Press Release

Date: 29 March 2016

Dhaka-Washington pledge to work together against violent extremism & radicalism

Bangladesh and the United States Tuesday renewed their pledge to work together to fight violent extremism and counter radicalism to protect people, homeland and advance democracy.

'We will be there in the ongoing fight against violent extremism and terrorism, which threaten Bangladesh, the United States, and many other societies that cherish human freedom,' Nisha Desai Biswal, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, said at the Independence and National Day Reception at Bangabandhu Auditorium in Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin who hosted the reception said a challenge to Bangladesh's development and democratic-secular way of life is the act of terrorism and the culture of impunity of the defeated anti-liberation communal forces.

The Ambassador said the heinous activities of the evil forces have recently been contained and legal arrangements have been put in place to try and punish the war criminals of 1971. He urged the international community to support Bangladesh's cause for justice.

'It is a well-known fact that justice and only justice alone can heal the wounds of our liberation war and bring lasting peace in Bangladesh,' he said.

The Ambassador said ongoing collaboration between Bangladesh and the USA in combatting terrorism is very strong, and Bangladesh is determined to restore and strengthen its secular and inclusive social fabric.

In her remarks Nisha Desai said 'we're facing challenges of extremism and terrorism’ and both Dhaka and Washington are increasingly working together, sharing information for countering radicalism to protect our people, our homeland and advance our democracy.

She praised Bangladesh's success in reducing poverty, enhancing food security and ensuring maternal health as well as contributing to global economy and international peace. She also lauded the role of NGOs and private sector for the impressive development in Bangladesh.

Contd P/2
Referring to Bangladesh’s important geo-strategic location between South Asia and South East Asia, Nisha said Bangladesh and the US are working together to enhance bilateral trade.

‘The United States is a proud partner of Bangladesh in many of these successes,’ she said, adding USAID mission in Dhaka invests nearly US$ 200 million every year to help Bangladeshis live healthier, more productive lives. She said every year Americans purchase more than 5 billion dollars’ worth of goods made in Bangladesh.

‘The American people have long been with Bangladesh. And, today, I am here to underscore that we will remain by your side,’ she remarked.

Mentioning that the people and the civil society are vibrant in Bangladesh, Nisha said ‘we will be there in support of the rights of every citizen to speak openly, practice their faiths freely, assemble peacefully, and vote in honest and fair elections, because democracy lives in the DNA of both our peoples.’

The US Assistant Secretary of State said ‘the coming decades will present us with new challenges of growing complexity, requiring that we find novel approaches and solutions.’

Ambassador Ziauddin said Bangladesh participates in President Barack Obama’s four initiatives which include health, food security and climate change. ‘In these and other areas, our present government is firmly committed to working closely with the United States.’

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has also taken personal interest to work with President Obama on ‘the Equal Futures Partnership Initiative’ which pledges a world of equal opportunities for women in all human activities.

The reception was largely attended by foreign diplomats, senior officials of the state department, former US ambassadors to Bangladesh, politicians, members of academia and civil society, senior journalists, artists, high civil and military officers and members of the Bangladesh community.

Two local cultural groups - Dhrupad and Bornomala- performed a few dance items and songs at the Reception.

An impressive display of modern art by celebrated artists, Kalidas Karmakar and Mustafa T Arshad was in place in the auditorium. The exhibition will continue till March 31.