

**Inauguration ceremony of 4000th Para Kendra (Village Centre) in
Chittagong Hill Tracts Region**

Address by

Sheikh Hasina

Honourable Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka. Sunday, 8 Magh, 1424, 21 January 2018, Time 10.00 A.M

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

The Chair

Dear Colleagues

Leaders of the CHT

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu alaikum and a very good morning.

I welcome you all in the inaugural ceremony of 4000th para centre of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Para centres (village centres) reach the milestone of 4000, which is a special effort of Government of Bangladesh to ensure fundamental social services of children and women of CHT region. At the beginning I remember with deep respect, the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I also remember four national leaders, 30 lakh martyrs, 2 lakh women, who lost their innocence, in the war of liberation.

The father of the nation Bangabandhu visited Chittagong Hill Tracts for 3 times after liberation during his tenure of three and half years. The father of the nation realised that the total development of Bangladesh is not possible, ignoring the indigenous people of Bangladesh. The then Pakistan Government did not ratify the ILO convention of 1957 related to the rights of indigenous people. Bangabandhu ratify the ILO convention in 1972 immediately after independence.

The Government of Bangabandhu introduced honorium of Circle chief and Headman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Tk 1000 and 100 respectively for the first time. Bangabandhu directed to create a separate board for the development of Chittagong Hill Tracts. In 1973 Bangabandhu also gave instruction to reserve specific seats for the tribal students in the colleges, universities and technical institutions. Bangabandhu send indigenous students for higher education on Agriculture, Medical education and Engineering in India, the then USSR and East European Countries.

Post 1975, non democratic Government created divisions among bangalies and tribal peoples instead of social stability in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Military Ruler Ziaur Rahman fueled the problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts considering it not as political but economical because of their wrong policies. Ziaur Rahman introduced longterm bloody conflicts with bengali settlement by force. Ziaur Rahman established Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board by Ordinance No. 77 in 20th October 1976. In 1976 Shanti Bahini engaged in armed conflict against Government of Bangladesh due to wrong policies of Zia Which continued for two decades.

I declared the problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts as political after formation of Awami league Government in 1996. We paid attention to solve this conflict through discussion. With the continuation, the Peace Accord was signed on December 2, 1997 between the Government of Bangladesh and Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS). This historic peace

accord was signed without involvement of any third party. It is an exceptional event in the world history.

On 3rd December 1997, immediately after signing the peace accord, Leader of BNP showed reaction in a press conference that country had abandoned its sovereignty by signing the accord. BNP Leader told that accord was the division and separation. BNP Leader said Bangladesh would be the part of India upto Feni district due to the peace accord. After implementation of peace accord the sound of prayer of Hindu religion will be heard instead of azan from the mosques of Bangladesh.

Bloody conflicts of two decades of Chittagong Hill Tracts ended with the signing of peace accord. Peace and development is established in under privileged and under developed Chittagong Hill Tracts region. Armed members of Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity came to normal life by surrendering their arms to the Government. Government has extended all sorts of assistance to them.

Award of UNESCO's Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize is international recognition of this accord. Our Government is working relentlessly for the development of this region based on peace Accord.

Development activities gained momentum in the region after peace accord.

Remarkable activities are as follows:

- Ministry of CHTA has been established on 15 July 1998 as a part of the implementation of Peace Accord.
- Establishment of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and strengthening of 3 Hill District Councils with the amendment of existing laws.
- Formation of 'Taskforce for repatriation and rehabilitation of tribal refugees returned from India and Identification and Rehabilitation of internally displaced people'.
- Our Government follow the path of the father of the nation for special progress of socio-economic and infrastructure development in this region for the last 2 decades.
- There was no separate budget for 3 Hill District before peace accord.
- Now the Awami league Government allocated Tk 915.83 crore for the fiscal year 2017-18.
- Moreover different ministries are implementing the projects of about Tk 9000 crore in Chittagong Hill Tracts region.
- 17 projects included in current ADP are under implementation.
- 30 subjects/departments have been transferred to Hill district Council. Government repatriated 66212 persons.
- Different projects are implementing for education, health, agriculture and communication for overall economic development.
- Establishment of 1729 Rice Bank for food storage during scarcity and 1551 farmers field schools.
- 315 primary schools have been established in remote hill area.
- Text books for ethnic communities have been published in their own language.
- 77278 text books written in the own language of Chakma, Marma, Tripura and other ethnic communities were distributed in 2017 and 149276 books are distributed in 2018.
- Working jurisdiction and duties of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and Hill District Councils has been increased.
- Honorarium of traditional Leader, Circle Chief, Headman and Karbari has been increased and make their direct involvement in local development process.
- Projects are implementing in all sectors including education, health, electricity, communication, infrastructure, mobile network.
- One Science and Technology University and one Medical College have been established in Rangamati.

- Solar energy facilities have been extended in remote area of Chittagong Hill Tracts, extension of electric line and substations have been established.
- Mobile networks have been established in 3 hill districts.
- Supply of safe drinking water has been increased and projects are under implementation for overall development.
- Initiative has been taken for Resolution of Land Dispute.
- Land Dispute resolution commission has been formed. Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act, 2001 has been amended in 2016 and Land Dispute Resolution Commission (Amendment) Act, 2016 has been published.
- Enactment of Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission Rules under process.
- Our Govt. has been enacted CHT Development Board Act, 2014 to accelerate and organize the activities of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.
- We take different initiatives to keep the natural beauty of CHT for the expansion of tourism industries.
- I have given 1.94 acre of land at Baily Road in Dhaka to the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts as a gift for the construction of CHT Complex and construction work is in progress.
- Hill Districts are not backward now due to our timely steps/initiatives. People of Chittagong Hill Tracts region are equal partner for the journey of overall development of the country.
- We are bound to maintain the peace in everywhere of the country including Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

4000 Village Centre, 3500 Para development committee, 1935 para women development groups have been formed to reach the outcome of development to every house hold of 4811 villages of 375 mouzas of 121 union councils of 26 sub-districts of 3 hill districts. Today is the inaugural ceremony of 4000th Village Centre.

All necessary initiatives will be taken for establishing peace and sustainable development in CHT region by providing facilities like other part of the country. I want to see smiling faces of people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Bangladesh is now a role model in the world. Bangladesh achieved world recognition as emerging economic country due to women empowerment, adopting and mitigation of climate change, expansion of information technology, poverty alleviation, increasing GDP growth rate, progressing social indicators, favorable condition in foreign trade and transactions etc.

We shall make bangladesh as a middle income country by 2021 and developed country by 2041. I declare the opening of 4000th Village Centre for sustainable economic development of Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

Thank You All.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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