due to technical issues, the Qatar embassy in Dhaka told this newspaper yesterday that the Qatar government has already rented an air ambulance.

"Whenever the medical board decides Khaleda is fit to travel, the air ambulance will fly in from Georgia and take her to London," said Asadur Rahman, public relations officer at the embassy.

The 80-year-old former prime minister has been receiving treatment in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) at Evercare Hospital since November 23.

She has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis. She has a permanent pacemaker and has previously undergone stent implantations in her heart.

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

ZUBAIDA IN DHAKA

Zubaida arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning from London on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight. She went directly to Evercare, where she was welcomed by party leaders and activists.

Zubaida, also a member of the medical board overseeing Khaleda's treatment, spent two and a half hours at the hospital and stayed nearly 40 minutes with Khaleda in the CCU. She then left for her Dhanmondi residence.

She returned to the hospital last night and joined the meeting with the medical board comprising local and foreign specialists.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Putin, Modi agree to boost trade, ties

Sign multiple deals; both sides adopt economic cooperation plan till 2030



REUTERS, New Delhi

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday agreed to expand and diversify trade beyond oil and defence despite Western pressure on New Delhi to scale back its decades-old close ties with Moscow.

India, the world's top buyer of Russian arms and seaborne oil, has rolled out the red carpet for Putin during his two-day state visit, his first to New Delhi since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The trip coincides with New Delhi's talks with the US on a trade deal to cut punitive tariffs imposed by President

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An illegal three-wheeler drives against traffic on the Aminbazar Bridge in Dhaka. This reckless manoeuvre, which risks a fatal crash, is far from an isolated incident. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Over a hundred factories, including textile, dyeing, printing, and re-rolling mills, discharge untreated, toxic waste into the Buriganga river every day, poisoning this vital waterway. The photo was taken recently near the fire service station in Dhaka's Shyampur.

PHOTO: STAR

Number of fire-prone structures triples in a year

Reveal inspections by fire service; experts call for strict enforcement of safety regulations

2024	2025 (till Oct)
7,568 buildings surveyed	9,000 buildings surveyed
2,731 or 36.08% were at risk of fire	7,987 or 88.74% were at risk of fire

DIPAN NANDY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The number of fire-prone structures across the country has nearly tripled to 7,987 within a year, underscoring a worsening fire safety situation despite repeated warnings from the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Experts have attributed this to negligence by building owners, inadequate monitoring, and weak enforcement of fire safety regulations.

A nationwide inspection last year found that 2,731 out of 7,568 buildings were at risk of fire. The fire service then notified the owners and instructed them to improve safety measures at the buildings.

From January to October this year, the fire service inspected around 9,000 buildings, of

which 1,435 were marked as extremely fire-prone and 6,552 as fire-prone.

The inspection covered a wide range of establishments, including factories, hospitals, clinics, shopping complexes, educational institutions, and government offices.

According to fire service officials, the number of risky buildings has risen sharply, partly due to an expanded scope of inspection and partly because most of the previously listed buildings remain non-compliant.

A building is classified as risky if it lacks essential fire safety measures such as fire extinguishers, emergency exit stairs, a dedicated water tank, or fire hydrants.

When contacted, Lt Col Tajul Islam

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TALES OF FREEDOM

Fifty-three years after Bangladesh's independence, countless stories remain untold. Part 3 of this 12-part series tells the story of the brutal killing ground in Hariharpara village in Enayetnagar union of Fatullah, Narayanganj, where thousands were shot dead by the Pakistani army.

A massacre in Hariharpara

AHMAD ISTIAK

Throughout the Liberation War, the oil depots along the Buriganga River in Narayanganj became sites of unspeakable horror.

Witnesses recall how, day after day, trucks would arrive carrying men and women picked up from Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Munshiganj. The men were tortured in makeshift cells during the day, then blindfolded and executed by the riverbank at night.

The women were confined, subjected to rape and torture, and killed if they fought back.

Abdur Rashid Bholi Miya, 75, a survivor, broke down as he remembered: "There was not a single night during the war when they [Pakistan soldiers] didn't kill men or assault women."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Female migration declines amid abuse, unsafe conditions

MD ABBAS

The migration of female workers abroad has been gradually declining over the last four years due to multiple problems, including the lack of exploration of new labour markets, unsafe working conditions, and abuse in destination countries.

Most of them travel to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan, and Lebanon, where they mainly work as housemaids or garment workers.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), 40,088 women have migrated by September this year. Last year, 61,158 women went abroad, while the figure was 76,108 in 2023 and 105,466 in 2022.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, over 100,000 women migrated each year, according to BMET data.

Experts say women are increasingly discouraged from working abroad. Many see their dreams of a better life shattered due to abuse, lack of medical care, forced prostitution, long working hours, insufficient food, and sexual harassment.

Tuly Akhter (pseudonym), a resident of Khulna, spent Tk 1.5 lakh from her savings to travel to the UAE, hoping to earn a better income as a housemaid. However, her dreams soon turned into a nightmare.

Upon arrival in Abu Dhabi, she was taken to the Howard Johnson Hotel in Ajman, operated by Bangladeshi Sayem and Payel, also known as Ranu.

With the help of Payel's mother, Tuly was trafficked into forced prostitution. She recently returned to Bangladesh with the assistance of an NGO.

Tuly is not alone. Many women face similar challenges

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