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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Bangladesh Maintains Commitment to Democracy: US Under Secretary Ambassador Shannon**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P. today (Friday) met with Ambassador Thomas Shannon, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, at the U.S. Department of State.

He congratulated Ambassador Shannon on officially assuming the charge of the office of the Under Secretary of State today. The State Minister was the first visitor to meet Shannon in his new capacity.

Shannon thanked the State Minister and said his maiden visit to Bangladesh in December 2015 was very important and fruitful. He termed it a great way to start his visit to South Asia.

During the discussion that lasted for about 45 minutes, Ambassador Shannon said the U.S. government considered Bangladesh as an important partner of the USA. He said Bangladesh maintained its broad commitment to democracy, which is one of the core values of the U.S. Government. He underscored the necessity of strengthening the bilateral relations to a new height.

The State Minister thanked him for choosing Bangladesh as his first destination in South Asia. He remarked that Bangladesh and the USA enjoyed excellent bilateral relations and it was high time to take it to a higher level. He mentioned about the existing bilateral cooperation in security, trade, counter terrorism, intelligence sharing, etc.

Both of them also discussed other issues of common concerns including the global threat of ISIS, climate change, recent attacks on foreigners and bloggers in Bangladesh. The State Minister briefed the Under Secretary about various initiatives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government to counter these radical forces. He reiterated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 'zero tolerance' stance against all sorts of terrorism and violent extremism.

Both State Minister Alam and Ambassador Shannon underscored the necessity of a close cooperation in different sectors to generate positive perception among the peoples of the two countries and to further cementing the existing friendly relations.

Earlier, the State Minister held a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Ms. Nisha Desai Biswal and discussed various issues of common concerns. Terming the two countries close partners, she also emphasized on enhanced engagements between Dhaka and Washington in the coming days.

The State Minister also met with Mr. Peter Lavoy, Senior Director for South Asian Affairs of the U.S. National Security Council at the White House. He lauded Bangladesh's achievements in various sectors, such as women empowerment, education and her commitment to international peace keeping and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin was present during the meetings.

