

**To Mark the Completion of the
Four years of the second consecutive term of the present government**

Address to the Nation

By

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina

Honourable Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Dhaka, Friday, 29 Poush 1424, 12 January 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Beloved Countrymen,
Assalamu Alaikum.

I took oath as the Prime Minister for the 3rd time on this day in 2014 after being elected with your votes in the last national election. On the 4th anniversary, I have appeared before you to convey my heartfelt gratitude. I have tried heart and soul to uphold your dignity and keep up the trust and confidence that you bestowed upon me. You, the people, would judge to what extent I have been succeeded or failed.

I just want to say that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had liberated this country upholding an ideology and spirit. Bangabandhu led the struggle of independence with a pledge to ensure a better life for the country's people after freeing them from hunger, poverty and illiteracy.

Fulfilling his desire is my one and only pledge. My heart is always resounded with this line of Bangabandhu: "May the people of Bangladesh do get food, clothes and have a better living". So, it has always been my major stride - how I would make the life of the people of Bangladesh more meaningful, well-off and beautiful.

On this day, I pay my deep homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, four national leaders, 30 lakh martyrs and 2 lakh repressed mothers and sisters. I also salute the freedom fighters and also those who had extended cooperation to the freedom fighters.

August 15, 1975 was a disgraceful day for the whole of Bengali nation. The Father of the Nation had got only three and a half years to rebuild this war-ravaged country. When Bangabandhu was rebuilding this war-ravaged and devastated country after upgrading a province to a state alongside moving forward the nation towards socioeconomic development, then came the crucial blow.

I and my younger sister Rehana had lost 18 of my family members, including my beloved father, mother, brothers, sisters-in-law and other close relatives with the bullets fired by the killers.

We, the two sisters, survived as we were abroad, but we could not return home. The illegally power grabbing rulers did not allow us to return home. We had to pass long six years abroad with the heartburn and pain of losing our near and dear ones.

When the Bangladesh Awami League elected me as its president back in 1981, I was then able to return home with the unflinching support of the countrymen overcoming all the hurdles. Then my inhuman life of a refugee came to an end.

After returning home, I concentrated on reorganizing my party at one hand. On the other hand, I tried my level best to hand over the peoples' power to the country's people after retrieving it from the cantonment in a bid to restore the democratic rights of the people.

I had traveled the whole of Bangladesh and also in villages as a commoner and also had undertaken plans on what needs to be done to improve your living conditions.

Whenever I had rushed to you with the pain of losing my near and dear ones, then every time, I had received boundless love, affection and was boosted with self-confidence. After overcoming many hurdles and barriers, we got the chance to serve the countrymen through assuming office in 1996 after long 21 years.

This was for the first time, Awami League then got chance to form the government after August 15, 1975. The people of Bangladesh then got the services of the government. Bangladesh proceeded towards massive development including the development in socioeconomic fronts. The country's immense potentials continued becoming visible gradually.

Implementation of various programmes on housing, education, healthcare, employment, social safety and rendering services to the mentally and physically-challenged people had then created confidence among the people.

But, Awami League was not allowed to assume office again through a deep-rooted conspiracy in the 2001 general election. After that, the countrymen had witnessed political bankruptcy, plundering of funds, the activities of Hawa Bhaban, creation of militancy, emergence of 'Bangla Bhai', killing of thousands of Awami League leaders and workers including two MPs, oppression and killing of the minorities, grabbing of land, houses and business establishments, extortion, money laundering and corruption alongside series bomb blasts at 500 places at a time in 63 districts.

On 21 August, 2004, a total of 22 Awami League leaders and workers were killed in a grisly grenade attack on a rally of Awami League. Grenade attack was also launched on the British high commissioner and beastly tortures were carried out on women across the country. Thus, the whole country had turned into a burning fireball. The country's people were tormented consistently with that agony.

In such a situation, emergency was declared. After suffering miserable pains for seven years, you, the countrymen, gave us the opportunity to serve you by casting votes for 'Boat' in the 2008 election. We are working sincerely for the overall development of the people.

BNP-Jamaat alliance had carried out heinous terrorist activities centering the parliamentary elections of January 5, 2014. They burnt 582 educational institutions on the day of election and killed presiding officers and members of law enforcement agencies.

Around 500 people were killed and several thousands of people were injured by the terrorists of

BNP-Jamaat in three years from 2013 to 2015. They also torched around 3,000 vehicles, 29 trains and nine launches. A total of 70 government offices and structures and six land offices were burnt by them. They also burnt the holy Quran by setting fire to mosques. Even, trees and domestic animals were not spared from their revenge.

