

China most reliable dev partner of Bangladesh

Says ambassador Wen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said China is the most reliable development partner and a true friend of Bangladesh.

He said the so-called China trap is sheer fabrication. Chinese projects under the Belt and Road Initiative bring about immense benefits to the people, he said at a reunion of the alumni of Chinese exchange programmes at the Chinese embassy yesterday evening.

China has been Bangladesh's largest trading partner for 13 consecutive years, he said, adding that it is also a major source of foreign investment in Bangladesh, with an investment of \$3.17 billion.

Wen said there are around 700 Chinese companies registered in Bangladesh.

However, he said, alongside the steady progress of China-Bangladesh relations, some disturbing noises emerge once in a while.

China-Bangladesh cooperation finds its root deep in the long-established friendship between the two peoples. It would have been impossible without the political guidance of the leaderships of the two countries, he said.

The envoy said China in the coming year will organise more bilateral training programmes, which would benefit a greater number of Bangladeshi participants.

Wen said 50 flights are operated on China-Bangladesh route every week and nearly 10,000 people travel to and from China on weekly basis.

"Here, I have another good news to share with you. More direct flights from Dhaka to Beijing will be launched very soon, so as to provide more diverse flight options and making people-to-people exchanges even more convenient," he added.

SPYING CHARGES

Russian court extends detention of US journo

AFP, Moscow

A Moscow court yesterday said it had extended until January the detention of US reporter Evan Gershkovich, who was arrested in Russia earlier this year on spying charges.

The court said Gershkovich's "period of detention" was extended by two more months until January 30, in what the Wall Street Journal, his employer, called a "brazen and outrageous attack on a free press."

The 32-year-old correspondent, the Wall Street Journal and the US government have all rejected the spying allegations.

My interpretation of sculptures is a fleeting moment caught in time that is otherwise a contorted, dramatic expression of life's beautiful everyday story. A mother feeding her child, Buddha in meditation, a seated woman, even animals – all these everyday sights are captured in a three-dimensional artwork in the hands of the sculptor.



REVIVAL OF SCULPTURE as an art form

RBR

Art galleries in Dhaka hardly hold any exclusive exhibition for sculptures and even if they do, it is mostly as part of mixed media shows. However, the grandiosity of a simple composition of a woman resting, if perfectly placed under the soft light, grabs your mind with so much intensity that you might just want to lose yourself completely.

According to artist Hamiduzzaman Khan, "Architects, while planning, are now mindful of allotting spaces for full-sized sculpture in construction sites of grand buildings. The general people are beginning to value the power of such massive art forms.

"Works of students from the Sculpture Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka are regularly exhibiting their work in the university premises. They have a special place and are very sought after in their yearly Zainul Utsab at the institute. These are pleasant signs for taking this 3D art form forward."

Recently, a mixed media art exhibition by 27 modern and contemporary artists is going on in Uttara. The show, "Behind the Numbers" at Galleri Kaya presents a selection of 83 astounding works.

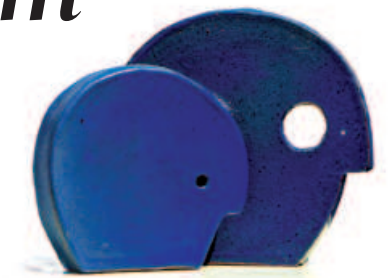
The exhibition has been extended till 8 December for collectors to experience powerful sculptures and fluid paintings on display. Artist Goutam Chakraborty, the Director of the gallery, has carefully selected the works of art with much pomp.

What really captivates the heart are the forms of images in solid



material that are turned into a three-dimensional work of art. Hamiduzzaman Khan, Ivy Zaman, Mukti Bhowmik, Habiba Akther Papia, Tejosh Halder Josh, and Shahanoor Mamun's work are on display.

The brass work of Habiba Akter Papia titled "Affecting Time" and "Rusted Time" are striking works



made in the form of distorted bottles. Shahnoor Mamun's stoneware ceramic and eminent artist, Ivy Zaman's bronze sculpture of Buddha and women are something to really appreciate.

"Behind the Numbers' is a beautiful exhibition where each curated piece has a story to tell. Sculpture, as an art form, was ignored for a long time in Dhaka. After a 20-year gap from the last National Sculpture Exhibition in 1982, it has only recently been given due importance. Shilpakala Academy now is giving sculptors a platform to showcase their medium of work by arranging annual exhibitions at the national level," said Hamiduzzaman.

