

US, Bangladesh hold talks on defence co-op

US delegation meets foreign secy; Washington keen to sign 2 defence deals with Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Washington yesterday discussed boosting defence cooperation, maritime security and strengthening the capacities of law enforcement agencies.

The issues came up during a meeting between a US delegation, led by US National Security Council's Senior Director for South Asia Rear Admiral Eileen Laubacher, and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen at the state guesthouse Padma yesterday.

The US has been eager to sign two defence agreements with Bangladesh as Bangladesh wants to modernise the military by 2030.

The agreements are General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which the officials termed foundational agreements meant to strengthen the defence relationship between two countries.

As part of a security plan in the Indo-Pacific region, the US wants to boost maritime security cooperation with the regional countries.

A meeting source said the issue of sanctions imposed by the US on Rab and seven of its former and current officials in December 2021 was not discussed.

"Both sides, however, spoke of exchange of training and capacity building of Rab and other law enforcers," he

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HUDDLING FOR WARMTH ... A group of children huddled together, enjoying the warmth they found in each other and the fire they lit up together on a cold winter's night. The photo was taken recently in the capital's Mohammadpur.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Metro Rail to stop at Pallabi station from January 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pallabi station of metro rail will be operational from January 25. It will be the third station after Diabari and Agargaon to be open to public.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, disclosed the information during a press briefing at the DMTC's Eskaton office yesterday.

Currently, the metro rail runs between Diabari to Agargaon without any stops in between.

Trains will run from 8:30am to 12:30pm, and entries to the stations will be opened at 8:00am and closed at 12:00pm.

Additionally, the authority will try to relax the restriction on the number of passengers from 200 in order to accommodate more commuters.

The official said the decisions were made following the first review

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MONEY LAUNDERING

2 JP MPs slam govt over failure to stop it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Jatiya Party lawmakers came down heavily on the government for its failure to stop money laundering.

JP MP Fakhru Imam said he "feels helpless" when the head of a strong government like Sheikh Hasina "does nothing" to stop money laundering, despite the fact that billions of taka have already left the country.

He made the statement while taking the floor on a point of order during a discussion of unscheduled issues in yesterday's parliament session.

The MP said, "We saw the prime minister show great courage on various special occasions ... she has the strength to fight against [big] powers."

"In the recent past, we saw her speak boldly against those who interfered in the country's internal affairs."

"We like this [boldness]."

The JP lawmaker said the country's economy is passing a transitional phase as its money is being siphoned off.

"An amount equal to two years' budget has already been laundered, so I hope the government will be stern in this regard. I am urging the intervention of the government's head," he added.

Meanwhile, another JP MP Kazi Firoz Rashid complained that there is no exemplary punishment for irregularities in the financial sector.

"We have heard that someone left the country with Tk 158 crore. On the other hand, for a small loan, farmers were arrested. The government should think about this." Also participating in the discussion, another JP MP Pir Fazlur Rahman said former Ducus VP Nurul Haque Nur went to Dubai and met Mendi N Sadafi, an agent of Israeli intelligence agency -- Mossad.

"A picture of Mendi with Nur has gone viral on social media. The news was also published in a newspaper. But Bangladesh has no diplomatic relations with Israel," he added.

He demanded that the home minister investigate this and make a statement at the House in this regard.

NARCO TRADE, DRUG ABUSE

Police high-ups irked over some cops' involvement

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Top police officials have expressed resentment over field-level officials abusing drugs and being involved in the narcotics trade, and warned of stern action against them.

The warning came on Saturday at a crime conference, chaired by Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, on the sidelines of the just concluded Police Week 2023.

"When our members are detained with narcotics, we are ashamed. Some of their dope test results also come back positive," said a high official quoting the IGP.

The IGP then urged all to place utmost importance on ensuring discipline within the force.

Field-level officials, including the deputy inspector generals and superintendents of police, participated in the meeting at the Rajarbagh Police Auditorium.

Sharing the meeting minutes, a highly-placed source said the police chief also spoke about allegations of gambling at fairs held under the banner of the Bangladesh Police Women Welfare Association in different places.

Mamun told the field officials that no such fair can be arranged without approval from the Police Headquarters, he said.

However, the allegation of police officials' involvement in drug abuse and trade is not new.

Till date, at least 212 police personnel of Dhaka Metropolitan

Police were suspended after they tested positive in the dope tests.

