**Dhaka, January 28, 2014**

Jan 5 polls held to uphold constitution: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today reiterated that the January 5 elections were held in the country to uphold constitution and maintain the trend of democracy.

She made the remarks when newly-appointed Norwegian Ambassador to Bangladesh Merete Lundemo called on her at her office here this morning.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

He said the Prime Minister stressed the need for maintaining peace in the country and said desired development is not possible for any country without peace.

Sheikh Hasina urged the Norwegian government to provide assistance in capacity building, removing supply constraints and diversifying the export base of Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister mentioned that the export of IT products from Bangladesh and its identity as an outsourcing nation have been growing at a fast pace.

In this connection, she requested Norway to import IT products and tap the opportunity of low-cost outsourcing of IT and ITES in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina also sought Norwegian technical assistance and investment in Bangladesh's potential shipbuilding sector, especially in the ship recycling sector.

The Prime Minister requested the Norwegian businesspeople to invest in Bangladesh in bigger way, particularly in the fields of IT, power, oil, gas and mineral exploration, tourism, infrastructure, telecom, leather and leather goods, frozen foods, textile and electronics.

She also sought special NORAD support for developing and expanding fisheries sector with Norwegian technology, projects and ventures in breeding and fingerling development and fish health development.

Pointing out Noway's present development aid focuses on climate change and renewable energy, Sheikh Hasina requested the Norwegian government to provide support to these priority areas.

She also stressed the need for technology transfer, capacity building and training and courses.

"Bangladesh offers best investment incentives in the sub- continent and one of the best in Asia and I hope that the Norwegian businesspeople would take advantage," she said.

The Norwegian Ambassador condemned the terrorism and violence unleashed by BNP and Jamaat-Shibir in the last couple of months and said it must be stopped for the sake of the development.

Lundemo highly praised tremendous success of Bangladesh in different fields including agriculture, education, health, women empowerment and power under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

Later, Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Bangladesh W A Sarath K Weragoda paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister at her office.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed her satisfaction over the existing friendly relations between the two countries that is based on historical ties and commonalities on culture, belief and values and hoped that it would be further strengthened in the coming days.

She termed the end of armed conflict in Sri Lanka as a welcome development not only for the island country, but also for the entire region.

"Bangladesh has always been consistent in supporting Sri Lanka's fight against terrorism and insurgency, " she said.

Weragoda informed the Prime Minister that Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa highly appreciated her participation and active role in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Colombo in November last.

He also handed over a CD on the CHOGM to the Prime Minister.

Ambassador-At-Large M Ziauddin and PM' Principal Secretary Shaikh Md Wahid-Uz-Zaman, PMO secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present at both the meetings.

**Dhaka, January 28, 2014**

Don't indulge in graft, irregularities, PM warns AL MPs

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina today issued a strong warning to the newly-elected parliament members not to indulge themselves in irregularities, corruption and nepotism while discharging their duties.

"Make sure that you will remain free from any stigma and maintain transparency in your works," she told the MPs.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) in the meeting room of the treasury bench at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban here this evening.

After the meeting, Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad ASM Feroz briefed reporters at the Media Center of parliament.

At the nearly two-hour meeting that began at 6.30 pm, he said, the Prime Minister also asked the ruling party MPs to coordinate the upcoming upazila elections.

In this connection, the Awami League president put emphasis on maintaining party discipline and nominating single candidate from the party for each upazila of the country.

Responding to a question, the chief whip said that opposition Jatiya Party will get five seats in the front line of the House, but they are demanding one more. "Their demand is now under active consideration," he said.

Terming the government system of Bangladesh as a parliamentary democratic one, Sheikh Hasina also urged them to work together in upholding the constitution of the country.

The Prime Minister came down heavily on the recent violence and terrorism unleashed by BNP and Jamaat-Shibir across the country in the name of resisting polls.

She said they created anarchy across the country by burning the people to death and torching and vandalizing the houses and shops, felling trees, removing fishplates causing untold sufferings to innocent people.

Earlier, a minute's silence was observed at the meeting in memories of those killed by the violent acts unleashed by the BNP and Jamat-Shibir before and after the 5th January polls.

Feroze said the ALPP has nominated Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury for the post of the Speaker again.

The ruling party has also picked Advocate Fazley Rabbi Miah for the post of deputy speaker.

Senior presidium member of Awami League Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, who was the deputy leader of the House in the 9th Jatiya Sangsad, has also retained her post as the deputy leader of parliament, the chief whip said.

He said the ALPP unanimously nominated Dr Shirin Sharmin and Fazley Rabbi for the posts of speaker and deputy speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad and Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury as the deputy leader of the House.

Feroze said AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam proposed the names of the speaker, deputy speaker and deputy leader of the House which were seconded by Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith respectively.

**Dhaka, January 26, 2014**

PM formally opens biggest-ever vaccination campaign

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today formally inaugurated the country's biggest-ever vaccination campaign, saying that her government is pledge-bound to cut child and mortality rate to face the challenges of the 21st century.

"We are determined to eliminate measles and control rubella as well as to cut child and maternal mortality rate substantially to face the challenges of the 21st century," she told the inaugural function of the measles-rubella (MR) vaccination campaign at her official Ganobhaban residence here this morning.

She added that the government is working ceaselessly keeping ahead the goals of rooting out measles, controlling rubella and maintaining polio-free status of Bangladesh.

"I believe that with the sincere efforts of all, increasing the rate of measles and rubella immunization to 95 percent would be possible by 2016," she said.

And through this, she added, it would be possible to maintain measles eliminating status of the children and bring down the rate of rubella disease to 90 percent in comparison with 2010.

