

Indian foreign secretary to visit Dhaka Today

February 14, 2023

Online Desk: The visit of Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra to Bangladesh is in line with the “highest priority” accorded as per India’s ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy, the country’s Ministry of External Affairs said today. Bangladesh is India’s top-most development partner and its largest trade partner in the region, India said. The Indian foreign secretary’s visit will further strengthen bilateral ties and add momentum to ongoing cooperation in diverse areas, according to the ministry.

Foreign Secretary Kwatra will be on an official visit to Bangladesh, on February 15-16, at the invitation of Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Masud Bin Momen. During the visit, both foreign secretaries will review the entire range of bilateral relationship including political and security, water, trade and investment, power and energy, defence, connectivity and sub-regional cooperation. Kwatra will arrive in Dhaka after the completion of his two-day official visit to Nepal (February 13-14).

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and his Indian counterpart will discuss bilateral issues at the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). Kwatra assumed charge as foreign secretary on May 1 last year, and this will be his first Bangladesh visit since then. The last FOC was held on January 29, 2021, in New Delhi, India. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to attend the 18th Group of Twenty (G20) Summit which will take place in New Delhi on September 9-10 this year. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited Hasina to attend the Summit.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen will attend the G20 foreign ministers’ meeting in New Delhi on March 1-2. The issues related to the upcoming visits by the prime minister and foreign minister are likely to be discussed during the Indian foreign secretary’s visits, said a diplomatic source. Kwatra is likely to meet the prime minister and foreign minister during his visit. India, which holds the presidency of the G20 from December 1 2022 to November 30, 2023, invited Bangladesh as a “guest country” in its all meetings.

Bangladesh sees its series of engagements with the G20 under India’s presidency this year as a “big honour”. “We will raise our issues there. It is a big honour for us. We should be prudent,” Momen told reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently, noting that Bangladesh is the only South Asian country invited by the host. India invited Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as guest countries to its meetings and summit, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, India. The G20 members represent around 85 percent of the global GDP, over 75 percent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.