

# Bangladesh will remember Castro with reverence: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Cuban revolutionary icon Fidel Castro, saying that the great Cuban leader will be remembered by the people of the country with love and reverence.

"I am deeply grieved at the sad demise of the great Cuban leader Fidel Castro. On behalf of the people and the Government of Bangladesh, I convey our heartfelt condolences to you and through you to the members of the bereaved family and the people of the Republic of Cuba," she said in a condolence message sent to Cuban President Raul Modesto Castro Ruz.

Sheikh Hasina said Castro was awarded "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour" in recognition of his invaluable contribution to the War of Liberation. She also remembered the great friendship between Castro and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"They were great friends and during their meeting at the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Algiers in 1973, Mr Castro made an emotional remark while hugging my father, which I still recall," she said.

Castro had said: "I have not seen the Himalayas. But I have seen Sheikh Mujib. In personality and courage, this man is the Himalayas. I have thus had the experience of witnessing the Himalayas." "The great Cuban leader will be ever remembered by the people of Bangladesh with love and reverence."

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Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, announces to observe a half-day hartal in the capital on January 26 protesting construction of the Rampal power plant near the Sundarbans. Inset, protesters of the committee gathering for the announcement on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the capital yesterday.

# Hartal on Jan 26 if Rampal project not scrapped

DU CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports yesterday announced to observe a half-day hartal in the capital on January 26 if the government does not scrap the Rampal power plant project near the Sundarbans.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the committee, made the announcement from a rally at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.

Earlier, around noon, thousands of protesters from different parts of the country gathered to attend the rally as part of their programme "Cholo, Cholo, Dhaka Cholo" (Let's march towards Dhaka).

The committee also decided to stage a countrywide demonstration on December 26 and observe worldwide "Global Day of Protest" on January 7 to press home their demand.

"An alternative mega plan made by the experts will also be presented on January 14 on ensuring sustainable and pro-environment fuel and power security in the country," said Prof Anu.

"Though 35 lakh people, dependent on the Sundarbans will be affected and five crore people will be victim of..."

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# Eliminate middlemen to lower migration costs

Speakers tell seminar on safe recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"One of my neighbours demanded Tk 2 lakh for helping me get a Lebanese visa and I gave him Tk 50,000 in advance accordingly. But two months have gone by, he has not given me the visa yet," said Sanwar, an aspirant migrant worker.

Sanwar, hailing from Manikganj, said this at a seminar on ensuring safe recruitment and lowering migration costs, organised by Brac, National Alliance for Migrants' Rights, Bangladesh (NAMR,B) and Bangladesh Civil Society Coordination Committee on Global Forum and Migration Rights at the capital's Brac Centre Inn yesterday.

Speakers at the seminar observed that workers' dependency on middlemen and lack of adequate information are some of the factors responsible for higher migration costs. Recruiting agencies' non-fixed service

charges for migration processing and insufficient budgetary allocation in national budgets are also responsible for this, they added.

Hasan Imam, head of migration programme at Brac, said, "Many of the middlemen give false hope to the less informed workers and charge high for migration processing."

To reduce the costs, he stressed the need for initiating a "government to government" migration process for aspirant migrant workers.

Director of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) Dr Nurul Islam said workers often fall victim to fraudulence as most of the middlemen deal with migration processes without giving their clients necessary documents.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, joint secretary general of the Bangladesh

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# 2 BRUR female teachers 'stalked by BCL men'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The authorities of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) are yet to take any action against the activists of BRUR unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), who allegedly stalked two female teachers of the university on Thursday.

The same day the teachers filed a complaint to the university's proctor.

They said in the complaint that some students numbering six to seven intercepted and hurled expletives at them when they were going to Fazilatunnessa Hall by a rickshaw in the afternoon.

"We can do this because we do politics," a teacher quoted one of the students as saying, when the teachers introduced themselves.

Proctor Shahin Rahman confirmed that he received the complaint.

Sources at the university said the students are involved in BCL and hold vital posts.

Adnan Ali and Mrityunjoy Roy of statistics department and Mahfuzar Rahman and Md Shamim of chemistry were made accused in the complaint, while the other students present there at that time could not be identified.

None of them could be contacted despite several attempts as they all turned their phones off.

The sources also said last year they stalked a female student of computer science and engineering department, who later quit the university over security concerns.

A case was filed with Rangpur Sadar police in August the same year against the unit's six BCL leaders.

The teachers demanded stern actions against the stalkers.

Contacted, Mostafa Mahmud Hasan, general secretary of BRUR unit BCL, said he

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Khadiza makes her first public appearance at a press briefing in the capital's Square Hospitals yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# I'm well now

Khadiza tells press briefing at Square Hospitals, seeks blessings for early recovery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"I'm well now," she said sitting on a wheelchair.

"I want to thank all those who stood beside me," Khadiza added in a soft, yet resolute tone.

Over one and a half months after the brutal attack, Sylhet college student Khadiza Begum Nargis has recovered as doctors said they are all set to release her from the hospital.

Doctors at the capital's Square Hospitals, where she was undergoing treatment, yesterday said she can be released anytime upon decision by the medical board formed for her treatment.

"She can now eat by herself, can read and also walk with support," Mirza Nazim Uddin, director of medical services of the hospital,

told reporters. Now she needs to undergo physiotherapy at a rehabilitation centre, he said.

Khadiza, 23, also appeared on a wheelchair before media during the press briefing and spoke for a while, seeking blessings for her recovery.

"I know all of you have prayed for me that helped my recovery. I hope you will pray for me in future also," she said. She also expressed her gratitude to the hospital authorities and media for standing beside her.

It was her first public appearance since the brutal hacking incident, which took place on October 3 in her home district Sylhet.

Khadiza was hacked by Badrul Alam, a fourth-year student of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology and also a senior

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A decorative cut-out placed in the capital's Kalyanpur marking the Awami League's 20th council continues to partially block Mirpur Road although the event ended way back on October 23. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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# 8 held for using unfair means in Sust exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) authorities yesterday handed over eight people, including five admission seekers, to police for using unfair means during the test for admission to the university.

They were held with 14 mobile phones which looked like calculators. Of them, Ishrat Imtiaz Hridoy, law student of Jahangirnagar University, and Al Amin, food engineering and tea technology student of Sust, are associated with a racket which is being run by "Google Coaching Centre" of Bagura and were providing the admission seekers with answers, said Akter Hossain, officer-in-charge of Jalalabad Police Station.

The other detainee was accompanying one of the aspirants.

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