

## **Dr. Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019**

Speech by,

**H.E. Sheikh Hasina**

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Ambassador Shri TP Srinivasan, Chief Advisor, Dr. Kalam Smriti International,  
Srimati Deena Das CS, Chairperson, Dr. Kalam Smriti International,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Excellencies,  
My dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

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

It is my great pleasure and honor to receive the 'Dr. Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019' constituted to disseminate the ideals and teachings of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. He was a visionary scientist and renowned President of India. I pay my deep respect to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, whom I have long admired and revered. He was truly a people's president, with his phenomenal contribution to empowering the rural community and in encouraging the youth to think differently, to invent, to discover, to conquer problems and succeed.

Prior to receiving the award, I recall with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all times, Farther of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my respect to the four-national leaders, 3 million martyrs and 2 hundred thousand women who lost their innocence in the liberation war. My salam to the freedom fighters.

I would like to thank all concerned for instituting such an award to immortalize the noble ideals of the great President Abdul Kalam. The award has been inspiring leaders across the globe to work on his vision to bring about sustainable socio-economic development and becoming mankind's 'wings of hope'.

I am humbled that my modest contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development for my countrymen has attracted the attention of the global community.

This award will certainly inspire me and my government to strive for the achievement of greater inclusive development for my people while bearing in mind the need to ensure the conservation and protection of our natural ecosystems.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dreamt to build a 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bengal'. Sensing the urgent need for overall development for the nation, he committed to "Mobilize and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment".

He understood that without creating equal opportunity for all citizens, it will never be possible to create an equal and humane society for which he struggled throughout his life.

The dream and vision of the Father of the Nation is the guiding light for us and it is his vision that we follow today as we stride forward in our journey to make Bangladesh a prosperous nation by 2041.

Indeed, I see wide convergence of the visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and President Abdul Kalam, both of whom dedicated their lives to unleash the potentials of ordinary people.

### **Distinguished Guests,**

Bangladesh has adopted the Agenda 2030, along with the international community, after experiencing a high degree of success in achieving the MDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right

choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. Bangladesh is determined to attain the SDGs on time.

**Excellencies,**

Over the last decade, Bangladesh India relations have reached a new height marked by mutual trust, confidence and goodwill. We have witnessed remarkable progress in cooperation between our countries in different conventional and unconventional areas. I strongly believe that this trend of cooperation will continue and coupled with the achievement of the SDGs, these will help build a prosperous Bangladesh by 2041.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Bangladesh was recognized by the World Bank Group as a middle-income country in 2015. The International Monetary Fund in its 2019 estimate ranked Bangladesh as the 29<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world in terms of Purchasing Power Parity. Our per capita income has surged to US\$1909 in 2019 from US\$ 543 in 2006. Over the last one decade our GDP is growing at a rate of over 6.5% per annum and in 2018-2019 the GDP growth rate was 8.1%. Our commitment is to achieve a growth rate of 10 percent by Fiscal Year 2023-24. Poverty has dropped to 21.4% in 2019 from 41.5% in 2006.

Our special thrust on agriculture and rural development enabled us to attain autarky in food grain, fish, poultry and vegetables. Growing web of physical and virtual connectivity is holding tremendous prospects for our knowledge-based ICT sector. We have launched our first communication satellite - 'Bangabandhu-I'.

For eradicating poverty, we need to develop skilled human resources, and drive sustainable economic growth, much of which depends on investment in labor intensive industries. We hope that, investors from India will avail the business friendly opportunities on offer and will invest in Bangladesh, with due attention to conservation of the environment.

**Distinguished Guests,**

I conclude by warmly thanking the organizers for conferring upon me the Dr. Kalam Smriti International Award. I am humbled to accept this award and to join past recipients in recognition of our work towards attaining sustainable development for our countries and for the globe as a whole. I accept this as a token of your appreciation for the sense of duty that I have towards the people of my country, which has been the guiding principle of my life, as it was for my father and the Father of our Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I am dedicating the award to my countrymen

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Long Live Bangladesh-India Friendship.

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