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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Bangladesh Ambassador meets 2 more US Congressmen**

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mohammad Ziauddin met with Congressman Eliot Engle (D-NY) who is a Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Congressman Daniel Donovan (R-NY) and discussed a wide range of Bangladesh-US bilateral ties and multifaceted cooperation.

The issues that came up during the separate meetings held in the Capitol Hill include Dhaka's fight against religious extremism and restoration of GSP facility for Bangladesh.

The Ambassador said Dhaka-Washington relations is based on mutual trust and respect and both the countries share same values and objectives. He said Bangladesh and US senior officials meet regularly in the gamut of partnership dialogue, military to military dialogue, TICFA and security dialogue to strengthen and deepen the bilateral cooperation.

On the political front, Ambassador Ziauddin briefed the Congress members on the brutal killing of the Bangladesh's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman in 1975, indemnity to the killers, rehabilitation and rewarding the anti-liberation forces, creation of religion-based political parties, consecutive military rules and recent incidents of arson, killings and violence engineered by the BNP and its key ally Jamaat-i-Islami to destabilize the country.

The Ambassador said the present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has vowed "zero tolerance" against all forms of extremism and terrorism. Bangladesh under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working closely with the USA, neighbors and other friendly countries to eliminate extremism and terrorism from Bangladesh and beyond.

The envoy said that education is the key to ensure social awareness against extremism. The present government is relentlessly working on education and empowerment of women. Ninety percent of four million workers in the RMG industry are women. These women have stepped out of their homes, contributing to poverty alleviation, literacy, and above all weakening extremist network and reinforcing the government's efforts to root out extremism. He said the empowering of women with job opportunities is transforming our society into a progressive one, which is a panacea of getting rid of radicalization.

On bilateral trade, the Ambassador apprised the Congress members that Bangladesh does not enjoy any trade preference from the US government while the US Preferential treatments given to its trans-pacific partners shall undermine the competitiveness of Bangladeshi products in the American market.

He said Bangladesh apparels are subjected to high tariff in the USA as opposed to zero tariffs to almost all other developed countries in the world. This predicts a dire consequence for the export of Bangladeshi RMG to the US with devastating impact on Bangladesh's apparel industry, women empowerment, poverty alleviation and above all, the country's war against extremism and terrorism.

To strengthen Bangladesh's ongoing fight against religious extremism, the Ambassador said, the US government should restore the GSP facility and grant duty-free access of Bangladeshi products, particularly RMG, to the US market.

Taking careful note of the deliberations by the Ambassador, Ranking Member Eliot Engle, a high profile Democrat Congressman, said that his door is always open for the Ambassador to discuss any issue of mutual interests. Earlier, Congressman Daniel Donovan, who is also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, thanked the Ambassador for the briefing on Bangladesh. Political Counselor Nayem Uddin Ahmed were present in the meeting.





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