

# Momen seeks US support for RAB's capacity building

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**Online Desk:** Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen on Thursday sought US support for increased capacity of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) while visiting US state department counselor Derek Chollet acknowledged improvement in performance of the Bangladesh's elite anti-crime police unit. "He (Momen) sought US support towards their (RAB) capacity building," the foreign ministry said in a statement after Chollet held a meeting with the Bangladesh foreign minister, reports BSS.

Chollet, who serves as a senior policy advisor to the Secretary of State Antony Blinken, led a seven-member US delegation in the meeting. The foreign ministry statement said the US side acknowledged RAB's improved performance but emphasized on its sustained reforms while the anti-crime force is now under a sanction imposed by Washington. Momen said the RAB is a key force in law enforcement and earned people's confidence and trust over the years. Drawing attention to Bangladesh's remarkable progress in the socio-economic sector, Foreign Minister suggested the US to take advantage of Bangladesh's liberal investment policy by investing in the designated special economic zones.

Chollet who is leading a seven-member inter-agency US delegation also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and held a breakfast meeting with foreign secretary Masud Bin Momen. During the meetings, they discussed a wide range of bilateral and other issues of mutual interest including the Rohingya situation, Ukraine crisis, Trade and Investment and Rights related matters, said the statement. Press freedom, national election and other issues were also discussed during the meetings, it added.

Chollet appreciated Bangladesh for generously hosting more than a million Rohingyas and assured continued US humanitarian support and actions. The US side expressed their commitment to support the ongoing criminal justice mechanisms in international courts. Bangladesh thanked the US for its support and requested them to strengthen their humanitarian initiatives to Bhashan Char. Bangladesh sought US's support for earliest sustainable solution to Rohingya crisis and their repatriation. Regarding Russia-Ukraine conflict, Bangladesh reiterated its position on resolving any disputes through peaceful means and asked for immediate end of the war.

Bangladesh called upon the US to take effective measures to resolve the economic crisis originated from the global food and oil crisis and the increased living cost due to the reciprocal trade sanctions. Chollet informed that the US has already started working to solve the food crisis. In addition, the US has expressed Bangladesh's support towards international initiatives to resolve the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Meanwhile, in a statement the US embassy here said, during these meetings, Chollet emphasized continued US support to Bangladesh in addressing Rohingya issues, the importance of free and fair elections and the protection of human rights, cooperation to mitigate climate change and a free and open Indo-Pacific region. "This has been a very productive visit to Bangladesh, and I'm honored my first trip to Bangladesh comes on the heels of the year when we marked 50th anniversary of U.S.-Bangladesh relations," said Counselor Chollet.

"The United States and Bangladesh have a robust partnership based on decades of cooperation and support, and we look forward to strengthening our relationship in trade, investment, security, and other shared priorities," the statement said quoting the counselor. The US government is dedicated to expanding the full range of trade, security, education, and humanitarian cooperation and ties between the Bangladeshi and American people to promote a more stable, secure, and prosperous future for both our nations, said the US embassy statement

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The Secretary (West) Ambassador Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury and other Senior Officials of the Foreign Ministry were present during the meetings from Bangladesh side. The U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas, Counselor for USAID Administrator Clinton White, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of U.S. Department of State, South Central Asia Bureau Elizabeth Horst and Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Beth Van Schaack were present from the US side.