The people of Bangladesh remain deprived for 28 years from 15 August, 1975 to 23 June, 1996 and from 1 October, 2001 to 6 January, 2009. Those who grabbed the state power were busy in making money for themselves. They didn't play any role for the people's welfare. Rather they stopped the work which we had started for the welfare of the people.

We have been taking and implementing immediate steps, mid-term and long-term plans since the formation of office in 2009. We have undertaken a five-year plan as well as a perspective plan for 10 years.

During the tenure of BNP in 1991-96, the inflation rate was 7 percent, which came down to 1.5 percent in 2001 when the Awami League left office. Later, the inflation rate again reached 7.16 percent in 2005-06 financial year when BNP left office.

During the 2008-09 period, the inflation rate stood at 12.3 percent, which has been brought down to 5.84 percent in December, 2017.

The foreign investment was US\$0.744 billion in 2005-06, which has increased to about \$3 billion in 2016-17 financial year.

The size of budget was Taka 61,057 crore in 2005-06. The budget size is about Taka 4,00,266 crore in the current financial year. In 2005-06, the size of Annual Development Programme (ADP) was Taka 19,000 crore, which has also increased to Taka 1,64,000 crore in 2017-18 financial year.

Export earning was only \$10.5 billion in 2005-06, which has surged to \$34.85 billion in 2016-17. The foreign currency reserve was only \$3.48 billion in 2005-06, which has soared to \$33.44 billion in 2016-17.

In 2005, two lakh 70 thousand people of the country were employed abroad. A total of 10 lakh 8 thousand 130 people got employment abroad in 2017. Expatriate Bangladeshis remitted \$4.8 billion in 2005-06. The inflow of remittance was \$13 billion in 2016-17.

In the last nine years, the government nationalized a total of 26 thousand 193 primary schools across the country. We established one thousand 458 primary schools. A total of 365 colleges were nationalized during the period. The government has established computer labs and multimedia classrooms at 50 thousand educational institutions.

A total of 35 crore 42 lakh 90 thousand 162 free text books have been distributed among the students on the first day of the year. Literacy rate has increased to 72.3 percent.

Eighteen thousand community clinics and union health complexes have been established across the country to reach the healthcare services to the doorsteps of the rural people.

Thirty kinds of medicines are being given free of cost. Healthcare facilities have been introduced at district and upazila level hospitals through mobile phones.

A total of 119 power plants have been set up. Power production capacity has stood at 16,350 megawatts (MWs). Eighty three percent people are getting electricity facilities. 100 percent electricity coverage would be brought by 2021 through producing 24,000 MWs.

We have ensured food security. Food production has reached to four crore metric tons. Bangladesh has ranked fourth position in sweet water fish production of the world. Average life expectancy has reached to 72 years.

Trials of war criminals have been completed and their verdicts are being executed. Verdicts of killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were executed. The trial of BDR killings was held. We have contained militancy successfully. The campaign for elimination of militancy has continued through creating mass awareness.

Law enforcement agencies have played a strong role. I sincerely congratulate them.

Salaries and allowances of government official and employees were enhanced by 123 percent. Salary of workers has been increased. A total of 100 special economic zones have been set up to attract local and foreign investment and create employment facilities. None will remain jobless and poor.

We want to build Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country. For this, we are implementing various mega development projects. More than half of the construction works of Padma Bridge has been completed. The construction works of Dhaka metro rail and elevated expressway are underway. The entire Bangladesh is being brought under rail networks.

A tunnel under the Karnaphuli river is being built. The construction of first nuclear power plant is going on at Rooppur, Ishwardi. Bangabandhu satellite will be launched very soon.

Payra port is being constructed. Constructions of coal-based power plants at Matarbari, Cox's Bazar and at Rampal are going on.

Electricity supply is being given in grid-less areas through installation of 45 lakh solar systems. Works for transmitting solar power to the national grid have started.

LNG import is being started to solve gas crisis. LPG gas production for cooking has begun.

We have made significant development in the communication system by constructing roads, highways, bridges, culverts across the country. Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Mymensingh highways have been upgraded to four lanes. Four-lane work of Chandra-Tangail Highway is underway.

Small, medium and heavy industries have been set up across the country as a result of boosting investment. We have opened a number of closed factories. It is being possible to implement Blue Economy in development, research, extracting marine resources after settling maritime dispute between with India and Myanmar.

