

Phone: (202) 244-5071
Fax : (202) 244-2771/7830
E-mail: press.bew@gmail.com
Website : www.bdembassyusa.org



EMBASSY OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
3510 International Drive, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

PRESS RELEASE

Date : 14 March 2016

Bangladesh Ambassador meets Congressman Mike Kelly

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mohammad Ziauddin met with Congressman Mike Kelly (R-Pennsylvania) in Washington, DC on Monday and briefed him on various development activities of Bangladesh. Mr. Kelly is the Member of the House Ways and Means Committee dealing with tax, trade and economic growth policies.

The Ambassador briefed the Congressman on the existing strong bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the USA. He mentioned about the mutual cooperation in countering terrorism and extremism and said Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who herself is a victim of terrorist acts, is a strong believer of zero tolerance to terrorism and violent extremism. In 1975, Bangladesh's founding father and incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated along with 18 members of his family.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also survived as many as 19 assassination attempts on her life. Having such a brutal past, she possesses inherent hatred against all forms of extremism and terrorism. The Ambassador further informed that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh is working closely with its neighbors and the United States for eliminating extremism and terrorism from South Asia.

The Ambassador told the Congressman that the present government attaches high priority to women empowerment and education including modern madrasa education. He said 90 percent of four million workers in the RMG industry are women who have stepped out of their homes and are contributing to poverty alleviation, literacy, and above all weakening extremism and reinforcing the government efforts to eliminate extremism and terrorism. Women are transforming our society into a progressive one and it is a solution for ridding the country of all forms of radicalization, he said.

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Ambassador Ziauddin said although Bangladesh, the current LDC Chair, is the largest apparel exporter to the USA, it along with other Asian LDCs do not get Duty Free Quota Free access of their products to the US market. However, all the 34 African LDCs under a group called 'AGOA' (African Growth and Opportunity Act) are enjoying this facility. The Ambassador urged that the US, on the basis of justice and equal treatment, should consider all LDCs to get DFQF access, especially when the EU is providing DFQF access to all 48 LDCs. The Ambassador also pointed out that the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) may cast negative impact on the Asian LDCs.

Congressman Kelly appreciated the Ambassador's initiatives of briefing him on many issues including DFQF issue. He praised the dynamic and robust economy of Bangladesh. He said he would consider the DFQF issue positively. He emphasized on opening a line of communication to exchange further information in this regard. The Ambassador thanked the Congressman for sparing his time for the meeting. The Ambassador was accompanied by Mr. Toufique Hasan, Counselor (Political) during the meeting.

