

# **The inauguration of the National Jute Day-2019 and Diversified Jute Products Fair**

Speech by

**HE Sheikh Hasina**

**Prime Minister**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka, Wednesday, 22 Falgun 1425, 6 March 2019

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## **Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

Respected Chair,

Dear Colleagues,

Excellencies,

Jute Cultivators, Jute Farmers and Invited Guests.

### **Assalamu Alaykum and a very Good Morning,**

I would like to convey my heartfelt wishes to all on the occasion of the National Jute Day, 2019.

March is the month of our independence. At the same time, this is the month of birth of the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my deepest homage to the Father of the Nation. I also remember with respect the four slain national leaders, the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 repressed mothers and sisters of our Liberation War. I also salute the freedom fighters.

### **Distinguished guests,**

The National Jute Day is being celebrated for the third time aimed at promoting and flourishing the jute sector in an integrated manner. On this special day, I congratulate all involved with the cultivation, production, marketing and use of jute and jute products.

Jute is our golden fiber. The 6<sup>th</sup> March was announced as the National Jute Day to promote harnessing the potential of this fiber for speeding up economic growth. I believe that the observance of the day will encourage all to work together for the continued development of the sector.

Jute is an environmentally-friendly fiber with diverse usage. From the time of the industrial revolution, jute began its journey and marked its place among other artificial fibers. The unique feature of jute is its ability to be mixed with other fibers. Given that jute is readily perishable, it is also very friendly for the environment.

Jute was once the backbone of our economy. It is also inextricably linked to our Liberation War. While presenting the Six-Point Demands, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman highlighted the economic disparity between East and West Pakistan by using the example of jute's contribution. Jute was also a major issue in Bangladesh Awami League's 1970 election manifesto.

In the post-independence Bangladesh, 90 percent of the country's foreign earnings came from the jute sector. However, the sector faced a crisis period partly due to the advent of artificial fibers and partly due to the mismanagement of the post-1975 governments.

Now, the golden days of jute are making a comeback. More and more people around the world are becoming aware of the environmental concerns involved with the use of artificial fibers and opting for natural fibers such as jute. Additionally, the diverse use of jute is also increasing.

As the second largest jute producing country in the world, we have to focus more on the diverse usage of jute. We also need to invest more in the research of this sector and tap into more export markets for the fiber.

For increasing production and internal usage, ensuring fair prices and preserving the environment, we have formulated the "*Mandatory Jute Packaging Act, 2010*" and "*Mandatory Jute Packaging Rules, 2013*". The Awami League Government has also made mandatory the use of jute packaging for 19 items, including paddy, rice, wheat, maize, fertilizer, sugar, spices etc.

By the implementation of this law, the internal demand of jute sacks per year has been increased by nearly 150 crore units.

To diversify the eco-friendly jute products, we have established "Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC)". As a result, 650 entrepreneurs have been created in the private sector. These entrepreneurs are producing, marketing and exporting almost 280 commodities from jute.

Apart from the traditional products such as thread, sacks, bags and carpets, jute is now being used for the production of fabrics, cushion covers, carpets, sarees etc. Winter clothes are also being produced by mixing jute with wool. Jute crust is being used to produce high quality carbon. Jute stalks can also be used for producing toiletries, medicine, paint etc. Jute stalks are used as an alternative to bamboo and wood for making particle boards, paper pulp and paper.

Recently, the method to produce jute polymer from jute has been discovered. This is being used to create an alternative to plastic bags known as 'Golden Bags'. I urge all involved to help expedite the wider usage of Golden Bags.

Distinguished guests,

We have formulated the Export Policy 2018-2021. In light of this, we invite investors from home and abroad to invest more in setting up product-specific industrial areas or special zones so that we can develop the jute sector further and tap into a plethora of new export markets.

The Golden Fiber has to be branded globally. There is now a growing demand for eco-friendly jute and jute products as a result of heightened awareness about environmental issues. By extending the cultivation of jute and usage of jute products, we can play an important role in this environmental movement.

As an industrial sector, jute industry is till now one of the largest in our country. We have earned approximately 1025.55 million US dollar in the fiscal year 2017-18 by exporting jute products. During the BNP-Jamaat government, we earned only 430.48 million US dollar in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

The BNP-Jamaat government closed down a number of jute factories, including the largest one in Asia in Adamjee, in 2002. As a result, 25,000 employees and workers became jobless.

The jute sector is comprised basically of the industries and agriculture sectors. Farmers produce the jute which is then used in the industries sector for manufacturing products. Hence, a healthy coordination is required between the Agriculture and Industries Ministries for the continued development of jute sector. We will only produce as much jute as is needed, including the demand for the export markets.

We have previously noticed that farmers faced losses as a result of too much production of jute. While at other times, too less production hampered the manufacturing of jute products. This means that demand should dictate the quantity of production. This will ensure that neither farmers nor manufacturers face any losses.

In order for the continued development of the sector, we have to make the jute mills profitable. We need to ensure fair price of jute for the farmers. The jute traders also need to be paid on time. We believe that by ensuring transparency and accountability, we can bring back the lost glory of jute.

I urge the Jute Ministry, BJMC, BJC and other concerned departments to take effective measures in this regard.

**Distinguished guests,**

We have set the targets of increasing GDP growth to 10%, per capita income to 2,750 US dollar, export income to 72 billion US dollar by 2023-24 fiscal year in our election manifesto.

To achieve these targets, not only do we need more investment, but we also need to diversity our manufacturing process. We believe that jute can play a crucial role in this regard. This

requires a coordinated effort from both the public and private sectors. We believe that by working together, we will be successful in our endeavors.

We aim to build a hunger and poverty free Golden Bangladesh as envisioned by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Let us work together to build a prosperous and developed Bangladesh, the motherland we got as a result of the supreme sacrifices by the millions of martyrs.

With the belief that by bringing back the past glory of the 'golden fiber' jute we can expedite our national development, I am officially declaring the opening of National Jute Day, 2019 and Diversified Jute Products Fair.

Thank you all.

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

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