We have taken multipurpose programmes to ensure social safety-net programme. A total of 35 lakh ultra poor are being given old-age allowance. The number of widow, women who are abandoned by husbands, and destitute women allowance-recipients is 12,65,00. As many as 8.25 lakh people with disabilities are getting allowance. A total of 80 disabled students are getting education allowance.

Agri-input cards have been distributed among 2,28,13,477 farmers. Nearly 98 lakh farmers are getting subsidy by opening bank account at only Tk 10.

A total of 2.3 crore students from primary to masters and PhD are receiving scholarship and stipend. Stipend money is being sent to mothers of 1.3 crore students at the primary level through mobile phone. The number of total beneficiaries in the education sector is four crore thirty seven lakh and seven thousands.

We have implemented different programmes to face natural disasters. We are implementing different projects for protecting the country from impact of climate change. Recognition of the historic 7th March Speech of the Father of the Nation as part of world's documentary heritage has enhanced image of Bangladesh on the world stage.

Now, the whole world sees Bangladesh with due respect. Bangladesh which once upon a time was treated and considered with sympathy and compassion for extending the hands of support, now that Bangladesh is honored on the global stage as a role model of development.

We are implementing the Forces Goal 2030 which was prepared in line with the Defense Policy 1974 framed by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Massive development activities are being carried out for the development of Police, RAB, BGB, Ansar-VDP and Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Bangladesh has earned appreciation globally for women development and empowerment. We top in the South Asia for women empowerment and reducing gender disparity. Bangladesh has attained the fifth position in achieving gender-related MDG goals.

Bangladesh has been attaining success consecutively in sports both at domestic and international levels. Most recently, our girls have become champion in SAAF Under-15 football. Earlier, our girls attained the glory of becoming champion in AFC Under-14 football. Bangladesh played quarter final in Cricket World Cup for the first time. Bangladesh has been demonstrating its success in the one day version of international cricket.

"Friendship to All, Malice to None"- this revealed truth of the Father of the Nation is the key theme of our foreign policy. Today, Bangladesh is moving ahead following this policy maintaining harmonious relationship with neighboring countries and others.

Over 10 lakh Rohingya people have come to Bangladesh from Myanmar on the face of repression and torture. We have given shelter to them on humanitarian grounds. Relief is being distributed among them along with medical treatment.

Beloved Countrymen,

Election to the 11th Jatiya Sangsad will be held later in 2018 as per the constitution. The election

procedures have been clearly mentioned in our constitution. As per the constitution, the polls-time government will be constituted. The government will extend wholehearted support to the Election Commission for holding the polls.

The honorable President has constituted new Election Commission through a search committee. Meanwhile, this commission has attained people's trust through holding the election to the two city corporations along with some elections at local level.

I hope all parties registered with the election commission will participate in the next national election and cooperate to uphold the democratic process of the country.

Some vested quarters could move with ill motive to create anarchic situation centering the next election. You have to stay alert in this regard. People don't want unrest. People will no more accept the damage to people's life and property in the name of movement after boycotting election.

Beloved Countrymen,

You are the owner of all power. So, you have to fix the goal - what you want! Do you want to see Bangladesh moving forward or the country dragging backward? Just think once what was the status of the country ten years back?

Don't you want your children become self-reliant with proper education? Don't you want the light of electricity reach at each house! Don't you want each road of every village is developed! People are feed twice in a day! To live peacefully!

Beloved Countrymen,

Forty-seven years are being passed since independence. We don't want to be regarded as poor anymore. We want to live as a dignified nation raising our head worldwide. If those are your expectations, we are always beside you.

Because, we have set a goal that we will establish Bangladesh globally as a middle income country by 2021 and a developed and prosperous country by 2041. We are not sitting idle after fixing the goal. To attain the goal, we are preparing and implementing necessary programmes.

We don't want to remain clinging to the past, but also won't forget the past. We'll move forward by evaluating the successes and failures of the past as well as correcting mistakes and faults," she said.

There is no scope for looking back from the development of highway in which direction we started our journey. The present and future generation will take the responsibility for removing all obstacles to the way to prosperity and progress.

Let's come all irrespective of parties and opinions to build a developed, happy and prosperous Bangladesh unitedly for the future generation.

Bangladesh is moving forward and will advance further. The future generation will get a

prosperous Bangladesh. I call on the countrymen to move towards the path of development being aware so that Bangladesh's advancement is not disrupted.

We'll move on the world stage keeping our head high. We'll establish Bangladesh as a middle income country by 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041 to build Sonar Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Insha Allah.

May all remain well and healthy. May almighty Allah help us.

Khoda Hafez
Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu
Live Long Bangladesh.

...