

**National Jute Day 2018 & Diversified Jute Fair
Opening Ceremony**

Speech by

Sheikh Hasina

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

BICC, Dhaka. Tuesday, 22 Falgoon 1424, 06 March 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Representatives from different Organizations,
Distinguished Jute growers, entrepreneurs and
Ladies & Gentlemen.

Assallamu Alaikum.

I welcome you all at the inaugural ceremony of National Jute Day and Diversified Jute Fair 2018.

The National Jute Day is being held in the country for the 2nd time for promotion of jute sector. I would like to greet all concerned linked to jute cultivation, production of jute goods, marketing and users of jute on the occasion.

March is the month of our liberation. I pay may homage to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall the four national leaders, three million martyrs and two hundred thousand women of lost their innocence in the war of liberation. I also pay my respect to the martyrs of all democratic movements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 6th March has been declared as National Jute Day to expedite the economic development by exploring the potential of Golden Fibre Jute of Bangladesh. Jute plays an important role in our economy and protection of environment. Jute is an inevitable part of our culture and heritage.

You all know that jute sector was the major export earner of the then Pakistan. 90% of export earnings also came from jute sector in the era of immediate post-independent Bangladesh. I believe that the jute sector has still the enormous economic potentiality.

We produce the best quality of jute in the world. We are 2nd largest jute producing and first in exporting raw jute in the world.

Jute played a significant role in our liberation movement. In the six point declaration, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman mentioned about the contribution of earnings from the jute in the context of economic disparity between East and West Pakistan.

It was an important issue in the campaign of Awami League in the 1970's general election. We mentioned the revitalization and modernization of jute sector in our election manifesto.

Historically, Bangladesh is well known as the country of 'golden fibre. Due to invention and increased use of artificial fiber, demand and use of jute has been reduced at home and abroad. To attain food sufficiency farmers also have paid more attention to grow paddy instead of producing jute. Considering the present situation environment friendly jute fiber has regained its huge prospect and potentiality.

Respected guests,

Panoramic view of jute field is attached to our childhood memory. In that time our basic need was fulfilled from jute earnings. Now-a-days young generation is not aware of our golden heritage of jute. It is needed to aware them, especially the students, about the prospect and possibility of jute. My expectation is that the respected teachers, guardians and concerned people will play vital role to know our future generation about our own heritage and culture.

It is very unfortunate that golden fiber of jute has not been given proper attention due to absence of farsightedness by the post-1975 regimes of Bangladesh. You all know that BNP-Jamaat coalition government closed down the largest jute mills- Adamjee in 2002. As a result Jute sector has thrown out in a dilapidated condition. Some 25 thousand workers and employees became jobless.

After assuming office the present government has taken initiative to restart the closed jute mills with a view to restore our heritage of jute. We have already reopened five jute mills. As a result about 10 thousand job opportunities have been created. Mandatory packaging of jute for 17 commodities has been enacted which created environment friendly use of jute in local markets.

As a result better working environment has evolved in the public and private jute mills. We gave much emphasis on the diversification of jute products. In these connections a number of initiatives has been taken by Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC).

The world leaders committed to saving the environment. As a result the demand of jute has increased as it is perishable and environmental friendly. The role of Bangladesh on protection of environment has highly been appreciated. Bangladesh endorsed the Paris agreement. We are implementing a number of programmes as a responsibility to world environment.

We can render great contribution to the world in environment protection movement by increasing jute cultivation and use of jute.

Dear Guests,

Considering the industry sector, jute is one of the biggest sectors in Bangladesh. We are earning about 10 thousand crore taka foreign currency by exporting raw jute, traditional jute product and diversified jute goods which is 3.86% of our export income. About 4 crore people are involved directly or indirectly in the process of jute cultivation, jute production sells and exports. thirty lakhs farmer are directly involved in jute cultivation, two lakh workers and employees are engaged in jute industry, around one lakh people involved in jute business. Moreover, a lot of people are engaged in jute transportation and other jute related activities. If we can explore the potentials of jute, we can increase our export income a lot.

Ladies and Gentleman,

We want to proceed by conserving our heritage. We have to work for expansion of jute in the world market. In this connection regular research and innovation is necessary both in public and private sector.

Our researchers are working for improved and diversified use of jute. In future, necessary support will be provided for wide range of research. In this connection, we can remember our renowned scientist Dr. Maksudul Alam. Under his leadership, the Genome of jute was discovered. Due to his contribution, a new era of jute cultivation has been created.

We are already producing 'Sonali Bag' from jute fiber and drinks like 'readymade tea' from jute leaves.

The jute mills should be made profitable. The jute growers should be ensured fair prices of their produces. The payment of jute traders must be made timely. If we ensure transparency and accountability, we would be able to regain the lost glory of jute.

I would like to urge all concerned including Jute Ministry, BJMC, BJC, to take effective measure to these effects.

Dear audience,

In 2016-17, Bangladesh's economy posted a GDP growth rate of 7.28%, with a foreign currency reserve of USD over 33 billion, and exports worth USD 34.67 billion. Poverty has been slashed from 57% to 22%. Per capita income rose to US\$ 1610 from a mere US\$ 543 in 2005.

In the current year the country attracted USD 3 billion foreign direct investment.

We have established digital Bangladesh. Bangladesh has entered into 4G era after 3G. Digital center has been set up at each Union. Electricity production capacity has been rose to 16,350 MWs and 90% population brought under electricity coverage. We are going to set up nuclear power plant.

Healthcare services are reached at the doorsteps of the people. Average life expectancy rose to 72.4 years. Work on metro-rail, tunnel under Karnaphuli river, Payra deep sea port, LNG terminal are underway. Bangabandhu Satellite-1 will be launched soon.

We are constructing Padma bridge with our own fund. 100 Special Economic Zones are being established to create 100 million job opportunities.

We should proceed in implementing SDGs. We are committed to improving the living standard of the people of Bangladesh by optimum use of our resources.

We believe that through cooperation between public and private sector, it is possible to expedite our development. We are working on it and we expect your support.

Bangladesh is a country of huge potential. To become a strong and dynamic country it has all sorts of capabilities and proper environment.

Our target is to make a hunger free, poverty free, peaceful and developed Bangladesh. We want to move forward with all of you.

We have a vision to make ourselves as a middle income country by 2021 and wish to find ourselves as a developed country by 2041 and eventually materialize the dream of our Father of the Nations for our future generation.

I would like to extend my wish for accelerating the development process through our journey with jute which is called 'Golden Fiber'.

With these few words, I declare the 'National Jute Day' and diversified Jute Products Fair. Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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