



Foreign leaders to join Khaleda Zia's funeral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of high-level foreign dignitaries, including those from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, are likely to attend the funeral of Khaleda Zia today to pay their last respects to her.

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq are among the likely foreign dignitaries.

"External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will represent the government and people of India at the funeral of Begum Khaleda Zia," the Indian high commission in Dhaka said in a statement.

Her namaj-e-janaza is scheduled today after Zohr prayers at the South Plaza of the National Parliament Complex.

In his X handle last night, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said Ayaz Sadiq would join the funeral.

Foreign ministry sources told
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A man carries a child, wrapped tightly to keep warm, near City College in the capital as a cold wave sweeps through the country. The photo was taken at noon, when the temperature hovered around 20 degrees Celsius. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Media, academia, rights bodies pay tribute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A host of organisations and institutions expressed deep shock and sorrow at the passing of BNP chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia yesterday.

From media houses to university campuses and across the country's industrial belts, institutions reflected on Khaleda's pivotal role in shaping Bangladesh's democratic, educational, and economic landscape during her three terms in office.

In a statement, Simeen Rahman, CEO of Transcom Group, said the nation has lost "one of its foremost political guardians", who was at the very centre of the country's long democratic struggle.

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab), in a statement signed by its President AK Azad, prayed for the salvation of Khaleda's departed soul and extended condolences to her bereaved family and party members.

The Jatiya Press Club's management committee held a condolence meeting, describing Khaleda's passing as the loss of one of the country's most prominent political figures.

Recalling Khaleda's cordial interactions with the media during her tenures as prime minister and opposition leader, leaders of Dhaka Reporters Unity, Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association, Economic Reporters Forum,
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Cold continues to disrupt lives

STAR REPORT

Severe cold continued to disrupt lives and livelihoods across the country yesterday, with sunlight remaining absent for seven consecutive days in the northern districts.

The gap between day and night temperatures narrowed significantly due to the lack of sunlight during the day.

Kishoreganj's Nikli upazila recorded the country's lowest temperature of the season for the third consecutive day yesterday, with the mercury dropping to 11 degrees Celsius amidst cold winds and dense fog, said Akhtar Faruq, senior observer at the Met office in Nikli.

Jitendranath, acting officer of Tetulia Weather Observatory in Panchagarh, said the ongoing severity of the cold is likely to persist for the next two to three days.

"Due to persistent thick fog,
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A year of disruptions for health sector

Scrapping of programme, medicine shortage deprived thousands of much-needed care

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Health services faced disruptions throughout the year, as shortages of medicines, equipment and contraceptives left thousands of people without much-needed care following the scrapping of a decades-long operational arrangement.

Troubles began with the sudden halt of USAID funding in January, which affected the health sector -- both directly and indirectly. One immediate setback was the suspension of icddr's Alliance for Combating Tuberculosis, which was aimed at improving the tuberculosis case detection mechanism.

In the latter part of the year, public medical facilities witnessed protests by health workers pressing for a wide range of demands. Amid mounting pressure, the

government promoted over 6,000 doctors, mostly to supernumerary posts.

Meanwhile, dengue continued to take a heavy toll on human lives, stretching the public health facilities to their limits. Influenza infection rate hit 59.2 percent in July -- the highest since surveillance of the disease began in 2007.

Adding to the concerns, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2025, released last month, revealed that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) rose to 2.4 from 2.3 in the previous survey. This marks the first increase in TFR in five decades.

Despite extensive discussions on the urgent need for health sector reforms, progress remained elusive. A high-powered commission submitted a report recommending sweeping changes, but

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- Health sector saw little progress in reforms
- Over 6,000 doctors promoted, mostly to supernumerary posts
- Total Fertility Rate rose for first time in 50 years
- Public medical facilities saw disruptions in services in Nov due to protests

Grief envelopes Evercare Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A heavy silence enveloped the area around Evercare Hospital as BNP leaders and activists began gathering early in the morning following news of the party chairperson Khaleda Zia's death.

Many were seen arriving in groups from different parts of Dhaka and nearby areas. Some stood silently, while others broke down, unable to restrain themselves from weeping.

The party activists were seen embracing each other in grief, with some carrying portraits of Khaleda.

The eyes of party leaders and activists remained fixed on the hospital where Khaleda passed away around 6:00am yesterday, more than a month after she was admitted there.

Many madrasa students rushed to the spot immediately. The mourners offered prayers seeking eternal peace for her soul in Jannah.

Several were seen wiping away tears as they recalled the departed leader, whom they described as a dedicated fighter for the party and democracy.

Party leaders and activists stayed there for hours, braving the severe cold. Many were seen hanging
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Damaged military vehicles, reportedly sent by the United Arab Emirates to support Southern Transitional Council (STC) separatist forces, lie in the port of Mukalla, southern Yemen yesterday, after a Saudi-led coalition air strike on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

UN chief says 'get serious' in grim New Year message

AFP, United Nations

The United Nations urged global leaders Monday to focus on people and the planet in a New Year's message depicting the world in chaos.

"As we enter the new year, the world stands at a crossroads. Chaos and uncertainty surround us. Division. Violence. Climate breakdown. And
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Trump warns Iran of possible strike

Urges Hamas to disarm after meeting Netanyahu; Russia calls for restraint

REUTERS, Palm Beach

US President Donald Trump said on Monday the United States could support another major strike on Iran were it to resume rebuilding its ballistic missile or nuclear weapons programs and warned Hamas of severe consequences if it does not disarm.

Speaking beside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu following a meeting at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump suggested Tehran may be working to restore its weapons programs after a massive US strike in June.

"I've been reading that they're building up weapons and other things, and if they are, they're not using the sites we obliterated, but possibly different sites," Trump told reporters during a press conference.
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ইংরেজী নববর্ষ উদযাপনে
আতশবাজি
পটকা ফোড়ানো এবং
ফানুস উড়ানো থেকে
বিরত থাকি!

▶ আতশবাজির কারণে শব্দদূষণ, বায়ুদূষণ, অগ্নিকাণ্ড, পাথির মৃত্যুসহ জীববৈচিত্র্য ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়

▶ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান, হাসপাতাল ও অফিস-আদালত এলাকার ১০০ মিটার পর্যন্ত তীরব এলাকা। তীরব এলাকায় শব্দদূষণ দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

▶ আবাসিক এলাকায় রাত ৯:০০ টার পর শব্দদূষণ দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ

শব্দদূষণ (নিয়ন্ত্রণ) বিধিমালা,
২০২৫ অনুযায়ী, কর্তৃপক্ষের
অনুমতি ব্যতিত পটকা,
আতশবাজি ও অনুরূপ
শব্দসৃষ্টিকারী পণ্যের ব্যবহার
দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

শব্দদূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণে সমন্বিত ও অংশীদারিত্বমূলক প্রকল্প
পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর