

China pledges free market access

Jiabao assures Hasina of more support for climate battle

BSS, Beijing

China will allow duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to its markets and increase its support for the country's efforts to face floods and other natural calamities caused by global warming.

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao gave the assurance during official talks with Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina held at East Hall of Great Hall yesterday afternoon.

During the talks, the two leaders discussed various issues of bilateral interest as well as Chinese support and cooperation for Bangladesh's socio-economic sectors.

In the meeting, the Bangladesh premier also sought short and long term Chinese assistance, grants and approval of state to state loan on ODA basis for implementing seven projects in Bangladesh's agriculture, power and infrastructure sectors.

These grants are for construction of Chinese Exhibition Centre with car parking facilities, construction of road and rail

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni look on after signing of a treaty between China and Bangladesh at Great Hall in Beijing yesterday.

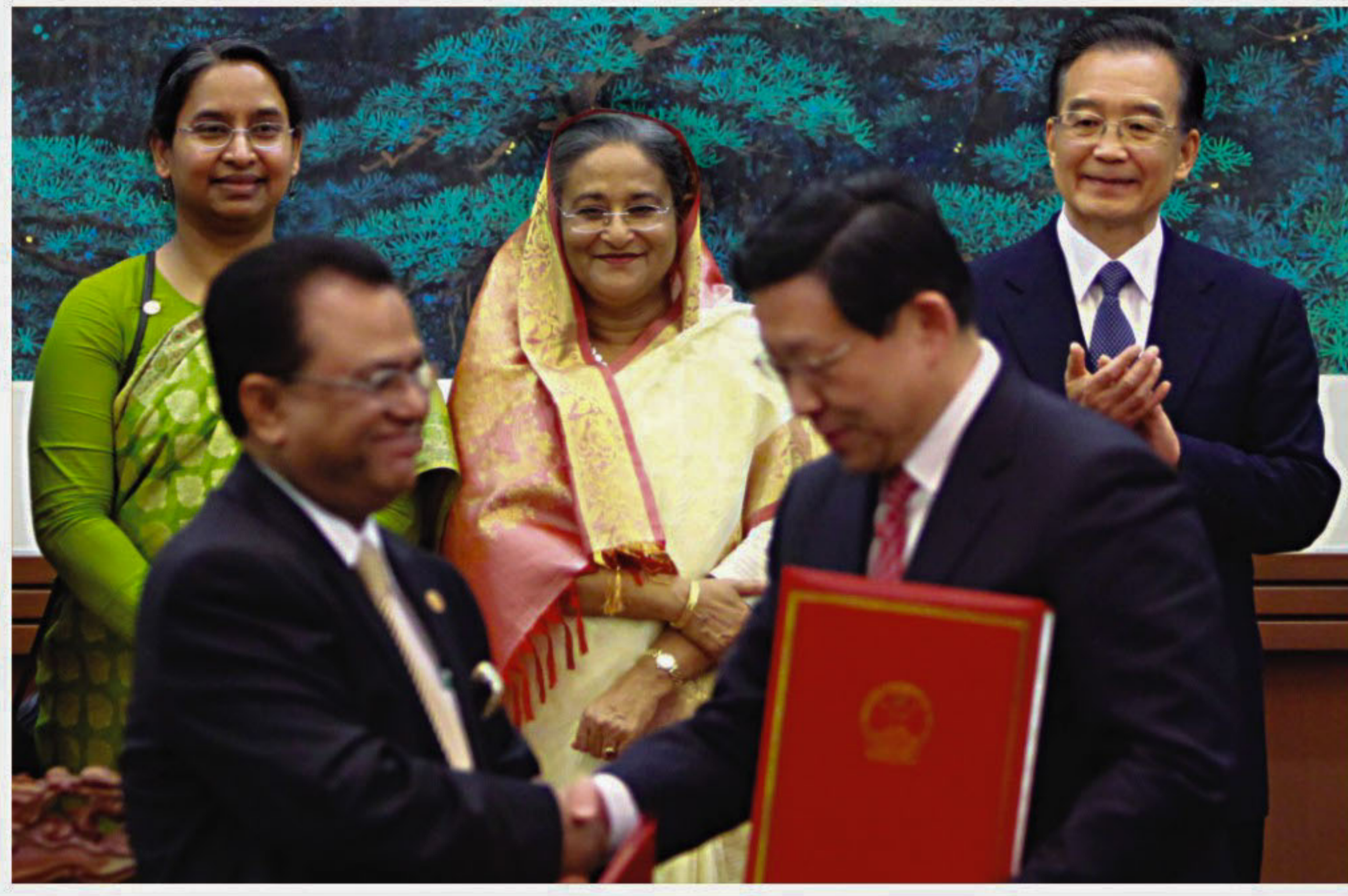


PHOTO: AFP

Deals signed on fertiliser unit, bridge, more grant

UNB, Beijing

Bangladesh and China yesterday signed three accords and one memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation in the fields of economy and technology, infrastructure and energy.

The agreements were signed after formal talks between Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao at the East Hall of the Great Hall here.

The accords are Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement with Adequate Grant, Framework Agreement for Construction of Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory, Agreement for Construction of the

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Independence award 2010 announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has nominated 10 distinguished persons and an organisation for Swadhinata Puroshkar (Independence Award) 2010 in recognition of their glorious contributions to the nation.

The nominated persons and organisation are AKM Samsul Haque Khan (posthumously), Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Belal Mohammad in the category of independence and liberation

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1,000 foreign-funded NGOs run illegally

ALPHA ARZU

At least 1,000 foreign-funded non-government organisations are operating illegally, as they have yet to renew their registration with the NGO Affairs Bureau.

