

Exercise Shantidoot- 3 Opening Ceremony

Speech By

HE Sheikh Hasina

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

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Dear Colleagues,
Chiefs of Staff of Army, Navy and Air Force,
Distinguished guests,
Participants of Exercise Shantidoot-3,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning.

I am delighted to be present here at the opening ceremony of Multi-national Exercise on Peace Support Operations, Exercise Shantidoot-3 organized by Bangladesh Army and co-sponsored by the US Pacific Command.

I warmly welcome all the distinguished guests, trainers and participants from home and abroad on this inaugural day of the Exercise.

March is the month of our Independence, our glory.

In this month, I recall with deep respect the great leader of our liberation struggle, the greatest Bangalee of all time, the Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who declared the Independence of Bangladesh at the early hours of 26th March, 1971. The nation under his dynamic leadership achieved independence through a long struggle and liberation war.

I pay homage to 3 million martyred freedom fighters. I express deep sympathy to the wounded freedom fighters and tortured women.

I recall those valiant heroes of Bangladesh and the world who have made their extreme sacrifices for the cause of international peace. May their souls rest in peace.

Distinguishes guests,

We are committed to full contribution towards international peace and cooperation as reflected in the Preamble and Article 25 of our Constitution.

Bangladesh became the member of the UN in 1974 through the relentless diplomatic efforts made by the Father of the nation. Since then, Bangladesh has been playing a significant role in establishing peace across the world within the ambit of the UN charter.

Bangladesh is fully committed to the cause of international peace and security and participated first in the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group in 1988. Since then, it has regularly participated in various UN assignments ranging from peacekeeping operations to peace enforcement operations.

Out of a total of 66 UN peace missions since 1948, Bangladesh has successfully completed 45 Peacekeeping Operations across the world and currently deployed in 11 ongoing peace missions in 11 countries.

We have been providing key appointment holders like Force Commanders, Police Commissioners, Deputy Force Commanders and Chief Military Observers to various Field Missions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, the UN member states are obligated by the UN Charter to work for collective security and contribute troops for the peace support operations to make the world a secure place to live.

At present over one hundred thousand uniformed peacekeepers deployed in 16 peacekeeping operations in 15 countries. Out of which Bangladesh is the highest contributor of peacekeepers. We are proud of the achievement.

As Asians, we have another area of glory. 47 percent of the total UN peacekeepers currently deployed across the world are from the Asia-Pacific region alone.

Taking this point in view, I feel that the staging of such multi-national exercise on peacekeeping in the region is very timely and relevant.

Distinguished Guests,

New dimensions have been introduced in peacekeeping. The peacekeepers now operate their missions within a changing physical, social economic and political environment.

The peacekeepers are easing tensions between the conflicting groups of the problematic countries. At the same time, they have to integrate a wide range of activities including protection of civilians, ensuring human rights and rule of law, reforming security sector, electoral assistance, confidence building measures, sustainable environment, ensuring special care for children and women, destroying mines and disarmament.

Peacekeepers are often facing new challenges in discharging their responsibilities. It demands greater skill and thus better training for them.

We have been endeavoring to develop modern armed forces. Modern equipments have been introduced in each force. The capacity of Bangladesh Army has been augmented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite applying professionalism, 103 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice and another 108 were injured for the noble cause of establishing international peace.

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been discharging their duties with honesty, sincerity, dedication and discipline. Our peacekeepers have proved their credibility in the international peacekeeping and earned reputation. I hope our future peacekeepers will uphold the earned glory by improving the overall standard of training.

Distinguished Guests,

I take this opportunity to thank the participants and participating countries and the observers who have joined this exercise to acquire better skill, share expertise, best practices and learn from each other to work better for the cause of peace.

I would like to express my thanks to Bangladesh Army and especially to BIPSOT for hosting this exercise. I also acknowledge the support and assistance provided by the Government of the United States of America for capacity building in the field of the UN peace support operations training. I also have great appreciation for the support provided by the United States Pacific Command in organizing this exercise.

With these few words, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests and Participants, I express once again a very warm welcome and best wishes to you all and "I declare the exercise Santidoot-3 open."

Khoda Hafez

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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