At the function, the Prime Minister encouraged the children in taking vaccines by patting and taking them on her lap. Health Minister Mohammad Nasim delivered the welcome address at the function chaired by Health Secretary MN Neazuddin.

National Professor Dr MR Khan, Director General of Health Professor Dr Khandakar Sifayetullah, Bangladesh Medical Association President Professor Mahmud Hasan and Secretary General Professor Iqbal Arsnal were present on the occasion, among others.

Sheikh Hasina said the government has already made Bangladesh polio-free by observing 21 national immunization days. "No polio patient is yet to be found in the country since detection of the last polio patient on November 22 in 2006," she mentioned.

Terming today's children as future of the nation, the Prime Minister said her government assumed office again by taking the mandate of the people to build a beautiful Bangladesh for the children.

Sheikh Hasina said the aim of her government is that all children are groomed with good health and get a beautiful life. "To achieve the goal, we are working relentlessly," she said.

The Prime Minister also illustrated her government's stunning achievements in the health sector, saying that the government is striving hard to reach the healthcare services to the doorsteps of the people.

She said her government in previous terms took many pragmatic steps for the development of the health sector. "Our efforts would also continue in future to build a healthy nation," she said, seeking cooperation of all to this end.

She also sought cooperation of all to make the vaccination campaign a success and urged the parents, guardians, teachers, public representatives and the common people to encourage other children in taking the vaccines along with own children.

"You will have to stay alert so that a single child does not remain out of the campaign," she said. The Prime Minister urged all to remain cautious about health, saying that health awareness is an important matter side by side with education.

The main objective of the nationwide vaccination campaign is to continue the country's polio-free status side by side with eliminating measles and rubella diseases. The country remains polio-free since 2006.

About 5.20 crore children (one third of total population) will be given measles-rubella vaccine while 2.20 crore children the polio vaccine during the vaccination campaign, said officials of the health ministry.

They also said the vaccination campaign will be run from January 25 to January 30 at all primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, madrasas, maktaba, mosques and other informal educational institutions.

Later, the vaccine will be given everywhere in the community through all the Expanded Programme for Immunization centers between February 1 and February 13, they said.

About 67,000 trained EPI workers along with about 2.41 lakh volunteers will work together to make the vaccination programme a success.

At least 38 children out of each million were attacked with rubella in 2011 and 21 children out of each million in 2012 in Bangladesh Diseases like pneumonia, diarrhea, malnutrition, encephalitis, blindness and deafness are borne out of measles while rubella infection forces a mother within three months of her pregnancy to miscarriage or a child born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome.

Rubella breaks out in every 2/3 years. In the first week,measles-rubella vaccines would be given to around 3.35crore students in 171,000 schools and, in the second and third weeks, such vaccines would be given at 120,000 fixed sites of the Expanded Immunization Program across Bangladesh.

According to the WHO, measles killed 1,54,000 children while rubella virus attacked 1,00,000 children worldwide in 2011.

**Dhaka, January 26, 2014**

PM urges Chinese entrepreneurs to set up power plants

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today requested the Chinese entrepreneurs to set up power plants in Bangladesh's special economic zones (SEZs) to meet the growing demands of electricity.

"We need more electricity for further socioeconomic progress and development of the country," she told a Chinese delegation. The delegation led by Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jun called on her at her official Ganobhaban residence here this evening.

After the meeting, PM's Deputy Press Secretary Bijan Lal Dev briefed reporters.

He said Sheikh Hasina thanked the Chinese government for its support to Bangladesh's socioeconomic uplift.

The Chinese team members said Beijing is very encouraged to take part in Bangladesh's socioeconomic development. Such type of cooperation will be win-win for both sides, they said.

The Chinese delegation members mentioned that a good number of projects are being implemented in Bangladesh with Chinese cooperation.

As a developing nation, we know our prospects, problems and better strategies which we can share for mutual benefits of the two countries, they said.

The Chinese team mentioned that Bangladesh witnessed tremendous development in power sector in the last five years and expressed interest to set up power plants in Bangladesh.

In this connection, they apprised the Prime Minister of setting up of a 1320-MW coal-based power plant at Pekua in Cox's Bazar in joint venture with S Alam Group using super critical technology.

Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office Md Abul Kalam Azad and Power Secretary Monwarul Islam were present at the meeting.

**Gaibandha, January 25, 2014**

Stern action would be taken against attackers: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today termed politics of BNP and Jamaat- Shibir as militant activities and said that it will have to be stopped otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

"It is not politics, but militant activities. It must be stopped, otherwise stern action would be taken against those involved in the terrorist and militant acts," she said.

We won't let Bangladesh to become a terrorist and militant country again, Sheikh Hasina added.

The Prime Minister said this while handing over cheques among the family members of those killed and injured by the terrorists of BNP and Jamaat-Shibir in recent times in the district at local Circuit House this afternoon.

A total of 10 persons were killed and 62 injured by the terrorists of BNP and Jamaat-Shibir since the announcement of verdict of war criminal and Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedi on Feb 28 last year.

Besides, 117 education institutions were torched and damaged by the terrorists during the period.

At the function, Sheikh Hasina distributed cheques among family members of 75 victims.

Among the victims, mother of SM Khalilur Rahman, a BCL leader of Rajshahi University, Kanti Bhushan Barman, a junior officer of Sonali Bank and assistant presiding officer of the recently held polls, narrated the attacks the BNP and Jamaat- Shibir made on them.

**Gaibandha, January 25, 2014**

No place for terrorism, militancy in Bangladesh: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today that the wrath of the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir cronies would not continue further as they would have to answer to the people one day for their acts of violence including felling of tress, cutting roads, damaging educational institutions in their bid to foil the last parliament elections.

Reaffirming her government's strong commitment, she said that there would not be any place for terrorism and militancy on the soil of Bangladesh.