The exhibition at Galleri Kaya gives art collectors an opportune invite to witness the thoughts of some of our most brilliant minds in the field of fine arts. The exhibition is open every day until 8:00pm at Galleri Kaya, House 20, Road 16, Sector-4, Uttara, Dhaka.

Man dies after being tortured for two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man died early yesterday after being tortured for two days by a gang in Chattogram city's Riazuddin Bazar area.

Police later arrested three suspects in this connection, said Noble Chakma, the additional deputy commissioner (south zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

The deceased was identified as Suman, 40, and the arrestees are Mamun, Mofizur Rahman, and Dulu, said the ADC.

After a primary investigation, police said the three held Suman captive for two days in a room at the bachelor quarters of Riaz Uddin Bazar and tortured him to recover some debt.

"He fell sick last [Monday] night after two days' torture and was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital after midnight, where the doctors declared him dead," said the ADC.

NGO employee dies after being hit by train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of Save the Children in Bangladesh died after being hit by a train as he was crossing the rail tracks in the capital's Khilkhet yesterday.

Witnesses and police said the victim was wearing earphones and did not notice one of the two trains passing through at the time.

The deceased was identified as Noor-E-Alam Taimur, technical specialist of the organisation, said Sub-Inspector Sunil Chandra Sutradhar of Dhaka Railway Police Station.

The accident happened around 8:30am when he was heading towards his office from his Bepariara residence in Khilkhet, he said.

Taimur was crossing the tracks wearing earphones. He noticed the airport-bound Ekota Express from Dhaka but not the other train, Mohanagar Express, coming from the opposite direction, the SI said.

Sunil said the Mohanagar Express train hit him, leaving him dead on the spot.

Quoting witnesses, the SI said bystanders from nearby areas shouted at him to warn him of the danger but Taimur could not hear them as he had his earphones on.

143 Bangladeshis return home from Libya

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 143 illegal Bangladeshi migrants have returned home from Libya's capital Tripoli.

A Burak Air flight carrying them landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka in the early hours of yesterday, according to a foreign ministry press release.

Foreign ministry officials and officials of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) received them at the airport.

Upon arriving at the airport, the IOM provided Tk 5,896 and some food to each returnee.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the financial support of IOM, is facilitating the return of illegal Bangladeshi migrants stranded in Libya.

As part of this initiative, another 373 undocumented Bangladeshi nationals will be repatriated from Libya to Bangladesh on November 29 and December 5, according to the foreign ministry press release.

In quest for convenient rivals

FROM PAGE 1

AL nominees in three constituencies in the capital are among the party ticket holders scrambling to have opponents from smaller parties, the sources said.

Some offered to go the extra mile to have opponents in the race.

Sources said a number of AL nominees told smaller parties that they would pay for the nomination forms of their opponents and have their campaign posters printed.

Pressure is mounting on the smaller parties to nominate candidates, but the problem is that some of these parties do not have the capacity to field candidates in all constituencies.

A few of them are running for the first time and the candidates they are picking are hardly known by the constituents, said AL insiders with knowledge of the developments.

Even if the AL nominees succeed in getting opponents from smaller parties, it will not be easy to stop the ruling party from giving the go-ahead to an AL-endorsed independent.

Party President Sheikh Hasina on Sunday spoke in favour of such independents apparently to make the election look competitive.

She also threatened punitive action against AL nominees who would win without any competition whatsoever.

Talking to reporters at the AL chief's Dhanmondi office, party General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the party would not allow all willing AL leaders to run as independents.

"We have taken a strategic decision. We have time until December 17. We can make changes or corrections within the time. We are a political party participating in the election. So, obviously we have a strategy," he said.

Many leaders who have been denied the party tickets are preparing to run as independents since the BNP and like-minded parties are almost certain not to run.

Some of these so-called independents are formidable. Many AL nominees and incumbents

have tried and failed to get their opponents within the party to back off.

Twenty-six of the 44 registered parties are taking part in the polls.

Of them, the AL, Jatiya Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, Bangladesh Kalyan Party, and the Bangladesh Supreme Party-led Liberal Islamic Alliance have unveiled their candidates.

JP nominated 287 candidates. JSD fielded candidates in 181 constituencies, Liberal Islamic Alliance in 121 and Tarikat Federation in 123 constituencies.

