

Bangladesh removes 'except Israel' from passport, yet travel ban remains

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Dhaka : Bangladesh has removed the two words "except Israel" from the passport as per government decision to maintain international standard, said Major General Md Ayub Chowdhury, Director General of Department of Immigration and Passport.

From now on, the new electronic passports or e-passports will mention, "This passport is valid for all countries of the world."

However, "It has no link with the country's diplomatic relations with any other country," the DG said.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen also said, removing 'except Israel' in new passport does not mean Bangladesh's position changed.

The Foreign Minister on May 23 said there has been no change in Bangladesh's position towards Israel as it still does not recognise Israel.

The Foreign Minister said the home ministry saw many passports of other countries around six months ago when new passports were ordered for Bangladesh.

Dr Momen mentioned no passport in the world contains such words which is true.

"The changes have been made to maintain global standards," he claimed.

Passport is a national identity and it does not reflect foreign policy, the foreign minister said, according to reports.

Earlier, Deputy Director General for Asia and the Pacific at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gilad Cohen tweeted that Bangladesh has removed travel ban to Israel.

He welcomed the move saying, "Great news! Bangladesh has removed travel ban to Israel. This is a welcome step and I call on the Bangladeshi government to move forward and establish diplomatic ties with Israel so both our peoples could benefit and prosper."

However, Bangladesh has ruled it out, keeping its position unchanged, meaning the travel ban still remains.