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PRESS RELEASE

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Ambassador Ziauddin meets US Congressman Jeffries

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mohammad Ziauddin met with Congressman Hakeem S. Jeffries on Thursday (25 August) in New York and briefed him on excellent Bangladesh-US bilateral relations as well as priorities of the current government of Bangladesh.

Congressman Jeffries is a member of Congressional Bangladesh Caucus. As a Democrat, he represents the diverse Eighth Congressional District of New York, an area that encompasses large parts of Brooklyn and a section of Queens. Congressman Jeffries is also a member of the House Judiciary Committee, House Education and the Workforce Committee and Whip of the Congressional Black Caucus.

During the meeting, the Ambassador briefed the Congressman on mutual cooperation between Bangladesh and the USA in countering terrorism and violent extremism through intelligence sharing and capacity building. He told the Congressman about Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "zero tolerance" against all forms of terrorism and violent extremism.

In this context, the Ambassador briefed him about the brutal killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and members of his family in 1975, the continuous struggle of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to fulfill her father's dream, numerous assassination attempts on her own life till today which has made her a strong crusader against all forms of extremism and terrorism.

The Ambassador also highlighted development priorities of the present government of Bangladesh, including women empowerment, education, trade and investment. He said the government has introduced modern education curriculum for the madrasa students so that they can adapt with the mainstream society and thus get rid of the religious extremism.

The previous madrasa curriculum was focused on religion based education for which the madrasa students lagged behind the mainstream students and could not compete in the job market. Therefore, they were easy prey for recruitment by various terrorist groups.

The Ambassador said 90 percent of more than four million workers in the RMG industry are women who are contributing to their household affairs leading to poverty alleviation. This also helps in eliminating child labour and getting them back to school as well as influencing over men folks not to get involved in extremism. Thus, the women are transforming the society into a progressive one and thereby helping the country get rid of violent extremism, the Ambassador noted.

He also sought US support in getting duty free quota free (DFQF) access of Bangladeshi products as well as products of all least developed countries (LDC) to the US market. Currently, 34 LDCs out of 48, are getting DFQF facility from the US, whereas the European Union is providing the same facility to all the LDCs.

Congressman Jeffries appreciated Ambassador Ziauddin's briefing on Bangladesh. He observed that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's brutal past was 'very traumatic' and an 'extraordinary story'. He said that Bangladesh is particularly important to him as well as to the USA since there is a significant Bangladeshi community living in New York, who are gentle, hard-working and very spiritual. He assured the Ambassador that he would certainly do his own part to contribute to the excellent bilateral relations of the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Md. Shameem Ahsan, Bangladesh Consul General in New York, Mr. Toufique Hasan, Counsellor (Political) of the Embassy and Ms. Tasia Jackson, District Director of Congressman Jeffries.



Ambassador Ziauddin with Congressman Hakeem S. Jeffries in New York