"Their (BNP-Jamaat-Shibir) wrath would not continue further as there would be no place for terrorism and militancy on the sacred soil of Bangladesh. Inshallah! We'll ensure peace and security to the people of the country's stamping militancy and terrorism," Sheikh Hasina said categorically while addressing a huge public rally at Shah Abdul Hamid Stadium here in the district headquarters.

Gaibandha District unit of Awami League organised the public rally with its acting president and administrator of district council Advocate Syed Shamsul Alam Hiru in the chair.

Health Minister Md Nasim, AL leader Dr Abdur Razzaque, Faruk Khan, MP, Advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, MP, State Minister for Home affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, State Minister for Textiles and Jute Mirza Azam, Mahbub Ara Guinea, MP and NAP central leader Advocate Lutfur Rahman Ranju, spoke, among others, at the public rally.

Alleging that the BNP chairperson had tried in vain to save the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the president of the ruling Awami League said, "You (Khaleda) have also tried to save the war criminals, but failed. The verdicts in the war crimes trial are given and the trial will continue. You will not be able to stop the trial."
"If your (Khaleda) heart burns for Pakistan, then you may go to Pakistan ... but, don't inflict sufferings to country's people and play 'ducks and drakes' with the people of Bangladesh anymore," she went on to add.

The Prime Minister alleged that the BNP chairperson has been trying to stop the war crimes trial as her heart is filled with 'Pyare Pakistan' and also she whispers 'Pyare Pakistan' adding: "She (Khaleda) doesn't believe in Bangladesh and also never believed in the independence of the country. So, she kills people to save the war criminals."

Turning to the January 5 polls to the 10th Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament), the AL president said that Khaleda Zia had tried forcefully to stop the polls unleashing terrorist attacks on police, presiding officers, voters, damaging polling centres, but she had failed to stop voting as people of the country had cast their votes with a turnout of 40 to 45 percent not responding to her call.

Citing different incidents of violence unleashed by the BNP-Jamaat hooligans in Gaibandha district over the last few months, she said that the people here do not want to see terrorism, conflict and militancy anymore, rather they want peace and safety to lead a better life.

"We'll not tolerate any kind of terrorist act further and you all keep this in your mind," the Prime Minister assured the mammoth public rally.

Bitterly criticising BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, the AL president said, "Khaleda Zia does not like anything except terrorism. She does not like peace and tranquillity even in her personal life while there is no truth in her words."

In this context, the Prime Minister came down harsh on the BNP chairperson for having so many birthdays, particularly for celebrating August 15 as her birthday when the whole nation observe the day as the National Mourning Day commemorating the horrendous assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members in 1975. "Can you imagine, what a mental disorder she possesses," she said.

Ruling out the BNP chairperson's claim that she is the leader of country's 96 percent people, Sheikh Hasina termed it as very unfortunate for the nation as Khaleda Zia could not clearly say her own real birthday, her husband's birthday and even the date of holding of the national polls on January 5. "She (Begum Zia) had stated in a recent rally that the national polls were held on May 5," the AL president quipped.

Citing the killing of farmers here in Gaibandha for demanding fertilizer at fair price during the rule of BNP in 1991, the Prime Minister said that farmers need not to lay down their lives
demanding fertilizer during the tenure of the Awami League government as fertilizers run behind them (farmers) now.

Sheikh Hasina also assured the huge audience that her government would make compulsory computer education at primary level, build at least a tin-shed house for all of the people, introduce ferry service on the Balashi-Bahadurabad river route and a railway bridge if possible after feasibility study, present a science and technology-based educated nation, reach power supply to each houses, set up mills and factories through establishing Special Economic Zone in this region as well as construct houses free of cost for the landless and homeless people in Gaibandha district.

The Prime Minister also expressed her firm resolve to build a mid- income country free from hunger and poverty by the year 2021 and a developed country in the community of nations by 2041.

Earlier, Sheikh Hasina inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of a number of development projects from the rally venue.

**Jessore, January 23, 2014**

Attackers of minority to be surely punished: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today her government would take whatever stringent action is needed to ensure peace and security for every citizen in the country.

"Those who were involved in atrocities on the members of the minority community at many places across the country would certainly get punishment," she said.

She was distributing cheques among family members of the minority community at Malopara village under Prembagh Union Parishad of Abhoynagar Upazila here, who fell victims to atrocities of BNP-Jamaat terrorists on the day of January 5 polls.

Conveying her sympathy to the affected families and consoling the victim families, Sheikh Hasina said, "You should live in the country with mental courage enjoying all the rights of citizens. For ensuring your rights, we will do whatever is necessary.. . we are with you and will always remain beside you."

"Bangladesh is a land of communal harmony. Every citizen has got his/her right to practice religious rites in the country. Build united resistance against those perpetrators of atrocities and vandalism," she said pointing at the affected families.

Terming the incident that had taken place at Malopra in Jessore as very unfortunate, the Prime Minister said, "As soon as we heard the news relating to such a painful incident, we instructed the local administration to ensure safety to the affected families extending assistance and cooperation to those victim families."

The Prime Minister said, "We have ensured right of every citizen bringing amendment to the constitution following assumption of power in our previous tenure."

Referring to the violence at many places to thwart the polls, Sheikh Hasina said, "Everybody has got his/her right to vote. But, any attempt to foil the poll unleashing terrorism, vandalism and atrocities are sheer violation of the constitution."

The Prime Minister alleged that the character of BNP-Jamaat is resorting to terrorism, killings, atrocities and looting and their hoodlums (BNP-Jamaat) had been indulging in atrocities and repression on the people for a long time. She added that in Satkhira district alone, the BNP-Jamaat terrorists killed 17 Awami League leaders and workers and their fault was that they pursued the politics of Awami League.

