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PRESS RELEASE

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Military dictators rehabilitate Bangabandhu's killers: Amb Ziauddin tells Woodrow Wilson Center

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mohammad Ziauddin met Congresswoman Jane Harman, Director, President and CEO of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a world reputed Think Tank in Washington DC, today.

Ambassador Ziauddin and Wilson Center President Jane Harman discussed various development achievements of Bangladesh, women empowerment, human rights, counter-terrorism, trade, DFQF issue etc.

The Ambassador said that the people of Bangladesh are secular and traditionally people from all religions live in peace and harmony. In this connection, he informed that the present government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed zero tolerance against any form of extremism and terrorism. Bangladesh is working closely with its neighbors, the United States and other friendly countries to eliminate terrorism and extremism.

Ambassador Ziauddin stated the genesis of Bangladesh Awami League as a political party created by the mass people vis-a-vis the other political parties created under the patronization of the military rulers after the brutal killing of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. The post '75 military dictators systematically provided impunity to the killers of the Father of the Nation and deliberately reinstated the religious fanatics and anti-liberation forces in politics. The Ambassador briefed her about Bangladesh Government's initiatives about repatriation of the killers of the Father of the Nation from the USA.

On the DFQF issue, Ambassador Ziauddin told her that Bangladesh along with other Asian and Oceanic Least Developed Countries (LDCs), does not get Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) access in the US market, whereas the 34 African LDCs under AGOA Group are enjoying the trade facility.

Therefore, a section of LDCs are deprived of getting the equal access to the US market. The Ambassador stressed that the US should allow all LDCs to get DFQF access on the basis of justice and fair play. He also mentioned that the European Union is providing DFQF access to all 48 LDCs at present on EBA. Therefore, Bangladesh, as the current Chair of LDCs, sought US support to the DFQF issue.

Ambassador Ziauddin highlighted many development priorities of the present government of Bangladesh, including women empowerment. He said that about four million workers in the RMG industry are women who are contributing to poverty alleviation, literacy, stopping child labour and above all containing extremism by influencing the men folks. He said that

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women are transforming the society into a progressive one, and it is a solution for eliminating all forms of terrorism and extremism from the country. The Ambassador observed if Bangladesh gets the DFQF access to the US market, there will be more garments factories in Bangladesh employing more women. This will curb the threat of extremism and terrorism in Bangladesh.

Wilson Center President Jane Harman appreciated Ambassador Ziauddin for briefing her on various issues of Bangladesh. She praised Bangladesh as a Muslim moderate country. She was overwhelmed by the success story of women empowerment in Bangladesh led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and wished to invite the Prime Minister to an event in Washington, DC.

She also wanted to know about the latest development in the RMG sector after the Rana Plaza incident. The Ambassador briefed her about various government initiatives with Accord, Alliance and ILO. Michael Kugelman, Senior Associate for South and South East Asia of the Wilson Center and Toufique Hasan, Counsellor (Political) of the Embassy were present during the meeting.

