

Peter Haas, Charles Whiteley to meet Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud today

January 17, 2024

Online Desk: Amid continuous greetings from Bangladesh's international friends and partners to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her re-election, ambassadors of the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) are set to meet Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud today (January 17, 2024) at his office.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas, who was criticised in the political arena before the January 7 national election, will meet the foreign minister at 12 pm today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Later, EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley will meet Minister Hasan Mahmud at 1 pm, according to the minister's programme schedule.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formed her new cabinet on January 11 with a combination of new and old faces.

Even though the United States concluded that the election was not "free or fair," it voiced commitment to work with Bangladesh.

The US ambassador also attended the oath-taking ceremony held at Bangabhaban recently.

"Looking ahead, the United States remains committed to partnering with Bangladesh to advance our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, to supporting human rights and civil society in Bangladesh, and to deepening our people-to-people and economic ties," said US State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller a day after the election.

The European Union (EU) said it will continue to work with the government of Bangladesh on the priorities that characterise their longstanding relations in the political, human rights, trade and development spheres including the country's possible future access to the GSP+ preferential trade scheme.

"The EU strongly encourages all stakeholders to respect political pluralism, democratic values and international human rights standards and to engage in peaceful dialogue," said High Representative Josep Borrell Fontelles in a statement on behalf of the EU.

It is essential that the media, civil society and political parties can carry out their work without censorship or fear of reprisals, said the EU.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma met the foreign minister on Monday. He was the first foreign envoy to meet the foreign minister after formation of the new Cabinet.

Ruling out any external pressure, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud on Sunday said Bangladesh will stick to its foreign policy principle – "friendship to all, malice towards none" – against the backdrop of a divided world.

"All the countries in the East and the West have expressed their willingness to work with us, with the government. At the end of the day, they are our development partners and we will work together," he told reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Minister is scheduled to leave for Uganda on Wednesday night to attend the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