Referring to the recent remarks of BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister said, "The BNP chief has stated that people did not vote in the last parliament polls. I want to ask her as to why attacks were unleashed upon the members of the minority community for casting their votes in the polls."

Sheikh Hasina distributed cheques among 61 affected families while the members of Border Guard Bangladesh have been constructing houses for 65 affected families there.

**Jessore, January 23, 2014**

Govt will not tolerate any sort of terrorism and militancy: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here today that her government would not tolerate, in any way, terrorism and militancy of any sort in the country.

"For this, we will take whatever stringent action required..we will ensure people's safety and security," she said while addressing a huge public rally at Abhoynagar Noapara Shankarpasha High School ground in the district.

"We will not tolerate also anybody's interference in the rights of others in the country. Bangladesh shall a peaceful abode. We have ensured the rights of people from all the religious faiths bringing amendment to the constitution," the Prime Minister said.

"Our target is to build Bangladesh on the spirit of the war of liberation war sharing each others shoulders working and residing together with fraternity here in the sacred soil of Bangladesh," she added.

"The spirit of our war of liberation is that people of every faith will practice his/her own religion in the country. People of Bangladesh believe in communal harmony. They don't believe in communal violence. They don't like hostilities, confrontation and destructions rather they want to live in peace," Sheikh Hasina said.

Pointing at her huge audience, the Prime Minister said, "I have to say a word to you that people of all the religious faiths try always to live together in each of your localities with fraternity so that none can interfere into the rights of others."

But, Sheikh Hasina regretted that BNP along with Jamaat, which committed genocide during the country's war of liberation in 1971, has been hatching conspiracy against the people of Bangladesh.

Portraying a grim picture of the atrocities of Jamaat-Shibir at different places in the country following the parliament polls, the Prime Minister said, "The extent of atrocities and repression let loose by them can't be expressed in language. The only offence the voters had committed that they turned up for polling although it was their constitutional right."

She said, "Jamaat is such a political party that opposed the independence of Pakistan and Bangladesh and it was also banned for killing of minorities. A question arises in everybody's mind as to where be its master. But, BNP chief has been hobnobbing with Jamaat."

The Prime Minister said the post-independence government of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated their trial but BNP allowed and rehabilitated them in the country politics freeing the war criminals following the August 15 massacre of 1975.

"BNP didn't try the war criminals rather rewarded the killers of Bangabandhu and patronised the war criminals and it has still been patronising them," she added.

"BNP chairperson doesn't like election. Could it be termed as her movement to kill people by stetting them on fire in her bid to prevent the polls?" Sheikh Hasina posed a question.

"Her (Begum Zia) statements contain only lies. She gives wrong information on her birthday as she mentioned five dates of her birth. She has been habituated with lies that she even changed her hubby's birthday," she said.

Congratulating the people who voted in the polls, the Prime Minister said 40 to 45 percent votes had been polled in the parliament election although the BNP-led combine urged the people to boycott the polls.

"People of the country did not respond to her (Begum Zia) call for boycotting the polls though she tried to foil the election by killing people and animals setting them on flames, torching educational institutions and felling trees although she in her remarks claimed success of her so-called movement," Sheikh Hasina said.

The Prime Minister, however, ridiculed Begum Zia's claim by saying: BNP-Jamaat succeeded in killing people and in corruption. It's a reality that they could not involve people in their soc- called movement."

Pointing at Begum Zia, Sheikh Hasina said, "Don't try to indulge in terrorism in the country and snatch away people's peace of mind. You will not be able to foil the ongoing trial of the war criminals."

"People of Bangladesh want peace and democracy as well as progress of the country in a healthy democratic environment, which we could only be ensured by Awami League, not by BNP," the Prime Minister said giving a vivid description of the development achieved in different sectors during the rule of her Awami League government.

"Inshallah! We will build a Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty with the continued pace of development and prosperity we could brought-in for the nation within the year 2021 and transform the country into a developed and prosperous state in the world within 2041," Sheikh Hasina assured her huge audience. Jessore District unit Awami League president Ali Reza Raju chaired the public rally, also addressed, among others, by Youth and Sports Biren Shikdar, State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Narayan Chandra Chanda and Kazi Nabil Ahmed, MP.

**Dhaka, January 22, 2014**

Govt identifies six projects including Padma Bridge as fast track projects

The government has identified six projects including the much-awaited Padma Multipurpose Bridge (PMB) as the fast track projects and directed the authorities concerned to implement those by attaching highest priority.

Besides the PMB Project, the five other projects are Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project, Rampal Coal-fired Thermal Power Plant, Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project (Metro Rail Project), Sonadia Deep Seaport in Cox's Bazaar and Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal Construction Project.

The projects were identified at the maiden meeting of the reconstituted Fast Track Project Monitoring Committee held at the Prime Minister's Office here this morning.

Chairperson of the Committee Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting.

After the meeting, Deputy Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Bijan Lal Dev briefed reporters.

He said the crucial meeting held a detailed discussion on the progress and future activities of the six projects.

At the meeting, he said, the Prime Minister directed the authorities concerned to execute the projects within the stipulated time.

About the much-awaited PMB Project, she underscored the need for dredging of the river to check river erosion and run economic activities on the reclaimed lands.

Talking about Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and Rampal Power Plant, Sheikh Hasina said the government has given emphasis on producing electricity through multi-source power projects.

In this context, she mentioned that a process is underway to generate electricity on joint venture with India, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, Environment and Forests Minister Anwar Hossain Monju, Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sharif Dilu, Planning Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal, Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Moshiur Rahman, State Minister for Science and Technology Architect Yeafesh Osman and State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid Bipu attended the meeting.

Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hussain Bhuiyan, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Shaikh Md Wahid Uz Zaman, PMO Secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad and secretaries concerned were present.