The DMP and Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) introduced the test for its members ranked between constable and inspector in early 2020.

The CMP suspended 12 policemen over the last three years.

Contacted, DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq yesterday told The Daily Star, "We have suspended around 212 policemen after their dope test results returned positive."

Regarding the police chief's

"When our members are detained with narcotics, we are ashamed. Some of their dope test results also come back positive."

warning, he said, "The dope test operation is underway and we will not spare anyone involved with drug dealing or addiction."

Abdul Waris, deputy commissioner (headquarters) of CMP, told this newspaper that the dope test results of 14 officials, ranked between constable and sub-inspector, were found to be positive so far.

"Of them, we have already suspended 12 and the process to suspend the other two is underway."

Besides drug abuse, policemen were also arrested and suspended over narcotics possession.

On January 2, 2022, the CMP

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Chinese FM lands in Dhaka for stopover

Momen supposed to make courtesy call

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

China's new Foreign Minister Qin Gang landed in Dhaka at 2:00am today for a two-hour stopover on his way to five African countries.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen was supposed to pay a courtesy call on the Chinese minister at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, foreign ministry officials told our diplomatic correspondent.

"The Chinese foreign minister will have the stopover from 1:00am as the plane carrying him will refuel at the Dhaka airport," a foreign ministry official said.

The time was later revised to 2:00am, foreign ministry officials who were at the airport told The Daily Star.

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ROMAN BUILDINGS Mystery of why they survived so long unravelled

CNN ONLINE



The majestic structures of ancient Rome have survived for millennia -- a testament to the ingenuity of Roman engineers, who perfected the use of concrete.

But how did their construction materials help keep colossal buildings like the Pantheon (which has the world's largest unreinforced dome) and the Colosseum standing for more than 2,000 years?

Roman concrete, in many cases, has proven to be longer-lasting than its modern equivalent, which can deteriorate within decades. Now, scientists behind a new study say they have uncovered the mystery ingredient that allowed the Romans to make their construction material so durable and build elaborate structures in challenging places such as docks, sewers and earthquake zones.

The study team, including researchers from the United States, Italy and Switzerland, analysed 2,000-year-old concrete samples that were taken from a city wall at the archaeological site of Privernum, in central Italy, and are similar in composition to other concrete found throughout the Roman Empire.

They found that white chunks in the concrete, referred to as lime clasts, gave the concrete the ability to heal cracks that formed over time. The white chunks previously had been overlooked as evidence of sloppy mixing or poor-quality raw material.

"For me, it was really difficult to believe that ancient Roman (engineers) would not do a good

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Vehicles impounded and dumped at different times by police are left to rot on the road in front of the capital's Bangshal Police Station. They have also narrowed down the road, restricting vehicular movement to some extent.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company (Pvt.) Ltd.
(A JOINT VENTURE OF BANGLADESH POWER DEVELOPMENT BOARD (BPDB), BANGLADESH AND NTPC LIMITED, INDIA)

INVITATION FOR BID
FOR
Operation & Maintenance Contract of Jetty equipment, Lime stone, Gypsum, Ash & Coal Handling System
of
2X660 MW MSTPP at Rampal, Bagherhat, Bangladesh
(International Competitive Bidding)

IFB No.: BIFPCL/OTM/Site C&M/2023/249 **Date: 10.01.2023**

Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company (Pvt.) Limited (BIFPCL) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders in Single Stage Two Envelopes (Envelope-1: Technical Proposal and Envelope-2: Financial Proposal) for subject package.

Bidding Document shall be available for sale and download from **10.01.2023 (Tuesday), 10:00 Hrs. (BST) to 09.02.2023 (Thursday), 17:00 Hrs. (BST).**

Last date for submission of Bids shall be **06.03.2023 (Monday) upto 11:00 Hrs. (BST)** and Technical Proposal shall be opened at **11:30 Hrs. (BST) on 06.03.2023 (Monday)**. If the Bid opening day is declared as holiday by the Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bid will be opened in the next working day.

Cost of bidding document is BDT 10,000 or USD 100 and shall be payable in the form of Demand Draft or Pay Order or through Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT).

For Qualifying Requirements, Scope of Work, availability of Bidding Document, and other details, please refer to detailed Invitation for Bid available at www.bifpcl.com; www.bpdb.gov.bd; www.ntpc.co.in; and www.cptu.gov.bd or may contact the office of the undersigned. For all other details, may please visit the website www.bifpcl.com.

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