

Ground Breaking Ceremony of Dasherbandi Sewage Treatment Plant Project

Speech by

HE Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Chair,

Dear Colleagues,

Representatives from Development Partners and

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.

I welcome you all at the ground breaking ceremony of Dasherbandi Sewage Treatment Plant Project.

At the outset of my deliberation, I pay my deep homage to the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall the 4 national leaders, 3 million martyrs and 2 lakh women.

August is the month of mourning. I pay my deep homage to the martyrs of the 15th August '75. I wish for the forgiveness of their departed souls.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the aim of building an exploitation-free happy and prosperous society, the Bengalee nation achieved the independence under the leadership of our great leader Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib started the development work of every sector with the dream of turning Bangladesh into a Golden Bangladesh. But his dream nipped in the bud after his assassination by the hands of hateful plotters. The development wheel of Bangladesh stopped. The politics of murder, coup and conspiracy began.

After long 21 years, Bangladesh Awami League formed the government in 1996. We started the development of the country on the path of the Father of the Nation. We first introduced a new master plan for Dhaka City in 1996. 'The Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Act, 1996' was enacted.

Then we came to power in 2009 and found that there was a chaos in the water supply system in Dhaka city. The procession of pitcher was found everywhere and the army was summoned to stop it. With my direct guidance, Dhaka WASA started working on bringing change in the water supply management system from 2010. Dhaka WASA aimed at implementing an environment-friendly, sustainable and pro-people water supply system. Due to the planned measures taken by our government, Dhaka WASA got cent percent capacity to produce and supply water. The development agencies consider Dhaka WASA as the 'Role Model' of water supply in South Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 6th goal of the 17 goals of the 'SDG-2030' declared by the United Nations is 'Ensuring safe water and sewerage system for all'. Our government has initiated a 100-year plan titled 'Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100' for the coordinated water resources management. Under the plan availability of water, its uses and ecological issues have been brought under consideration. A few significant programs among many such ones being implemented by our government regarding safe water and sewerage management are listed below:

- Formulation of National Water Policy 1999;
- Formulation of Water Supply and Sewerage Act 1996;
- National Water Supply and Sanitation Act 2014 formulation;
- National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation and Implementation Plan (NAMIP) to mitigate arsenic related problems;
- A project on Implementation Plan for Arsenic Mitigation for Water Supply 2016 is underway;
- Seven thousand ponds have already been desalinated by filtering the pond water and 32 thousand 6 hundred deep tube wells have been installed in the saline-affected areas;
- 4 thousand and 7 hundred reservoirs have been constructed to preserve rain waters;

- In the capital Dhaka, new canals are being excavated, and initiatives are on to re-excavate the old one and preserve the reservoirs
- Steps are underway to build reservoirs in industrial and housing areas, installing rainwater harvesting system and draining out wastes and polluted water;
- Programs are underway for ensuring safe water from surface water sources by 2021 in all divisional cities;
- Dredging is underway in important rivers for maintaining navigability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After all this, the modern sewer system was not developed in the capital. The BNP-Jamaat government did nothing about it in the past. A sewerage master plan has been created during present Awami League government keeping future in mind. The whole capital will be brought under the guidance of this master plan by 2025. Today's Dasherbandi Sewage Treatment Plant Project is a part of that. With the implementation of this project, it will be possible to provide modern sewerage service to about 50 lakh people of Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Bashundhara, parliament and adjoining areas including Hatirjheel of the city.

Our government has prepared three master plans on water supply, sewerage and drainage systems. Now Dhaka WASA has achieved the capacity to supply surplus water. We have taken initiatives to ensure environment-friendly water management by reducing the dependence on ground water, and soon the citizens will get the benefit of it.

Holding the slogan of the government, 'Safe water for all', Dhaka WASA has already ensured valid and safe water connections in the slums of the capital. Dhaka WASA has set target to take all slums under the safe water supply network gradually.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The billing system has been digitized to make Dhaka WASA's activities modern and dynamic. As a result, the quality of customer service has increased. Presently, system loss of WASA has reduced from 40% to 20%. The Dhaka WAS has been able to bring the system loss to 5 percent by implementing modern DMA (District Metered Area) technology. For this Dhaka WASA has earned praise from development partners as the only organization in South-East Asia.

The source of water of water treatment plants in Dhaka is basically the surrounding rivers of the city. The project has already been taken to start the removal of wastages from the river bed. In order to keep the Buriganga free from pollution, there are on going activities to remove the illegal structures from the bank of the river. In the dry season, the project to bring water from the river Jamuna has been undertaken to increase the flow of water in the rivers surrounding Dhaka.

To prepare a master plan and action plan, directives have already been given to keep the river free from pollution. Besides, if the planned sewerage treatment plants of Dhaka WASA are constructed, they will play role in reducing pollution. The navigability of the rivers has to be maintained by dredging the rivers. River catchment area cannot be closed. The river should be allowed at its own pace. We want to live in harmony with nature. Dhaka WASA has not built any other box culvert since 2009. I hope, Dhaka WASA will maintain the effective initiative to protect existing canals. It is praiseworthy that Dhaka WASA initiated the use of rain water and recharging the ground water level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dhaka WASA is a professional business organization. It has to ensure to collect the supplied water price from the users properly. All effective steps have to be taken to make this organization more profitable. I call upon WASA to be more effective to develop services, implement development projects and improve skilled management.

During the Awami League government, people get their rights back. Democracy is strong. Loot, terrorism and militancy are stopped. Poverty decreases rapidly. The rate of education increases. The health facilities of the common people including children and women are ensured. Trade and commerce boost up. The village is under massive development. So the Awami League government is the government of mass people.

We want to make Dhaka habitable for the next generation. Along with the government, the citizens will have to come forward for this development. Due to lack of availability of water, city dwellers need to be more conscious and economical to use water. We have to ensure the proper use of all the citizen facilities including water, gas and electricity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dhaka mega city belongs to all of us. Let us make Dhaka habitable. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had a dream of a hunger-poverty-illiterate-free Golden Bangladesh. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 in the golden jubilee of our great independence and a developed one by 2041, InshaAllah.

With these few words, I declare the ground breaking of Dasherbandi Sewage Treatment Plant Project.

Thank you all.

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

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