

International Conference on TVET for Sustainable Development Inaugural Session

Address By

HE Sheikh Hasina

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh

Osmani Memorial Hall, Dhaka, Thursday, 17 Boishakh 1422, 30 April 2015

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Chair,
Distinguished guest, foreign delegates and participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.

I welcome you all at the inaugural ceremony of the 3-day International Conference on TVET for Sustainable Development jointly organized by Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) and Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC), Manila.

I congratulate all concerned for organising this time-befitting conference. I especially welcome the foreign friends and hope that your stay here will be enjoyable.

The rapid development of scientific and technological advancement is bringing dramatic socio-economic progress within states. As a result, an opportunity has been created to reduce the gaps among the countries.

Our aim is to reduce poverty and accelerate the standard of living of common people utilising science and technology. At the same time we have to remain vigil to ensure maximum and sustainable utilisation of our resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is one of the densely populated countries in the world. Ensuring basic needs, including food, clothes and shelters, for 160 million people is a challenging task. Sustainable utilization of our resources is essential for a lasting development.

Every year nearly 0.1 million hectares of arable land go out of farming due to construction of houses, roads and other establishments in a unplanned way. We have to take immediate measures to prevent unplanned urbanisation.

I believe that nothing is more important than skilled human resources. We, therefore, are implementing huge programs to turn our manpower into human resources through imparting them science and technology-based education. However, it is not possible to accomplish such task with the government efforts alone. Rather, private entrepreneurs should come forward to supplement the government efforts.

If we are able to turn the huge manpower into human resources, they will be our great asset. The government is implementing various plans and programs to this effect.

The greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken initiative to establish two polytechnic institutes in 1954 when he was the minister for industry and commerce. Due to his initiative, the then East Pakistan Polytechnic Institutes (Dhaka Polytechnic Institute) was established.

Whenever Bangladesh Awami League got the opportunity to run the country, special emphasis was given on science and technology-based education. During the last six years, we

have established nearly 400 polytechnic institutions at government and private level, including three women polytechnic institutes. Mid-level engineers are being produced from these institutions.

Our government was the first to introduce SSC (Vocational) course in 1800 non-government schools. Second shift has been introduced in 51 government polytechnic institutes. Besides, process is on to launch 25 polytechnic institutions, including three for women.

The government has decided to expand vocational education through establishing one technical school in each upazila.

Measures have been taken to produce skilled manpower through thirty seven technical training centers and imparting training to the foreign-bound workers. Thirty more technical training centers are awaiting launching.

We have turned Dhaka Textile Collage into a University. Six textile institutions were modernized. One science and technology university has already been established in each old district.

We have adopted National Skill Development Policy with the help of European Union and ILO. Under the policy, national skill development council action plan is being implemented. The program has already achieved huge success.

We have launched five thousand 675 digital centers across the country to turn Bangladesh into a digital country. People are getting some 200 services from these centers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the last six years, over 15 million people have been employed at government and private level. Some nine million people have been working abroad.

We are sending manpower to Malaysia and middle-east at lower cost. Steps have been taken to create entrepreneurs through providing credit at lower interest.

Our economy is on firm footing despite global economic melt-down. Macro-economic indicators are moving in positive trends. The foreign exchange reserve rose to USD 23 billion. Bangladesh has become a role-model of development in the global arena.

Our electricity production capacity increased to 13 thousand 275 megawatt. Four more power plants with a capacity of 315 megawatt are going to be added within few days. We are providing health care services to our rural people through nearly 16 thousand community clinics and union health centers. Thirty different types of medicine are given to the poor patients at free of cost. The number of hospital beds has been increased mini-folds.

Now our per capita income is USD 1,190. Poverty has been reduced below 24%. We distributed about 2.45 billion text books at free of costs among the students up to secondary level during the last 6 years.

Dear Diploma Engineers,

You are responsible for implementing development works at field level. Nearly 85% development works are implemented through you. The quality of works and proper utilization of public resources depend on your skill, sincerity and honesty.

If the development works are not properly implemented, it is not only a national loss, but also may invite human disaster. South and South-Asian countries are highly natural disaster-prone. Recently, the devastating earthquake in Nepal caused huge human and property losses. I came to know that cracks have been developed in a number of buildings in our country also.

To ensure the quality of works is responsibility of those who work at field level. You must not compromise with the quality.

Bangladesh will be a middle income country before 2021, Insha-Allah. Our aim is to turn the country into a developed one by the year 2041.

The field level workers are mainly responsible to achieve this goal. Let us come and work together to establish Bangladesh as a developed and progressive country in the comity of nations.

With these few words, I declare the conference open. Thank you all again.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.