

**Dinner hosted by Hon. Park Jin, Chairman,  
Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification**

Remarks by

H.E Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

National Assembly, Seoul, Korea, Monday, 17 May 2010

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Hon'ble Park Jin, Chairman on Foreign Affairs,  
Trade and Unification;  
Distinguished Members,  
National Assembly of the Republic of Korea;  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to you all.

I thank you, Chairman Park Jin, most sincerely for your cordial and gracious words addressed to me and to the members of my delegation. I am greatly pleased to meet you and the distinguished leaders of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

Chairman Park Jin, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Both our countries have made painful sacrifices for freedom and democracy. But, in one generation your great country has also achieved economic emancipation.

Bangladesh achieved independence after a bloody struggle in 1971 under the leadership of my father and the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Before he could entrench democracy and emancipate our people from economic deprivation, he was assassinated with 18 members of our family on August 15, 1975. My younger sister, Rehana, and I were saved as we were abroad at the time. It was on 17 May, 1981 when I could come home with the popular support of the people.

Thereafter, my life was a bitter struggle against military autocracy in pursuit of democracy. I escaped 19 attempts on my life, including a grenade attack on 21st August in 2004 that left 22 dead and nearly 500 people injured. My struggle continued, and for a time I again was exiled abroad. Again it was people's support that enabled me to return home. A free and fair election was held on 29 December 2008 under the supervision of international observers, restoring democracy in Bangladesh. Our Grand Alliance won with an overwhelming majority in the Parliament, and I was elected as Prime Minister.

To strengthen democracy, we have for the first time established all 44 parliamentary standing committees, offering chairmanship of seven to other parties. I have reintroduced the Prime Minister's weekly question hour, so long shelved by the past government. The establishment of Korea-Bangladesh Parliamentarian's Friendship Association has also added to the strength of our democracy. I thank Hon'ble Kim Choong-Whan for his visit to Bangladesh early this year. On my return, I shall request our Hon'ble Speaker to establish a similar association in Bangladesh to interact with the Korean counterpart.

Indeed, Bangladesh attaches great importance to our relations with the Republic of Korea. Given the rapid growth and expansion of our trade, investment, people to people contact, we would like to elevate our relations to the level of Comprehensive Partnership. I would seek your committee's support in deepening our friendship in the coming days. Let us be partners in promoting democracy globally.

Hon'ble Chairman,

I thank you once again for your warm hospitality. I invite you and your colleagues in the National Assembly to visit Bangladesh at a time of your convenience. I also wish you and all present here good health, long life and happiness, and to the Republic of Korea, peace, progress and prosperity.

Khoda Hafez.

Khoda Hafez

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever

Long Live Bangladesh-Korea Friendship.

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