

Hopeful about future relations with Bangladesh: US State Dept Counselor Chollet

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Online Desk: Counselor of the US Department of State, Derek Chollet, today said they remain “hopeful” about future relations with Bangladesh – building on the strong partnership that has developed over 51 years. “We are hopeful for the future. 51 years – very strong partnership. We are looking forward to the next 51 years and beyond. We have many shared challenges but we have many common opportunities that we have talked about today,” Chollet told reporters after his meeting with Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bangladesh has seen a series of visits by senior US officials in recent months with the last by US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, Donald Lu. The US State Department counselor said that the US places considerable importance on its relationship with Bangladesh, which is growing. On the Rohingya issue, he said they are continuously working and trying to help Bangladesh, which is hosting over 1 million Rohingyas, and also trying to deal with the root causes in Myanmar.

Talking to reporters, Foreign Minister Momen said Bangladesh is happy to receive US diplomats. “We are looking forward to better days,” he said. Chollet and his delegation members met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganabhaban in the morning. He met senior officials in Bangladesh to discuss “coordination and response” to the Rohingya refugee crisis, strengthening cooperation in international fora, and advancing the “security partnership” between Dhaka and Washington. The US sees “huge potential” in relationship with Bangladesh and a lot of “room to grow”, he added.

“We are deeply concerned about the situation in Myanmar which is only getting worse,” Chollet said before his arrival in Dhaka. The US State Department counselor said they are doing whatever they can to cooperate with Bangladesh and trying to ease the pressure on the country from the refugee crisis by providing critical assistance to support its humanitarian needs. The counselor serves at the rank of under-secretary as a senior policy advisor to the US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken on a wide range of issues and conducts special diplomatic assignments as directed by him.