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Dhaka closely working with Washington to root out violent extremism

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mohammad Ziauddin has said Dhaka is closely working with Washington, neighbors and other friendly nations to eliminate extremism and terrorism as the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed 'zero tolerance' against all forms of terrorism and violent extremism.

The Ambassador made the remarks during separate meetings with Congressman Lee Zeldin (R-NY) who is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE), a member of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Ways and Means.

During the meetings held at the Capitol Hill they discussed wide range issues of mutual interests with particular reference to the restoration of GSP for Bangladesh.

He said Bangladesh-US relation is based on mutual trust and respect and both shares the same values and objectives.

Ambassador Ziauddin said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself is a victim of terrorist acts and lost her father and 18 members of the family in 1975. Due to her own tragic experience she has a firm resolve against extremism and terrorism.

He said Bangladesh shares the same principle as the U.S. on ISIS and seriously condemns its heinous acts of terrorism.

Ziauddin briefed the Congressmen on the brutal killing of the founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, indemnity to the self-confessed killers, rehabilitation and rewarding the anti-liberation forces, creation of religion-based political parties, consecutive military rules and the recent arson, killings and violence orchestrated by the BNP and Jamaat-i-Islami alliance.

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He informed that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is relentlessly working on education and women empowerment. Under her leadership, women were recruited in the Bangladesh Armed Forces and subsequently sent to the UN Peace Keeping Operations.

The Ambassador said most of the workers in the RMG industry are women. These women have stepped out of their homes, contributing to poverty alleviation, literacy, and above all weakening the extremist network, and thereby reinforcing the government's efforts to eliminate extremism and terrorism.

He noted that women are transforming our society into a progressive one, which is a panacea for ridding Bangladesh of radicalization.

On the bilateral trade, the envoy mentioned that Bangladesh does not enjoy any trade preference from the US while U.S. Preferential treatments to the trans-pacific partners shall chip away the competitiveness of Bangladeshi products in the US market.

He said Bangladesh apparels are subjected to high tariff in the US as opposed to zero tariffs to almost all other developed countries in the world. This would adversely impact the export of Bangladeshi RMG to the US market, women empowerment, poverty alleviation and above all, country's war against extremism and terrorism.

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

Taking careful note of the briefings by the Ambassador, Congressman Adrian Smith said that he would look into the issues. Congressman Lee Zeldin, who is also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee thanked the Ambassador for the briefing on Bangladesh. Political Counselor Nayem Uddin Ahmed of the Embassy accompanied the Ambassador.