"Last year, we served show-cause notices on 1,300 NGOs for working without renewal of registration," said Muhammad Ibrahim, deputy director of NGOAB.

Some NGOs could not be sent notices, as they have moved without giving the

bureau their new addresses, he added.

Of the notice recipients, only 300 have applied for renewal and another 300 informed the bureau that they would apply.

The remaining 700 have made no move whatsoever. They will get a few more days to apply for registration renewal. If they fail to do so, the government will have to cancel their registrations, said NGOAB officials.

The law in this regard stipulates that the projects run by a foreign-funded NGO

will be adjudged illegal and shut down if the organisation continues operating on expiry of registration.

As per Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulations Rules 1978, an NGO should renew its registration every five years.

Since inception in 1990, the NGOAB has cancelled registration of 54 NGOs for violating foreign donations rules.

In 2004 alone, it revoked registration of 15 NGOs for financial irregularities,

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WAR CRIMES TRIAL 3-man tribunal by March 26

An ex-IG to head probe agency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decided to form an investigating agency, a 12-member prosecution panel and a three-member tribunal to start the process of trying war criminals before this year's Independence Day.

"We will constitute a six-member investigating agency with a retired inspector general of police as its head before March 26," Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafiqe Ahmed told reporters after a meeting at the home ministry.

The other members will be senior police and army officers.

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SRIMANGAL 1,500 trees felled in three days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wholesale tree felling goes on unabated at Kailin Punji village also known as Nahar Paan Punji near Nahar Tea Garden in Srirangal in Moulvibazar.

A timber trader started chopping down trees on March 13 following a High Court directive to the forest department authorities and local administration to allow cutting down 3,550 trees.

"The trader has chopped

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DCC stumbles in billboard dismantling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation authorities were compelled to halt their drive for dismantling illegal hoardings within one hour of its start at Shahbag intersection last night in absence of police protection.

DCC Magistrate Khalilur Rahman, who led the drive, said two platoons of police were deployed under him to ensure security of his team while they were conducting the drive in front of Shahbag police control room.

Instead, the police personnel

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Dhaka City Corporation in a drive last night dismantles a hoarding, set up illegally in front of Shahbagh police control room in the capital. The move comes after two people were killed as a poorly-mounted billboard collapsed on them during a storm at Gulshan on Monday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Vessels strike called off

Committee asked to report on workers' pay structure by April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water transport workers called off strike last night following a tripartite meeting among the government, water vessels' owners and workers.

The four-hour long meeting that started around 8:15 pm was held at the residence of Labour Minister Mosharraf Hossain. Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan was also present.

The meeting asked the 16-member committee which was formed earlier to submit a report, including a wage structure for the workers in accordance with the government pay scale, by April 30 after reviewing 22-point demands of the workers.

President of Bangladesh Inland Water

Transport (Passenger Carriers) Owners' Association Mahbub Uddin, General Secretary of workers' association Noutjan Shramik Federation Ashikul Alam Chowdhury, among others, were present at the meeting.

About 1.5 lakh transport workers went on the strike on Tuesday to press home 22-point charter of demands for, among others, a new pay scale that was supposed to be announced in January last year.

Trade and commerce activities suffered seriously as loading-unloading at the outer anchorage of seaports and shipment of goods from river ports remained suspended for three days because of the indefinite strike.

Before calling off the strike, Meghna

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CONGRATULATIONS

Hon'able Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, hands over National Export Trophy (Gold) to Alhajj Morshed Alam, Managing Director of Bengal Plastic Industries Limited for the year 2006-2007 in recognition of his excellence in export performance.

From Bengal group of industries & Rtv family, we convey our Heartiest Congratulations to **Alhajj Morshed Alam, Chairman & Managing Director of Bengal Group of Industries and Rtv, for his outstanding achievements.**

All executives & staffs
Bengal Group of Industries & Rtv



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Talks 'positive'

Ramesh says after first day's JRC meet in Delhi

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Bangladesh and India began their ministerial-level Joint River Commission talks here yesterday on sharing of waters of the Teesta and other common rivers with Bangladesh Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen terming the discussions "positive".

Emerging from over three-hour talks with his Indian counterpart Pawan Kumar Bansal at Oberoi Hotel, Ramesh told journalists, "We discussed all issues. The discussions were positive and took place in a conducive atmosphere. We will continue the discussions".

He however declined to go into details.

Before the talks began, Ramesh said Bangladesh hoped to reach an interim agreement on the vexed issue of Teesta water sharing.

"The expectation is high. We are here to strengthen further the relations between the two countries" he said when asked whether Bangladesh was hopeful of reaching an interim agreement.

Pawan separately told the media after today's meeting, "Talks were good and there was a good atmosphere".

Both sides put forward their views on a range of issues, and agreed to resume the discussions today.

Sources said there are differences between the two countries on the methodology to be used to calculate availability of water in the Teesta in various seasons to reach an agreement on water-sharing.

West Bengal's Water Resources Minister Subhash Naskar, who was also present at the JRC meeting, said the discussions were "good and there were no negatives".

Teesta water-sharing, dredging of Ichchamati river, and Farakka barrage figured in yesterday's discussions but no decision was taken, he said.

Ahead of the JRC meeting, water resources secretaries of the two countries Sheikh Md Wahid-Uz Zaman of Bangladesh and U N Panjiyar of India held three-hour talks at the same hotel.

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e x h i b i t i o n

traditional
Boats
of Bangladesh

Bangladesh National Museum
Nalinikanta Bhattashali Gallery

23 March - 19 April 2010

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|----------|-----------|--------------|
| March | Sat - Wed | 9:30 - 4:30 |
| April | Sat - Wed | 10:30 - 5:30 |
| Friday | | 3:30 - 7:30 |
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