While declaring the nominees for Liberal Islamic Alliance, BSP chief Syed Saifuddin Ahmed said they would field candidates in 200 constituencies and they have 30 "heavyweights".

Newly registered Trinamool BNP and little-known parties like Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktijote and Bangladesh Congress said they would field candidates in all 300 constituencies.

adding that they were not even allowed to meet him in prison.

Afroza Abbas, wife of detained BNP Standing Committee Member Mirza Abbas and also president of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, chaired the programme.

She read out the list of the detained BNP leaders and demanded their release.

Leaders of some like-minded parties expressed solidarity with the family members at the programme amid huge police presence.

The demonstrators wanted to submit a memorandum to the chief justice seeking release of the arrested BNP leaders and activities, but they were barred by police.

Later, they sent the memorandum to the chief justice by a courier service.

More and more people now flocking to OMS trucks

FROM PAGE 1

The prices of sugar rose by 28.26 percent, salt 9.33 percent and brown eggs by 2.56 percent during the same period.

BUYING ESSENTIALS A TALL TASK Visiting 11 OMS and TCB shops in the capital yesterday, The Daily Star found a large number of people, including women and the elderly, waiting in long queues.

Monwara Begum, a 70-year-old resident of Hazi Rahim Box Lane in Lalbagh, left her home for the OMS truck near Agrani School and College in Azimpur around 6:30am. She went there on foot and by the time she reached there, a lot of people had already queued up.

Monwara lives with her daughter and son-in-law. Her daughter, a garment worker, earns Tk 7,000 a month. Her husband, a shopkeeper at Chawk Bazar earns about Tk 8,000. Monwara has to go out to buy commodities while they are at work.

Abdul Quader, a sales staff at an OMS truck near Agrani School and College, said the number of buyers has been increasing over the last one month.

He said 10 people would return home empty-handed on average

a month ago, but the figure has doubled now.

Shefali Begum, a 50-year-old widow, came to an OMS outlet near Abdul Goni Road around 8:00am. But she had to wait for more than an hour to buy 5kg rice and 5kg flour for Tk 270 -- around Tk 205 cheaper than the retail market price.

"I came early as I couldn't buy commodities yesterday [Monday]. I can't afford to buy the essentials from the retail market," said Shefali who earns around Tk 5,000 a month by collecting plastic and selling those to scrap shops.

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said more people crowding OMS outlets indicates that people's purchase capacity has decreased.

He said there are some people who buy OMS products and sell those to fund their purchase of other products, meaning their condition is even worse.

"People resort to such unethical means when they become extremely vulnerable," he said.

Rahman called upon the government to take steps to increase the income of the people.

Iran sacks sports official over athlete's hijab violation

AFP, Tehran

Iran's sports minister has sacked the country's deaf sports federation chief after pictures emerged of a foreign woman athlete without a compulsory headscarf at a tournament, local media said.

Mehran Tishehgaran was removed from his position "due to events that happened in the Asian Deaf Athletics Championships," the ISNA news agency reported late Monday.

Sports Minister Kioumars Hashemi named Alireza Khosravi to replace Tishehgaran, it said.

Iranian media has in recent days published images of a woman athlete wearing shorts and a tight tank top at the Sunday-Monday tournament in Tehran.

Tishehgaran said men and women did not mix during the competition. "Only women were present in that area and the security officials collected all the cameras and mobile phones," he said in an interview with the Fars news agency.

Tishehgaran added that images of the athlete were taken by her team from Kazakhstan.

AL to share seats with 14-party allies

FROM PAGE 1

"We will do whatever is necessary. Everything will be finalised by December 17."

It is a shift of stance of Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister.

On Saturday, Quader said if the opposition does not form a coalition, the AL will not form an alliance since there is no strategic reason for that.

On Monday, Quader and party Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud came up with different

statements about forging an alliance.

In the morning, Quader said the AL does not need to search for partners. Later in the day, Hasan Mahmud, also the information and broadcasting minister, said his party would adjust seats with the partners of the alliance like it did in the past although the party announced the names of its nominees in 298 out of 300 parliamentary seats.

AL leader Amir Hossain Amu, also AL-led 14-party combine coordinator, on the same day

assured the alliance partners that the AL would contest the election under the alliance banner. He also requested the leaders of the allies to file nomination papers with the Election Commission.

AL sources said Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina expressed resentment over alliance partners demanding more seats than they currently hold. They said this time the ruling party will offer the alliance partners fewer seats than the 11 that they got in the last election.