**Dhaka, January 21, 2014**

PM urges North Korea to boost trade with Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon the North Korean government to boost trade with Bangladesh and import pharmaceutical, ceramic and garment products.

"North Korea can import world class Bangladeshi products such as pharmaceuticals, ceramics and readymade garments," she said.

The Prime Minister came up with the request when newly appointed North Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Ri Song Hyon called on her at her office here this morning.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

He said Sheikh Hasina underscored the need for diversifying joint cooperation in the fields of agriculture, mining and water resources management.

The Prime Minister thanked the North Korean government for congratulating the new government of Bangladesh.

Ambassador-At- Large M Ziauddin, PM's Principal Secretary Shaikh Md Wahid-Uz-Zaman, PMO Secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.

**Dhaka, January 21, 2014**

PM urges UAE to recruit more Bangladeshi manpower

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today requested the United Arab Emirate (UAE) government to recruit more Bangladeshi manpower, particularly the skilled and semi-skilled workers.

"Bangladesh produces qualified engineers, doctors, nurses, paramedics, IT experts and certified accountants which could meet the growing demand of the UAE," she said.

The Prime Minister made the request when the newly appointed UAE Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Saeed Bin Hajar Al Shehi paid a courtesy call on her at her office this noon.

After the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

Laying emphasis on boosting bilateral trade and business, the Prime Minister urged the UAE businessmen to import Halal meat and fish from Bangladesh.

She also invited more UAE investments in infrastructure development, agro-based industry, power, oil, gas and mineral exploration, education and ICT sectors.

Sheikh Hasina expressed her happiness over the government to government cooperation in Dubai Ports World at New Mooring Container Terminal in Chittagong, the inland container depot with railway connectivity in Dhaka and the Mongla Port.

Ambassador-At-Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary Shaikh Md Wahid Uz Zaman, PMO Secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present.

**Satkhira, January 20, 2014**

Joint forces' drive in Satkhira to continue: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the ongoing joint forces' operation in this frontier district will continue as long as it is required to eliminate the militants and terrorists for restoring law and order in the region.

"The culprits involved in the killing of people and destroying their homes and business establishments will be tracked down wherever they take shelter," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while distributing cheques among the family members of the victims of BNP-Jamaat terrorist activities in the district from February 28, 2013.

In an emotion-charged voice, she said: "I remain beside you and will remain in future. By any means, Satkhira will be freed from terrorism. The ongoing drive of the joint forces would continue as long as it is required to root out militants and terrorists."

Calling upon the people to live with mental strength, Sheikh Hasina warned that government won't further accept the violence of BNP-Jamaat.

"The BNP-Jamaat would continue their atrocities on the people and we will remain silent, it won't happen," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the activities of BNP and Jamaat are not movement, these are sheer terrorism and militant activities. "The government will do everything to ensure safety and security of the people of this region," she said.

She said participation of the people is a must for any movement. But there is no participation of the people in the so- called movement of BNP-Jamaat.

Regarding the attacks on the minority people by the BNP- Jamaat terrorists, the Prime Minister mentioned that BNP is saying that the people did not vote in the January 5 polls.

"But they are making attacks on the minority people for casting vote in the elections," she said.

The Prime Minister said the aim of her government is to establish peace in the life of the people. "To achieve the goal, we took initiatives to make the country self-reliant in all sectors after coming to power in 1996," she said.

"But BNP-Jamaat cannot accept our efforts. That is why they are resorting to sabotage and militancy," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said a huge number of people were killed or affected due to the flames of revenge spread by BNP-Jamaat who committed the crime in the name of politics.

She said they burnt the people to death, fell trees and removed fishplates of railways. They also killed innocent animals by pouring petrol, even members of the law enforcement agencies could not escape from their wrath, she added.

The Prime Minister said a list of the affected people is being prepared and they would be given necessary assistance as per the list.

Besides, she said, initiatives have been taken to build houses of the affected people.

A heart-rending scene was created when the Prime Minister was handing over cheques among the family members of the victims of BNP-Jamaat atrocities.

They broke into tears when they were receiving the cheques from Sheikh Hasina. The Prime Minister consoled them by embracing.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and State Minister for Fisheries and Livestaock Naryan Chandra Chanda and senior AL leaders were present on the occasion.

A total of 16 people were killed by BNP-Jamaat terrorists from February 26, 2013 in this district.

**Satkhira, January 20, 2014**

Those involved in atrocities won't be spared, warns PM

Blasting the BNP-Jamaat for violent acts including killing, arson and vandalism, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today warned that none of those involved in these heinous crimes will be spared.

"BNP-Jamaat terrorists brutally killed numerous Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League leaders and activists across the country and looted and torched their houses in the last few months. They also cut roads and fell trees," she said.

"None of those involved in the atrocities will be spared and stern action would be taken against each of the culprits," she added.

Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League President, said this while addressing a mammoth public rally at Satkhira Government High School Ground here this afternoon.

District Awami League arranged the meeting with its President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the chair.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, State Minister for Home Asaduzzman Khan Kamal, former minister Dr Dipu Moni and local parliament members including Mostafa Lutfullah.

Earlier, the Prime Minister arrived here this noon to open 11 development projects and distribute cheques among the family members of the victims of BNP-Jamaat terrorist atrocities in the frontier district since February 28, 2013.

Sheikh Hasina also called upon the BNP chairperson not to disrupt peace of the people and said she will have to pay price for the mistake she committed by boycotting the January 5 polls.

"BNP did not join the polls as its ally Jamaat-e-Islami was barred from participating in the election by a High Court order," she said adding the court had declared the Jamaat as a militant organisation.

The Prime Minister said BNP had skipped the polls being sympathetic to the Jamaat. "They did not only boycott the polls, they also unleashed violent acts to resist the election," she said.

