

Bangladesh Investment & Policy Summit 2016

Inaugural Ceremony

Speech by

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina
Honorable Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel, Dhaka, Sunday, 11 Magh 1422, 24 January 2016

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

My colleagues in the government,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Investors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Very Good Morning to all of you.

I am happy to welcome you today at the "Bangladesh Investment and Policy Summit 2016".

I would like to congratulate Board of Investment (BOI), Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), FBCCI, International Finance Corporation and other government and private sector bodies for organizing such an important Summit on investment opportunities and policy developments in my country.

Overcoming all odds, Bangladesh economy has been progressing steadily for the last 7 year with remarkable growth and transformations, despite volatilities in many external markets and very sluggish growth in the developed countries.

We achieved 6.51% GDP growth in last financial year. During the previous 5 years our average GDP growth was 6.2%. We have been working to achieve 7% GDP this year. The indication we after passing half of the financial year, we are hopeful of achieving 7% growth.

We are optimistic because, today's Bangladesh is a different Bangladesh from a half a decade ago. Today's Bangladesh is a totally changed Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh are now much more confident. They are more self-confident and committed to materialising any impossible task.

And this was possible through attaining capacity and continued capability by our policy-makers, entrepreneurs, experts and above all the general masses.

The ability to attract private investment, both foreign and local, has increased. The confidence and skill of our entrepreneurs boosted. We have attained ability to implement big projects. The initiative to implement the Padma Bridge project with our own fund is a testimony of our ability.

Our annual budget is increased 5 times to nearly 3 lakh crore taka during the last 6 years. The export income boosted to USD 32.2 billion. The forex reserve was reached to over USD 27 billion in 2014-15 from a mere USD 3.48 billion in 2005-06.

In terms of GDP our economy stands at 45th position globally while in terms of purchasing power it is at 33rd.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I always speak that the government would not do business, rather the business people do it. Our duty is to create a business-friendly environment, which we are doing. Massive reforms have been carried out in infrastructures and, rules and regulations. We have undertaken all types of initiatives to create an investment-friendly environment.

Power and energy are inevitable ingredients. The power production capacity has been increased to 14,077 megawatt and the daily gas production to 2,728 MCFT in 2015 from 1600 MCFT in 2005-06. To meet future gas demand, we have taken steps to import gas. Work on setting up LNG terminal is going on.

Our efforts to expand regional, sub-regional and international cooperation are on. Our relentless efforts to strengthen economic ties with our trade and investment partners across Asia and Pacific, Middle-east and Central Asia, EU, Americas and Africa are going to next levels of engagement expanding to a deeper and wider economic, social and cultural exchanges among our businesses and citizens.

We have opened a new era of regional cooperation in South Asia, with our neighbors, to realize our comparative advantages in both horizontally and vertically-integrated production networks and to enlarge the space for growth, trade and investment.

South Asia is poised to be a large centre of growth in the near future and then it would no longer remain 'a poor men's club'!

Eminent Guests,

To accelerate investment in the long-run, we have to address the macro and micro policy determinants and effectively manage risks of uncertainties. These are our joint quest for an even better and conducive business climate.

While our power generation capacities reached beyond 14,000 MW, we are working hard to upgrade it further, in all potential sources of energy, solar, wind, nuclear, coal, gas – to cater to the needs of the coming decades.

Special emphasis is given to develop required human resources and social development indicators. Bangladesh is now being showcased as a miracle in social development by the UN and other development partners. Our comprehensive social security net has received admiration from all.

Untapped maritime resources in the Bay of Bengal are now accessible to investors to utilize it properly for the nation's development. This has been possible because of settlement of maritime disputes with Myanmar and India. Blue economy now offers a new window of opportunities.

With its youthful labour force, large market, excellent connectivity, individual freedom, sustained democracy and a functioning market economy, we have made the necessary reforms and simplified procedures for trade and investment.

Distinguished investors,

A key area of improvement is better policies and efficient services for the investors to ensure a more conducive and sustained investment climate.

My government and colleagues have put utmost efforts to provide and develop policy and regulatory framework conducive to the business community.

To identify private sector policy issues and resolve them in a systematic, research-backed and fact-based manner, the PMO has set up the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC). It is represented by all relevant public offices and representative business chambers and trade bodies.

We have undertaken substantial reform initiatives in recent years in a more systematic and sustained manner to ensure an even better business climate, through:

- Industrial infrastructure and economic zones
- Diversifying energy and power infrastructure
- Expanding the agenda and scope of Digital Bangladesh
- Enhancing transport and communication infrastructure in roads, railway and highways, with future plans to expand inland waterways and port facilities
- Better networking with the private sectors through PSDPCC, FBCCI, BUILD and other platforms
- Improving institutional reforms of investment facilitation bodies like BOI, BEZA, PPP Authority, line ministries, to transform the investment climate

- Working towards a true one-stop service facility for services to our Customers & Clients.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Public Private Partnership (PPP) in infrastructure investments offers a new window of opportunity for investors.

Existing Export Processing Zones (EPZs), and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being expanded and developed for competitive manufacturing for local and global markets. We are going to establish Bangladesh Development Authority for simplification of investment procedure.

We are planning to establish 100 Economic zones across the country. More than thirty sites have already been selected for special economic zones and foundations stones of 10 zones will be laid next month.

Major opportunities for foreign investors in Bangladesh exist in the physical infrastructure sector, including gas and electricity generation, roads, highways and bridges, tertiary health care and pharmaceuticals, ports development, competitive manufacturing, energy efficient industries, light engineering, automobiles, ceramics, textiles and clothing, leather and leather goods, footwear, ICT, ITES, and a diverse range of service industries. Nearly all sectors of the economy are open for private investment with attractive package of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives. Entry and exit are easy and an investor can repatriate his capital and profits easily.

Bangladesh observes 2016 as the year of tourism. Plenty of investment opportunities are there in the tourism industry, in both vertical and horizontal linkages.

Distinguished investors,

To realize our vision of achieving a middle income economy status, as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, my government has been working hard ensuring global-standard services for the investors.

Bangladesh has entered a new era of inclusive and equitable growth– both economic and social. The country has started to display her increasing strength by following an upper growth path.

Phenomenal development has occurred in health and education welfare. Longevity has increased and in areas of mother and childcare the record of Bangladesh is the best in Asia-Pacific region. Poverty has declined remarkably and is at 22.4% now.

This is the most opportune moment to show your dynamic role and be part of our historic growth and development. All relevant forces have fallen into place nicely.

This Summit will give you the most appropriate platform to know Bangladesh's investment trend, policies and potential more concretely and systematically – for seeing is believing.

As the Chairperson of BOI and Head of the Government, I would like to reassure you all – both local and foreign investors – of our highest level of commitment to facilitate your realistic proposals quickly and jointly and give you full value for money. Security and profitability of investment are guaranteed in Bangladesh. I repeat the poets' verse: "*.... You will never find another country like this anywhere else ...*".

With this, I declare Bangladesh Investment and Policy Summit 2016 open and wish it a grand success.

Thank you and have a pleasant stay here.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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