



Children of a madrasa, wearing hijab scarves, take part in a rally starting from the Shishu Academy in the city yesterday on the occasion of World Children's Day organised by Shishu Kalyan Parishad.

Bangladesh seeks Chinese help in building deep-sea port

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladesh has asked China for help in building a multibillion-dollar deep-sea port in the Bay of Bengal -- the nation's most ambitious and expensive infrastructure project, an official said yesterday.

"This week, we formally sought Chinese assistance to implement the deep-sea port project," economic relations secretary Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told AFP.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina discussed the plan with Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping when he made a two-day visit to Bangladesh in June, Bhuiyan said, adding Beijing's initial response had been "positive."

Bangladesh's main seaport in the southwestern city of Chittagong has been hit by severe congestion in recent months, with the average turnaround time for a container rising from three days to 11.

And the situation is likely to worsen, analysts say, as exports continue to soar -- garment shipments rose an average 30 percent year on year in July and August, according to government statistics.

The government wants Chinese help -- which could take the form of grants, concessional loans or technical assistance -- to build the new deep-sea port near the southeastern island of Sonadia, Bhuiyan said.

The government hopes the new port will become the main shipping hub for northeastern India, China's Yunnan province, Myanmar and landlocked Nepal and Bhutan.

The deep-sea port project has been in discussion for years, but Dhaka last year finalised the location and began looking for international partners.

Dhaka's decision to

request Chinese assistance is likely to raise eyebrows in India, Bangladesh's neighbour and closest ally, which is concerned about growing Chinese influence in its

backyard in South Asia. China is also developing port facilities in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Pakistan, and has plans for rail projects in Nepal and Sri

Lanka. Bangladesh is also in discussions with the Chinese and Myanmar governments to build a highway connecting

Bangladesh's southern port city of Chittagong with Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan, by way of northwestern Myanmar.

SC upholds HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld a High Court order granting bail to former minister Mirza Abbas in a murder case.

The HC on August 24 granted bail to the BNP leader in the case filed with Ramna Police Station on charge of setting fire and killing one, Faruque Hossain, on June 26 this year.

The chamber judge of the appellate division on August 31 stayed the HC order.

A three-member bench of the appellate division, headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque, yesterday passed the order after granting a petition filed by Mirza Abbas for vacating the chamber judge's order.

Advocate Khandker Mahub Hossain, lawyer for Mirza Abbas, told The Daily Star that there is no bar to his client's release from jail following the SC order.

Mirza Abbas was arrested on June 27, a day before BNP enforced countrywide daylong hartal.

The charges against him are vandalising vehicles on the streets, killing Faruque Hossain by setting fire to a car and obstructing police from discharging their duties during hartal hours.

Mirza Abbas freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas was released on bail yesterday after serving jail for about three months.

Former minister Abbas, under treatment in police custody at the city's BIRDEM hospital, was released at about 5:00pm, said the party leaders.

His wife Afroza Abbas told reporters that he would stay in

the hospital for a few days for medical treatment.

Police arrested Mirza Abbas from city's Shahjahanpur area in the capital during the country-wide hartal on June 27 called by the main opposition party BNP.

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld a High Court order granting bail to former minister Mirza Abbas in a murder case.

Woman killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two tenants allegedly killed their landlady and fled from house at Joarshahara Badda in the capital on Sunday.

Police recovered the body from their room yesterday. The deceased Nurjahan Begum, 42, wife of Saiful Islam Khan, lived in her house at Joarshahara Khan Para. Badda police recovered the body around 1:00am from the room of the two tenants, aged around 25 to 30 years, whose identities could not be known.

Saiful Islam Khan said two youths rented one room of their house on September 21. They claimed they were hawkers ferrying chicken, he added. Yesterday, their room was found bolted from outside and Khan did not find his wife since 10:00am on Sunday. He thought she might have gone to visit any of their relatives. But as she did not return till midnight, he noticed that the lights inside the room of the two tenants were on.

He peeped through the window and saw that his wife was lying on the floor. He broke the door open and found her dead. He said the earlobes of the dead were torn as the miscreants snatched ornaments from the body.

Sub-inspector Mosharraf Hossain of Badda Police Station said the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. A murder case was filed with the police.



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