

**First Concrete Pouring Ceremony of  
the Second Unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant**

Statement by

**HE Sheikh Hasina**

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Rooppur, Pabna, Saturday, 30 Ashar 1425, 14 July 2018

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Chair,  
Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation, HE Yury Borisov,  
Members of the cabinets of Bangladesh and Russian Federation,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

**Assalamu Alaikum and a Very Good Morning to you all.**

I convey my heartiest greetings to all of you at this auspicious event of First Concrete Pouring of the Second Unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

I also attended the first Concrete Pouring of the the First Unit on 30 November 2017. The work on the first unit made a good progress in the last 7 months. With the first concrete pouring of the second unit, we are going another step ahead. We hope that we would be able to complete the construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant within the stipulated time.

I pay homage to the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders. My respect goes to the memories of 3 million martyrs of the liberation war and 2 hundred thousand women who lost their honour.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant is our long-cherished dream that was sown in 1961 in the then Pakistan era. At that time several physical works, including land acquisition, were completed.

But the Pakistan government abruptly stopped the work and shifted the plant to West Pakistan showing step-motherly attitude to the East.

After the independence, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman undertook an initiative to construct the Rooppur nuclear plant. He ordered to establish contact with the nuclear power plant construction firms. As per his directive, work started but with his brutal assassination on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975, the entire process was abandoned.

No government took initiative till 1996 when Awami League government revived the project for its implementation. We included the nuclear power generation programme in our energy policy of 1996.

International Atomic Energy Commission-IAEA overlooks the issues relating to nuclear energy. We have sought its cooperation for commissioning of the Rooppur nuclear power plant. A time-bound plan has also been worked out with the help of IAEA. But before completion of the entire process, our 1996-2001 tenure ended.

After coming to power in 2001, the BNP-Jamaat government stopped implementation of many people-centric programmes, including the Rooppur power plant project.

Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant was a dream project of Bangabandhu. After assuming office in 2009 again, we have taken up the project again and Russian Federation has come forward to help implement the project. I convey my gratitude to the Russian government and its people for extending the support.

As a trusted friend, Russia not only extended material and moral support to our liberation war in 1971, but also took part in rebuilding war-ravaged Bangladesh after its independence. I recall with deep gratitude the contribution and sacrifice of the Russian people.

**Dear audience,**

Electricity is a key ingredient for socio-economic development of a country. Adequate and reliable supply of electricity is an important pre-requisite for attracting both domestic and foreign investment.

Electricity is also in the priority list of the demands of the people. We have taken steps to reach electricity to all citizens and various sectors of the country.

When we assumed office in 2009, the total electricity production of the country was only 3,200 megawatts which was far below the demand and erratic power outage was a common phenomenon.

We undertook short, mid and long-term plans to meet the demand. Now the total electricity production capacity rose to 18,353 megawatts. There is no load shading and 90 percent people have come under electricity coverage.

Solar home systems have been set up in the areas where transmission line is yet to reach. There are 4.5 million solar home systems.

In order to have a sustainable power supply, we have laid emphasis on alternative sources of energy like solar power, nuclear power, wind energy, etc. alongside fossil fuels in our energy policy.

As part of our electricity production master plan, we are commissioning the Rooppur Nuclear Power plant. We are hoping that a total of 2,400 megawatts of electricity would be produced and added to the national grid from the 2 units by 2023-2024.

Nearly, 10% of the total electricity production will come from nuclear energy by that time.

A section of the people expresses concern over safety of the nuclear power plant. Safety of nuclear power plant is indeed crucial and we are very much aware of it. We are strictly following IAEA safety standards and other relevant guidelines as well as international good practices in building the Rooppur power plant. The plant is being made with **G3+** Russian reactor which contains the latest technologies for safety measures and radiation control system. Highest measures are being undertaken to avoid any sort of risk for the people.

We have promulgated Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Act- 2012 to strengthen national nuclear regulatory infrastructure for ensuring by safe and secure applications of nuclear techniques.

An independent nuclear regulatory authority –Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority has already been formed and bilateral relationship with nuclear regulatory bodies of the Russian Federation and India as well as IAEA has been established for the capacity building of our national nuclear regulatory authority.

The design of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant has been developed in such a way that it will not succumb to any accident - natural or man-made.

One of the main concerns of any nuclear power plant is its waste management. The Russian Federation will take back spent nuclear fuel of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and we have signed a deal in this regard with them.

The President of Russian Federation has assured me of the safety issue. The construction firm Atomstroyexport has been constructing the plant maintaining international standards and ensuring all safety issues.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our dream is to build a happy, prosperous and developed Bangladesh which would be the Golden Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu.

We have made a good progress in the process. Bangladesh has been graduated to developing country from LDC in March this year fulfilling all the three criteria. Earlier in 2015, the World Bank ranked Bangladesh as Lower Middle Income country.

In socio-economic front, Bangladesh is well ahead not only of South Asian neighbours, but also many developed nations. We achieved over 6.5% GDP growth over the last one decade which this year is projected at 7.78%. Poverty rate dropped to 22% in 2017 from 41.5% in 2006.

Per capita income rose to USD 1,752 from mere USD543 in 2006. Average life expectancy has risen to 72 years and literacy rate 73% from 45%.

We have launched our own satellite Bangabandhu-1 in the orbit in May this year. Work on metro-rail in the capital is underway. We have been constructing the country's longest bridge, the Padma Bridge, with our own fund and 55% work has already been completed.

The centenary of the birth of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be celebrated in 2020 and the country's Golden Jubilee in 2021. Marking these two auspicious occasions, we are accelerating the socio-economic progress of the country.

We want to transform Bangladesh into a hunger and poverty-free, and technology and knowledge-based middle income country by the year 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

I want to mention here that we have taken proper initiative for developing manpower for safe operation of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. Recruitment of personnel and staff and their training in India and the Russian Federation have already been started.

Not only for Rooppur Power Plant, we are also preparing skilled manpower for maintenance of our Satellite Bangabandhu-1.

We have no dearth of talented youths. If proper training is given, our youths would be able to operate these high-tech machineries.

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, I hope, will play an important role in our journey of turning Bangladesh into a middle income country.

With these few words, I open the first concrete pouring of the second unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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