

## **47th National Cooperative Day**

Address by

Honorable Prime Minister

**Sheikh Hasina**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka. Sunday, 11 Agrahayan 1425, 25 November 2018

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### **Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

Dear Colleagues,  
Dear Cooperative Members,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

### **Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to you all.**

I welcome you all present here on the occasion of 47th National Cooperative Day. I, especially, congratulate the winners of the National Cooperative Award 2016 and 2017.

At the outset, I pay my deep homage to the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall the four national leaders, three million martyrs of the liberation war and two hundred thousand women who lost their innocence in the war.

Cooperative is a philosophy. It's a tested strategy for socio-economic development. In the cooperative-based development process, discrimination decreases, so development is balanced and sustainable. Around the globe, about three million Cooperative Societies with more than one billion members have adopted cooperative techniques as a strategic tool for socio-economic development.

Cooperative was the tool to fulfill the dream of the Father of the Nation, to build a golden Bangladesh. He wanted to expand cooperative-based production and distribution management in all sectors, including agriculture and land management, industrial initiatives and agricultural credit.

He incorporated the cooperatives as the second sector of ownership in Article 13 of the Constitution. He initiated agricultural cooperatives, fishery cooperatives, weavers' cooperatives and industrial cooperative societies with respective class of poor people for their socio-economic development. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib founded the Milk Vita –a national level leading cooperative of Bangladesh.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have been working to improve the socio-economic condition of the people of this country upholding the dream and ideology of Bangabandhu. The socio-economic indicators of Bangladesh are highly praised all over the world.

In our development process, we are giving utmost importance to rural development and cooperatives. Reduction of urban migration by creating more employment opportunities in the rural areas is also one of the main objectives of our rural development priority. The government has been implementing various development projects to this effect. We have been working to reach all urban facilities to the rural areas.

We organized the Chhinnamul (Destitute/Homeless) people through Ashrayan project and rehabilitated them through providing home and small loans. Meanwhile, 0.264 million families have been rehabilitated under Ashrayan project. Besides, they have been provided loan worth BDT. 103 crore 5.7 million through the Cooperative Department for carrying out different income generating activities.

Based on cooperative philosophy of poverty alleviation, 'One-House One Farm' project is being implemented at a cost of Tk 8001.127 crore. Under this project 82 thousand 395 village development societies have been formed in 87 thousand villages. The number of beneficiary households is over 3.88 million. Beneficiaries of this project are gradually

becoming self-reliant after getting training and credit facilities on various income generating trades. We have established Palli Sanchay Bank for the rural people.

We are implementing the 'Comprehensive Village Development Project' for the development of village based cooperative societies at a cost of over BDT three billion. Under this project, cooperative members are being provided with appropriate training and cooperative societies are being used as platforms for all services of nation-building organizations.

The present government is implementing various cooperative projects for the development of dairy sector. 'Cooperative-based Milk Production Project' and 'poverty reduction project through expansion of dairy cooperative activities in of greater Faridpur, Barisal and Khulna districts ' have been implemented.

Recently, another dairy plant project is under implementation in Faridpur at a cost of BDT 3.44 billion.

Development of backward population of the community is one of the priorities of the government. With this goal, we are implementing various projects by organizing these people through the Cooperative Department.

The 'Livelihood Development Project of Garo Community' is being implemented. The 'Livelihood Development of small ethnic groups through Cooperative Project' is being implemented for the small ethnic groups living in the plain.

Besides, for the development of the underprivileged women, currently a project is running at a cost of BDT 1.51 billion under which the beneficiaries are getting interest free, collateral free, long-term loan of Tk.120,000 each. Besides, loan with 4% interest rate is being disbursed among the farmers for attaining self-sufficiency in milk production.

Three development projects have been implemented since 2009 through the 'Small Farmer Development Foundation'. As a result, the activities of this organization have spread over 174 upazilas and the number of beneficiaries increased by 164 thousand and 180.

Through the Palli Daridra Bimochan Foundation (PDBF), the government has implemented 10 projects at a cost of BDT 4.64 billion from 2009 to develop rural infrastructure and the livelihood of the poor people.

In order to conduct research and action research in rural development and to increase the infrastructure facilities, the present government has increased the ADB allocation of Rural Development Academy in Bogra to BDT 2 billion from 250 million.

For the development of Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD), Comilla's research capacity and for conducting action research, 2 projects costing BDT 930 million are under implementation.

Currently there are about 174 thousand cooperative societies in Bangladesh having 10.9 million. The total working capital of these cooperative societies is BDT 135.80 billion. The number of jobs generated through cooperatives is about 0.9 million. I think cooperatives have a great and potential strength in our development efforts.

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress in women development. However, in order to empower women, we need to go further. At present, only 18 percent of the total members of the cooperatives are women. Therefore, involvement of women in cooperative activities should be increased. I believe that cooperatives can play an important role in developing leadership, human resources development and good governance.

The Father of the Nation wanted to build the country as a Golden Bengal by utilizing the resources of the country through cooperatives. He handed over many resources to cooperatives for making them self-reliant. Today, time has come to respect him by implementing the dream of the Father of the Nation.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The development of Bangladesh is now visible due to the continuation of the Awami League government for 10 years at a stretch. The mass people are getting benefit from this

development. Today, Bangladesh is the Role Model of Development in the World. Bangladesh has graduated as a developing country. Poverty rate has dropped from 31.5 percent in 2010 to 21.8 percent in 2018. Per capita income rose to US \$ 1,751. The average life expectancy of the people has increased to above 72 years. The electricity production capacity has risen to 20,000 Megawatt. We launched the Bangabandhu Satellite-1. Construction of nuclear power plant in Rooppur is underway. We are building Padma Bridge with our own fund. The construction of Metrorail is going on in full swing.

We disposed the dispute of sea and land boundary. This trend of development has to be continued so that by 2041 Bangladesh can reach the status of developed country. Bangladesh is going forward and must be forwarded. No one can stop this progress.

I believe that by achieving sustainable development goals by 2030, we will be able to build Bangladesh as a self-respecting developed country in the world by 2041. I want your all out cooperation to achieve this goal.

With this few words, I declare the National Cooperative Day open.

Khoda Hafez  
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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