The Awami League chief said BNP-Jamaat terrorists made the life of the people of Satkhira miserable by resorting to misdeeds. The common peace-loving people had to face serious difficulties to lead a peaceful life due to the terrorist acts of the BNP- Jamaat including killing, torching houses and shops, felling trees, uprooting rail lines and cutting roads, she said.

They have created such a situation that economic activities almost came to a standstill and it was very difficult to run the schools. "But due to our timely steps for containing terrorism and militancy, peaceful situation was restored and the people could cast their votes by braving all obstacles," she said.

In this connection, the Prime Minister congratulated the people for playing a courageous role and casting vote in the January 5 polls.

Referring to the misrule of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government from 2001 to 2006, the Prime Minister said BNP has two virtues - one is killing of people and other is corruption.

"BNP's cohort is Jamaat, who committed genocide and crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971 by killing people, torching houses and raping mothers and sisters," she said.
Sheikh Hasina said the aim of her government is to ensure peace, development and welfare for the people. "But there was an 'Ashanti Begum' in our country. Unrest starts in her life when she sees peace in the country," Sheikh Hasina said.

The Prime Minister said Begum Zia had declared to resist the polls. "But by the grace of almighty Allah, the elections were held despite obstructions and she could not foil it," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the BNP chief had failed both in waging movement and resisting polls. "Now she is getting burnt in the fire of failure and also burning the people in the flames," she said.

"I would like to warn the BNP leader that the people want peace, food, shelter and healthcare services. So don't destroy the peace of the people," she said.

About the trial of war criminals, the Prime Minister said her previous government started the trial of the 1971 culprits who committed crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971 to free the country from the stigma.

But the BNP leader became mad when the trial began and she tried to protect the 1971 culprits by unleashing atrocities across the country, she said.

"I want to ask the BNP leader why she is trying to save war criminals. I think she does not believe in the country's independence. Her mind remains in Pakistan and she always sees
dream of Pyare Pakistan and for this she is so sympathetic to the war criminals," Sheikh Hasina said.

The Prime Minister said the aim of her government is to establish Bangladesh as a peaceful country in South Asia. "There will be no room for terrorist and militant organizations in the country as its people want peace," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said those who stained the soil of Satkhira with blood by unleashing killing won't be spared and called upon the people of the frontier district to stand against such atrocities with their own strength.

"Stand against the terrorist acts with your own strength. We would be with you and the law enforcement agencies would stand beside you. And Satkhira won't remain bloodstained, we would root out terrorism from the district Insha Allah," she said.

The Prime Minister said the country was liberated under the leadership of Bangabandhu as the people irrespective of caste,creed and religion fought for independence. "So the people of all faiths would live in the country with equal rights and none would interfere in this regard and it won't be allowed," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the affected families of the victims of the BNP-Jamaat atrocities have already been given financial assistance. Initiatives have been taken to rebuild houses of the affected families, she said, adding the Border Guard Bangladesh has been tasked with building the damaged

houses.

**Dhaka, January 19, 2014**

Trend of democratic power transfer to continue, hopes PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the trend of handing over of power to an elected government by an elected government would continue in future.

"For the first time, the power was transferred to an elected government by an elected government through a democratic system and election. I hope that this trend would continue in future," she said.

Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League president, said this in her introductory speech at a meeting of the party aspirants in the women's reserved seats in parliament at her official Ganobhaban residence here this afternoon.

Deputy Leader of the House and AL Presidium Member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, AL Advisory Council members Amir Hossain Amu and Suranjit Sengupta, Presidium Member Obaidul Quader and General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam also spoke on the occasion.

The Prime Minister said there were many hurdles to foil the January 5 polls. "But crossing the obstructions, we could hold the polls successfully and continue the trend of democracy," she said.

In this connection, Sheikh Hasina extended her sincere thanks to the womenfolk for casting vote in the polls by braving the impediments. Many women candidates were too elected in the polls, she mentioned.

In her brief speech, the Prime Minister asked the women leaders of the Awami League to work for the women empowerment in their respective areas, saying that only shouting won't help achieve empowerment. "You must work to achieve this - it is the reality," she said.

Sheikh Hasina expressed her satisfaction over the massive interest of the women from across the country in only 36 posts for the Awami League and said it will help create a women uprising in the country.

The Prime Minister said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had kept a provision for preserving seats for the women in the parliament in the 1972 constitution to ensure empowerment of country's womenfolk.

Following the footprint of Bangabandhu, she said, her government has increased the number of reserved seats for the women and implemented various programmes to ensure women empowerment.

In this context, she mentioned that Bangladesh has set an example in the world by electing women as the Prime Minister, Deputy Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker.
"There is no such example in any other country in the world," she added.

The Prime Minister said a total of 45,000 women participated in local government elections in her 1996- 2001 term and of them, 12,000 were elected. "Later we reserved the quota for the women in different bodies and projects," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the government has reserved 30 percent seats for the women in different tiers of the local government in order to ensure the participation of women in decision- making process of the government at grassroots level.

She said her government is also providing financial assistance to the poor and insolvent women under the social safety net programme in the name of different allowances including widow and husband-abandoned women allowances, lactating mother's allowance and allowances for the pregnant mothers.

The Prime Minister said her government in 1996- 2001 term for the first time appointed women in the posts of secretary, deputy commissioner, police super, judge and pro-VC. "There was no place of women anywhere before that," she said. A total of 822 women leaders of Bangladesh Awami League who collected the party nomination papers for the women reserved seats in parliament were present.

**Dhaka, January 18, 2014**

Prime task is to free nation from militancy: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said, the prime and foremost task of the present government is to free the country from terrorism and militancy to build a peaceful Bangladesh in South Asia.

