

Bangladesh-India FOC meeting held with focus on bilateral issues

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Online Desk : Bangladesh and India on Monday held the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), exploring ways to address mutual concerns and take forward the relations in a changed scenario. Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin and visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri led the Bangladesh and Indian delegations respectively at the FOC that began at 12:45pm. The Indian Foreign Secretary is likely to make a brief statement for the media after his meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain later today. There will be a separate briefing by Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 5:30pm.

The Indian Foreign Secretary arrived on Monday morning to hold a several meetings in Dhaka, including the Foreign Office Consultations. Ishrat Jahan, Director General (South Asia wing) at the Foreign Ministry, received the Indian Foreign Secretary upon his arrival in Dhaka. Foreign Secretary Misri is also likely to meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus today. Adviser Hossain on Sunday expressed optimism that Bangladesh and India would be able to overcome the kind of stalemate that two neighbouring countries witnessed over the last couple of months.

“We expect that we will be able to overcome this impasse. Establishing mutual communication and meeting each other are very important to overcome any such stalemate,” he said. Speaking at a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club, Hossain said it is also important to note that the relations between Bangladesh and India witnessed changes after August 5 and both sides need to try and take forward the relations accepting this changed reality.

The downturn that the two countries witnessed over the last few months in terms of bilateral business activities affected both Bangladesh and India, not just Bangladesh got affected, said the Adviser. This is the first visit made by a senior Indian government official to Bangladesh since the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, came to power on August 8. The FOC led by the Foreign Secretaries is a structured engagement between Bangladesh-India. Spokesperson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Mohammad Rafiqul Alam said there are always efforts to keep all the elements of the bilateral relations on agenda.