

Bangladesh High Commission Canberra

Press Release

(24 February 2010)

Speaker of Australian Federal Parliament expresses his willingness to work with Bangladesh Parliament to strengthen Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh

Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid Advocate, MP met with Hon Harry Jenkins, MP, Speaker of Australian Federal Parliament this morning in Canberra and had discussion on issues of mutual interests particularly related to the effective functioning of the Parliament. Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh is visiting Australia from 21-27 February 2010 with a delegation comprising Members of Parliament (MPs)-Mr. Noor-E-Alam Chowdhury, MP (AL), Whip, Mr. ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, MP (AL), Chairman of the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Mr. ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan, MP (BNP), Chairman of Standing Committee on Fisheries and Livestock, Mr. Md. Atiur Rahman Atik, MP (AL), Mr. Md. Zillul Hakim, MP (AL) and Mr. Md. Afzal Hossain, MP (AL) as well as other Senior Officials of Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat. H.E. the High Commissioner Lieutenant General Masud Uddin Chowdhury also accompanied the Hon'ble Speaker in the meeting.

The Speaker of the Australian Federal Parliament fondly recalled his visit to Bangladesh in 1993 with a Parliamentary Delegation from Australia when he met the then Opposition Leader of Bangladesh Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He also admired the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and welcomed the robustness and intense political debate in the Parliament of Bangladesh and he expressed his willingness to work with Bangladesh Parliament to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh. Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh also reciprocated his sentiment with deep appreciation for extending cooperation and hospitality to the delegation. He stated that the then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Australia in 1999. He emphasised that relations between the two countries as well as between the two Parliaments would deepen in the years to come for the benefit of both the nations.



Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh with Australian Speaker Hon Harry Jenkins, MP and accompanying Bangladesh MPs

Hon'ble Speaker along with his members of the delegation also observed the question time in the House of Representatives of the Australian Parliament yesterday. There he was introduced by Australian Speaker to the Australian Members of Parliament. Hon Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia came down from his chair and met Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh and other accompanying Members of Parliament in the floor of the house. Later on the day, Hon'ble Speaker went to the Senate of the Australian parliament while the Senate was in session. He was invited by Senator the Hon John Hogg, President of the Senate to be seated beside him at the Senate which was a rare honour shown to Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh.

Earlier Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh met with the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon Stephen Smith, MP at the Parliament House in Canberra where issues of mutual interests were discussed. Hon Smith acknowledged the importance of growing bilateral relations between the two countries. He also recalled that Australia was the first country among the developed countries that recognised Bangladesh right after independence in January 1972. Hon'ble Speaker invited Australian Foreign Minister to visit Bangladesh in April 2010 as he would be attending the SAARC Summit to be held in Thimpu, Bhutan in late April 2010. Mr. Smith expressed that he would try to visit Bangladesh at that time mentioning that he had several meetings with Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Dipu Moni who is keen to have him in Dhaka for a meeting. Hon'ble Speaker also requested Australian Foreign Minister to consider providing fund for the Multi Donor Trust Fund on Climate Change created by the Government of Bangladesh to mitigate the impact of climate change in Bangladesh. The Australian Foreign Minister assured that Australia would look into the matter. Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh also requested Australian Foreign Minister to softening of visa requirements of Bangladeshi students (Vocational and Higher Education Sector) from assessment level 4 to assessment level 3. The Australian Foreign Minister assured to examine the matter.

Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh attended a luncheon meeting hosted by the President of Australia-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group Hon Chris Hayes, MP where other Members of Parliament of Australia, accompanying Bangladesh MPs and the High Commissioner were also present. In the meeting, further cooperation and collaboration between the two Parliaments were discussed. Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh informed the meeting that when he returns to Bangladesh a Parliamentary Friendship Group with Hon'ble Members of Parliament would be formed in the Bangladesh Parliament.

Hon'ble Speaker also met with Hon Bob McMullan, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance of Australia and other Senior Officials of the Australian Federal Parliament. Later in the evening Hon Speaker of Australia and President of the Senate hosted a dinner in honour of the Hon'ble Speaker of Bangladesh and accompanying Members of Parliament.

Hon'ble Speaker and his entourage will be visiting NSW Parliament from 25-26 February 2010 and will meet with Speaker of NSW Parliament and President of Legislative Council of NSW. He will also meet with the Hon'ble Governor of NSW Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO at the Government House in Sydney.