Asking the perpetrators of violence and militancy to shun their activities, she said, the government would take any action to be needed for eliminating them from the society.

The government would not succumb to any pressure on this issue, she said in her introductory speech at the Awami League Central Working Committee meeting at Gonobhaban here this evening.

The Prime Minister said, what the BNP and Jamaat are doing could not be called a movement but sheer violence. Their activities are completely terrorists and militant acts, which the people rejected through their spontaneous participation on January 5 elections.

Criticizing the post election violence on the members of the minority communities, the Prime Minister feared that BNP-Jamaat would unleash violence many times more than those of 2001 if they could come to power this time.

She said, the denial of BNP to join the election was beneficial to the country in one sense. We could save the countrymen from another disaster. The disaster could be hundred times more than those of 2001," she added.

"People are with us while the terrorists and militants are with BNP and Jamaat," she said, adding, "We have restored peace in the public life.

Sheikh Hasina said it sounds ridiculous when BNP sheds tears for democracy because it was born from the womb of a military dictator. They are carrying out attacks on the minorities and torching their houses for exercising their voting rights.

Expressing her firm determination to bring all culprits responsible for the attack to justice, the Prime Minister said, the affected people would be given all supports for their rehabilitation. Border Guard Bangladesh has been tasked with rebuilding the destroyed houses, she said.

Pointing out Bangladesh's continued economic progress, Sheikh Hasina said, none would be able to reverse the success of Bangladesh as a role model of development.

The Prime Minister extended her thanks to the people, Election Commission, law enforcing agencies, Bangladesh Army and all concerned for their efforts to hold the January 5 general elections.

General secretary of the Party also the LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam, presidium members of the party and members of the ALCWC attended the meeting.

The meeting adopted a resolution expressing condolence at the death of party's senior presidium member Syeda Zohra Tajuddin and other deceased leaders of the party.

**Dhaka, January 13, 2014**

PM spends busy day on first working day

A day after she was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the third time, Sheikh Hasina had a busy day both in and outside her office today.

Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League President and elder daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, spent the first working day of her third tenure as the Premier by placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at Dhanmondi, paying homage to the Language Movement martyrs, attending her office at Tejgaon and visiting the residence of former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman and Banani Graveyard.

Like other days, she began her day by offering Fazr prayers and reciting the holy Quran.

She went to historic Dahanmondi-32 at 9 am and placed wreaths along with her cabinet and party colleagues at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

Sheikh Hasina along with her younger sister Sheikh Rehana spent some time at their historic Dhanmondi-32 house which was donated by them to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust.

Later she visited the residence of former Chief Justice and ex-chief adviser of the caretaker government late Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman at Gulshan to see his body.

The Prime Minister stood beside the coffin of Justice Habibur Rahman in solemn silence for some time and offered Fateha.

She also enquired about wellbeing of the family members of the former Chief Justice and consoled them.

Sheikh Rehana, the younger daughter of Bangabandhu, and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were with Sheikh Hasina.

From Gulshan, the Prime Minister, accompanied by Sheikh Rahana, went to the Banani Graveyard in the capital and paid homage to her mother Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib, her brothers Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell and other martyrs of August 15 carnage by placing wreaths.

She also offered Fateha and prayed for eternal peace of the departed souls of the August 15 martyrs.

From Banani Graveyard, Sheikh Hasina went to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at Tejgaon in the capital and had her first day office as the PM for the third time.

Earlier, the officials and employees of the PMO greeted her by presenting bouquets, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said.

Azad said the Prime Minister had her office till 3.30 pm.

She went to the Central Shaheed Minar at 4.30 pm and paid rich tributes to martyrs of the Language Movement by placing wreaths.

The 49-member cabinet led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was sworn in on Sunday at a gala ceremony at Bangabhaban.

President Abdul Hamid administered the oath to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 29 ministers, 17 state ministers and two deputy ministers.

The government was formed five days after the democracy- loving people braving all odds cast their votes in the January 5 election to the 10th parliament.

The Awami League-led 14-party Grand Alliance secured a landslide victory in the elections, boycotted by few political parties led by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

**Dhaka, January 12, 2014**

PM rules out bowing to int\'l pressure on polls

Ruling out bowing to any international pressure regarding the just-concluded parliamentary polls, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government would continue to work that is needed for the welfare of the country and the people.

"You know well that Sheikh Hasina does not succumb to any pressure whether it is national or international. The country is ours and the people are ours. We would continue the work that is needed for the country and the people," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while talking to journalists at Bangabhaban here this afternoon after taking oath as the Prime Minister for the third time.

Sheikh Hasina also sought cooperation of all to run the new government and reiterated her call to BNP to stop destructive acts that are impeding the normal life and livelihood of the people and severe ties with Jamaat-e-Islam.

"We want cooperation of all to run the new government. I told BNP earlier and tell it again to shun the destructive acts like enforcing hartal and blockade and burning the people to death and felling trees and to cut relations with war criminal Jamaat," she said.

About dialogue with BNP, the Prime Minister said her government may take any steps for continuation of democracy. "We may take any steps for continuation of democracy and we won't face any trouble in this regard," she said.

She, however, said, for this, BNP will have to stop terrorist acts and militancy first.

About the Teesta and enclave issues with India, the Prime Minister said the issue of land boundary agreement with India has already been resolved and a bill in this regard has been placed in Indian parliament.

She said discussion with India about Teesta and enclave issues is underway. She said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee may oppose the Teesta treaty as she sees the issue from her own point of view and I think she should come forward with an attitude of understanding as a neighbour.

The Prime Minister said, "Any problems could be resolved through bilateral discussion and I have no objection to talk to Mamata Banerjee."

