

26th Annual Conference
Association of Thoracic & Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia
Inaugural Session

Speech by

HE Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The chair,
Dear colleagues,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good afternoon to you all.

I welcome you all from home and abroad at the 26th Annual Conference of the Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia here in the historic city of Dhaka.

Of late, the number of cardiac patients in our country has shot up alarmingly. Non-communicable diseases have taken the place of communicable diseases with respect to the causes of deaths. Among those, cardiac diseases have become the most dreadful.

Under such circumstances, this conference bears an utmost importance. I would like to congratulate the organizers as well as the experts attending from home and abroad. I also hope that the expert surgeons will exchange and share their knowledge and experience, and apply those for the treatment of patients in their respective countries.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Our Constitution guarantees five basic rights of human being. Health care is one of them.

The greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Raham had laid due importance on health care in reconstruction of the war-ravaged country soon after the independence. He expanded healthcare infrastructure upto thana level for building a people-oriented health care facilities. He also so upgraded the status of the physicians to the first class.

Following the philosophy of Bangabandhu, our government has been implementing massive programmes to reach the healthcare facilities to the doorsteps of the people during the last 7 and a half years.

We have enacted Health policy 2011 and Population policy 2012. At the local level, we have built a three-tier health infrastructure viz village, union and upazila. The people of grassroots level are now getting healthcare facilities with free of cost or minimal costs.

So far, we have established 16,438 Community Clinics and Union Health Centres. Some 30 different types medicines are supplied to the patients at free of costs. Healthcare advices are also being provided through mobile phones from hospitals of district and upazila levels apart from providing tele-medicine.

During the last 7 and a half years, 16 government and 5 army Medical Colleges were established in the country. Some 10 thousand 660 beds have been added in the government hospitals across the country. Nearly 350 new medical educational institutions at government and non-government initiatives have been set up. Some 12 thousand 806 seats have been added to medical education at various levels.

We have so far appointed 12 thousand 728 Assistant Surgeons and 118 Dental Surgeons. So far 5 thousand nurses have been appointed and process of appointing 10 thousand more nurses is at the final stage. Process of appointing 3 thousand mid-wife is also at final stage. The status of nurses is upgraded to the second class.

Bangladesh has formally received polio-free certificate in 2014. Bone marrow transplant unit has been set up at Dhaka Medical College Hospital to treat blood cancer and thalassemia diseases. A separate modern burn institute has been established at Dhaka Medical College hospital and burn units also set up at major hospitals in the country.

We have also set up 500-bed Kurmitola General Hospital and another 500-bed hospital at Mugda. In Khulna, Shaheed Sheikh Abu Naser Specialised Hospital and National Institute of Digestive Diseases Research Hospital was set up in 2014-15. The National Cancer Institute has been expanded to 300 beds. Besides, we have set up 250-bed National Eye Research Institute and Hospital. A 150-bed hospital for the government employees and National ENT Institute are also established.

Under the initiative of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust, a 250-bed Sheikh Fazilatun Nessa Memorial Hospital and Nursing College was established.

To increase the quality of medical education and conduct high quality research, we took initiative to establish medical university in the country 1996. As part of plan, we have turned the then PG hospital into Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. A vested quarter had opposed vehemently to set up this university. But today, people of the country are enjoying the facilities. The number of beds of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University has been increased to 1500 from 700. We are planning to establish two more medical universities in Rajshahi and Chittagong.

We have undertaken a survey to identify children with autism. Bangladesh was given UN MDG award in 2010 for reducing child mortality rate.

Due to our all these measures, the average life expectancy of the people of Bangladesh has risen to 71.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh achieved tremendous success in cardiovascular surgery in last 3 decades. Open-heart surgery was first conducted in 1981 in Bangladesh. The number of cardiovascular operations carried out in the country in 1997 was about 500 while in 2015 some 10 thousand operations were carried out in 22 different hospitals. It proves that our skill and quality of services have been increased substantially. In the past, many people used to go to abroad to avail medical treatment but now the number have decreased.

At present, cardiovascular surgery is being done only in National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Chittagong Medical College and Hospital. Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital and Shaheed Sheikh Abu Naser Hospital in Khulna are going to start the hear-related surgical operation shortly.

But the death rate in cardiovascular diseases will not be reduced only by increasing the medical facilities. We have to carry out research on why so many people are affecting in cardiovascular diseases and how we can remain immune from the diseases.

I would like to urge you all to put special emphasis on research apart from providing medical treatment. Moreover, you have to take initiatives to make people aware on measures to prevent cardiovascular diseases. For this, you have to carry out campaign more through mass-media.

Dear Physicians,

Medical treatment is not only a profession but also a great commitment. You have become specialists by dint of your hard work and talent. The mentality to provide services will have to be prepared within you. You have to serve every patient as your family member.

We have been ensuring all facilities for higher education. We are building specialized hospitals one after another. You should earn knowledge availing all these facilities and serve the people best- this is my expectation.

I think, only medical treatment is not good enough for the people but confidence on the services has to be created so that people are not got interested to go to abroad.

We have been working to make Bangladesh a hunger, poverty and illiteracy-free middle-income country by 2021. We are going to build a country where people will not suffer from diseases and enjoy all basic rights. The physicians will have to play a vital role to achieve the goal. I hope that you will perform your duties properly.

With these few words, I declare the 26th Annual Conference of Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia open.

Thank you all again.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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