

Staff Reporter

With the release of Khaleda Zia, her home-help Fatema Begum who had accompanied the BNP chief voluntarily, also came out of the BSMMU prison cell jail on Wednesday, after over 25 months.

Khaleda, together with Fatema, left the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) for her Gulshan residence around 4:20pm.

Though Khaleda was brought down to the ground floor of the hospital's Cabin Block from room number 612 around 4:10pm, it took 10 minutes to take her to her personal vehicle due to huge gathering of her relatives and party leaders and activists.

BNP sources said Fatema will be staying with Khaleda at her home, Firoza, in the city's Gulshan area to look after her as she did so in jail.

Fatema joined Khaleda in the old central jail at Nazimuddin Road in the capital on February 8, 2018 as the jail authorities allowed her to remain there to assist her following a plea of the BNP chief's lawyers to the court.

Khaleda Zia was released for six months suspending her sentences following an executive order over 25 months after she had been convicted and sent to jail in graft cases.

The government passed the executive order for her release upon two conditions -- receiving treatment staying at her Gulshan residence and not leaving the country.

Meanwhile, 'Firoza', the posh home of Khaleda at Road No 79 in Gulshan area which turned into an abandoned house since she had been to jail, was prepared for her comfortable stay there.

As the government announced on Tuesday that the BNP chief will be released from jail for six months, the house was cleaned and refurbished to welcome her.

Khaleda Zia's family recently submitted an application to the government seeking an executive order to have the BNP chief released for her treatment in London.

Her brother Shamim Eskandar, sister Selima Islam, and her (Selima's) husband Dr Rafiqul Islam met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and made an appeal for her release through an executive order.

Under the circumstances, Khaleda's sentences have been suspended as per section 401 (1) of Criminal Code of Procedure (CrPC), said Law Minister Annisul Huq on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said Khaleda's personal physicians provide her treatment at her residence.

Khaleda has been in jail since she was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case on February 8, 2018.

She was found guilty in another corruption case later the same year, though her party claims both cases are politically motivated.

Khaleda was receiving treatment at BSMMU since April 1 last year.