

Reopening embassy will boost trade between Argentina, Bangladesh: Visiting minister hopes

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Online Desk: Argentina's Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Santiago Andrés Cafiero today hoped that the economic, trade and business collaboration between his country and Bangladesh will get a boost following the reopening of the Argentine embassy in Dhaka. He expressed the optimism while paying a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's official residence Ganabhaban this morning, reports UNB.

PM's speechwriter Md Nazrul Islam briefed reporters after the meeting. "Argentina is happy to reopen its embassy in Dhaka," the visiting foreign minister was quoted as saying while extending thanks to Sheikh Hasina for giving the opportunity to reopen the mission in such a short time. He hoped that economic, trade and business collaboration between the two countries will be enhanced, as well as friendship will be strengthened further with reopening the embassy. "There is enough scope to enhance cooperation between our two countries," Cafiero was quoted as saying.

Argentina first opened its embassy in Dhaka in 1974 but it was closed in 1978 by the military junta that ruled the South American country at the time. The Argentina embassy was reopened in Dhaka's Banani area yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that Bangladesh is very keen to enhance relations with Argentina. "There is huge scope to enhance trade and tourism between Bangladesh and Argentina," she was quoted. Argentina can import garments and pharmaceutical items, jute and related products, and leather goods from Bangladesh, she said.

Bangladesh mainly imports edible oil, particularly soybean oil, animal and vegetable fats, seeds, fruits, grains, dairy products, eggs and natural honey. "We can also collaborate in the fields of sports, education and culture," she said, seeking cooperation from Argentina for the development of Bangladesh football. Sheikh Hasina said the whole world is going through turmoil caused by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia-Ukraine war, economic sanctions and counter-sanctions. Not only Bangladesh, but many developed countries are being impacted as prices of food items and inflation have gone up significantly around the world, she said. In this context, she said that public suffering can be eased through enhancing cooperation and relations among friendly countries.

The PM said Bangladesh has put emphasis on raising food production and setting up 100 special economic zones to generate employment, developing infrastructures and connectivity with neighbouring countries. Now Bangladesh is a marketing hub in South Asia, she added. The visiting Argentine minister said the people of his country are also bearing the brunt of high inflation induced by the Russia-Ukraine war and the Covid-19 pandemic. Talking about climate change, he said relations among the member states of the global south forum can be strengthened to fight the impact. He praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership in fighting climate change.

Appreciating the development of Bangladesh, he said, "We are highly impressed with the socio-economic development of Bangladesh." Noting that this is his first visit here, the Argentine foreign minister said he did not imagine that Bangladesh would be so beautiful. PMO Secretary Mohammad Salahuddin, Secretary (West) at the Foreign Ministry Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury and non-resident Ambassador of Argentina to Bangladesh Hugo Gobbi were present. On Monday, Argentine Foreign Minister Cafiero arrived in Dhaka to inaugurate his country's new embassy here and deepen trade and cultural relations. Diplomatic operations, such as visas in order to travel, were handled by the Argentine embassy in India until now.