Replying to a question about the much-awaited Padma Bridge, Sheikh Hasina said the construction work of the main bridge would start by June next. "The work on land acquisition and approach road has already been finished and the work of the main bridge would begin by June next," she said.

About the trial of war criminals, Sheikh Hasina said the trial of the 1971 culprits who committed crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation is underway. "The verdicts are being announced and executed and it would continue," she said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that her government wants to create a national consensus in a bid to save public life and property, ensure security to the minorities, stop political vengeance, maintain the flow of development, keeping trade, commerce, export and all political activities above all kinds of violent activities.

"We'll take all steps needed to protect the public life and property, ensure peace and safeguard democracy. We want the political vengeance, terrorism and violence to be eliminated to make sure that peace and security prevail among common people," she added.

In this connection, she said that her government has been able to prove in the last five years that Bangladesh is capable of moving ahead economically.

"We're moving ahead, we'll also move ahead in the coming days Insha Allah," she said.

Terming the post-poll violence in different parts of the country to fulfill political vengeance by the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir as unfortunate, Sheikh Hasina said that her government wants peace and democratic stability instead of anarchy and uncertainty, maintain the pace of economic development instead of destruction and subversive activities.

"I know that the people from country\'s all classes want peace and democratic process to continue and understanding to the democratic process would move the country ahead. We want that the country's people live in peace and security," she said.

Noting that the then main opposition party BNP did not perform responsibility properly in strengthening democracy and maintaining the constitutional process, she said: "The polls would have been more competitive and democracy would have got a firm footing, had they (BNP) come into the election."

The Prime Minister said that the BNP chairperson might have realized that she had committed a big mistake by not joining the 10th parliamentary elections. "She (Khaleda) might realize that from whom she was given advice of not joining the polls proved to be not good. So, I\'ll expect that she (Khaleda) would remain in the path of democracy and reorganize her party giving up the subversive, militant and terrorist activities," she said.

The Prime Minister criticized the role of the BNP chairperson for not responding to her repeated call for holding dialogue and for giving ultimatums time and again to oust the government.

She said Khaleda Zia's choosing the path of conflict and violence instead of path of democracy was very unfortunate for the nation which led to the deaths of many people from all classes.

Sheikh Hasina also strongly denounced the post-poll violence and oppression on the minorities in different parts of the country saying that it was very unfortunate that the miscreants also violated some women of the minorities.

The Prime Minister thanked the President, Election Commission, common voters including the new voters, members of the law enforcement agencies, journalists and the political leaders and activists of the political parties who took part in the 10th JS elections for playing their due role.

**Dhaka, January 12, 2014**

Sheikh Hasina takes oath as PM for historic third term

Overcoming ups and downs and conspiracy, democracy and constitutional rule finally triumphed as Sheikh Hasina took oath as the Prime Minister for historic third time and formed a new cabinet today.

Sheikh Hasina, the Awami League President and elder daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was given a standing ovation by the guests at the imposing Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban as she was sworn in by President Abdul Hamid.

The government was formed five days after the democracy loving people braving all odds cast their votes in the January 5 election to the 10th parliament.

The Awami League-led 14-party Grand Alliance registered a landslide victory in the elections, boycotted by few political parties led by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The Prime Minister was sworn in along with 29 cabinet ministers, 17 state ministers and two deputy ministers. A total of 24 new faces were inducted in her cabinet while others have previous experiences.

President Hamid administered the oath of office and secrecy to them at an austere but exciting ceremony at the Darbar Hall. Sheikh Hasina signed the oath of office and oath of secrecy after the swearing in.

The ministers who took oath are: Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Syed Ashraful Islam, Rashed Khan Menon, Engineer Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Obaidul Quader, Hasanul Haq Inu, Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, Shajahan Khan, Md. Mujibul Hoque, Mohammad Nasim, Syed Mohsin Ali, Anwar Hossain Manju, Nurul Islam Nahid, Anisul Haque, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, AHM Mostafa Kamal, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Asaduzzaman Noor, Shamsur Rahman Sharif, Advocate Quamrul Islam, AKM Mozammel Haque, Saidul Haque and Emazuddin Pramanik.

The state ministers are: Md. Mujibul Haque (Chunnu), Yeafes Osman, MA Mannan, Mirza Azam, Promode Mankin, Bir Bahadur, Asaduzzaman Khan, Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, Ismat Ara Sadek, Mashiur Rahman Ranga, Shahriar Alam, Zahid Malek, Narayan Chandra Chanda, Biren Sikder, Nasrul Hamid Bipu and Junaed Ahmed Palak.

The two deputy ministers are Abdullah Al Islam Jacob and Arif Khan Joy.

Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Rakibuddin Ahmed, Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court, former president HM Ershad, parliament members, political leaders, chiefs of the three services, members of the diplomatic corps, journalists, high civil and military officials and a host of other dignitaries from public life were present in the jam-packed Darbar Hall.

Sheikh Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rehana was also present on the occasion.

Attired in an off-white saree, Sheikh Hasina looked confident and lively at the Darbar Hall.

Thousands of people belonging to all walks of life thronged the Rajuk Avenue and Bangabandhu Avenue intersection to have a glimpse of the new prime minister when she was on her way back from Bangabhaban.

Earlier, people assembled in processions from different parts of the capital city chanting slogans hailing Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina was given a standing ovation when she entered the Darbar Hall at 3.30 pm. Minutes later President Hamid entered the Darbar Hall, where the Prime Minister took oath at 3.35 pm.

The ceremony began with the recitation from the holy Quran.

Sheikh Hasina took oath first pledging to preserve, protect and defend the constitution and state sovereignty.

In her instant reaction to the media after the swearing-in, she said improving law and order and controlling prices of essentials would be her government's first priorities.

The oath-taking ceremony was conducted by cabinet secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan.

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