

## **International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction-2019**

Speech by

**Sheikh Hasina**

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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### **Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

Chair of the Ceremony,  
Colleagues,  
Excellencies, Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

**Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.**

I welcome you all at the celebration of International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019.

With deepest homage, I remember the greatest Bangali of all times, Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I also remember the national Four-Leaders, 30 lakhs martyrs and 2 lacs abused mothers and sisters during the liberation war. Salam to all freedom fighters. I respectfully remember all martyrs of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975.

**Dear Audience,**

Only in three years of time, Father of the Nation reconstructed and transformed Bangladesh from a war-ravaged country into a developing country status. He relentlessly worked till the end his life with a dream to build this country as a hunger-poverty free developed-prosperous "Golden Bangladesh". We are quite unfortunate that we lost him so early.

Bangabandhu is an extraordinary example of mankind. He is the pioneer of Disaster Risk Reduction program in Bangladesh. In his noble initiative, 172 'Mujib Kellas' were built to protect and save lives and assets from devastating cyclone. With the kind cooperation by the then League of Red Cross, he had undertaken the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) in 1972.

Presently, CPP has about 56 thousand trained volunteers. In addition, there are 24 lac Anser-VDP, 17 lacs scouts, 4 lacs BNCC and 4 lacs Girls Guides ready to be engaged in humanitarian response at any time.

Our Government is constructing 378 more Mujib Kellas. Apart from this, 3,868 multi-purpose cyclone shelters have been built across the coastal districts and 1,650 more shelters will be constructed gradually. Due to the present government's timely and effective measures, the impact of natural calamities have come down to minimum.

At least 1.5 lakh people died in the 1991 catastrophic cyclone. Cyclone Sidr in 2007 caused deaths of more than 3,400 people. Cyclone Aila hit southwest coast of Bangladesh in May 2009 claiming around 190 people. While Cyclone Fani in May 2019 claimed less than 10 people.

Standing Orders on Disasters (SoD) was first introduced in 1997 in our term of Government (1996) which was then revised again in 2010 by us. We formed National Disaster Management Council (NDMC).

Our Government adopted Disaster Management Act-2012. Under the auspice of this act, we formed the Department of Disaster Management, which is playing an important role in risk reduction and management activities during natural and human error caused disasters. Keeping in mind the sufferings of the internally displaced people caused by natural disasters, we have formulated a strategic paper in 2015 and also have undertaken national resilience plan, which are highly relevant with the Sendai Framework and the SDGs.

We established National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) in 2015. A Humanitarian Staging Area is being established in Purbachal for large scale disaster management. In the meantime, we started modernization and expansion works in the Saidpur Airport, so that it

would be a regional hub of emergency services even for the neighboring countries. We are extending our regional cooperation on humanitarian assistance through civil-military engagement in the Asia and Pacific region through Regional Consultative Group (RCG) mechanism.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have taken program for huge number of tree plantation. Not only by the Government, but also from the party's initiative Bangladesh Awami League has been planting hundreds of thousand trees in each year. We will increase tree coverage from 22% to 24% of total land area in the next five years. So far Bangladesh has created 0.2 million hectares of coastal forests.

Our scientists and farmers are inventing stress tolerant crops and cultivation methods. We have taken a project on providing 5,00,000 household grain stores (Silos) to the families in 63 upazilas of 19 districts. By April 2019, we have already given silos to 3,28,000 families. Besides, under the cooperation of World Bank, we are constructing 8 silo complexes in 8 districts with a total of 5,00,000 metric ton storage capacity.

We have designed project titled 'Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100' for combating climate change. 80 projects are proposed in first phase of this Mega Plan. The 35 percent of the total investment would be incurred as the cost of flood control, protection from river erosion, increase of water storage capacity and navigation. We planned to dredge 510 kilometers of the rivers by 2022. A number of projects including construction of water reservoirs for summer irrigation, 4,883 kilometers canal, flood protecting dam and restoration works has been taken by our Government.

There are number of development and renovation works under progress, such as construction of herringbone bond road, bridges/culverts, flood shelters, cyclone shelters, relief store house cum- disaster management information centres in 64 districts. We have another ongoing project on construction of "disaster resilient houses" for the poor. We have taken volunteers' training program which also includes disables and their organizations.

We have provided modern equipment worth of 236 crore taka to Armed Force Division and other relevant agencies for their capacity building. In future, we will give them most modern equipment worth 1000 crores taka.

**Dear Participants,**

I would like to urge people to construct buildings and infrastructures under the safety guidelines of the building code manual to reduce the losses of natural and induced disasters for example earthquake and fire. Public gathering in proximity of the disaster creates huge trouble and barrier for firefighters and rescuers. Keeping this in mind, I would like to suggest you to allow them to work on their own trainings and skills.

I would appreciate United Nation Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) for the theme '**Build to Last**' in Bangla we say "নিয়ম মেনে অবকাঠামো গড়ি, জীবন ও সম্পদের ঝুঁকি হ্রাস করি" - which is really a befitting one in line with our overall goal and strategy in this regard.

We have achieved a great success in reducing risk and losses of cyclone, flood, drought, earthquake and fire, which is being appreciated by the international community. In July this year, we hosted Dhaka Meeting of the Global Commission on Adaptation, where the former Secretary General of the United Nation declared for establishment of a "Global Centre for Adaptation- Dhaka Office" as a symbolic of our outstanding performance in this sector.

We are very keen to conduct development works under short, medium and long terms planning. Bangladesh has now reached to the apex in terms of MDG achievements and SDGs progress, in the areas of quality education, health, gender equality, agriculture, poverty reduction, increase of life expectancy, export-oriented industrialization, establishing 100 Special Economic Zones, increasing revenue earning from export of garments and pharmaceuticals and in other economic indicators.

Constructing Padma Bridge by public finance, construction of Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant, Deep sea port at Payra, Tunnel under Karnaphuli river, Dhaka Metro Rail and other

mega projects in the country earned the special attention at home and abroad. Therefore, Bangladesh is now watched as a "Development Miracle" by the international community.

**Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,**

We have achieved 8.13 percent of GDP in last fiscal year. This year we have set target to achieve 8.2 percent of growth, hopping to achieve 10 percent in 2023-'24, which would continue till 2041. Currently 93 percent of our populations are under coverage of electricity. We have projected "Bangabandhu Satellite-I" in the space. Hope that we would be able to throw the second one in near future.

By this time, we have graduated from developing country status. We will be regarded as a middle-income country by 2021. We are determined to transform Bangladesh a hunger-poverty free by 2030 and a developed-prosperous one by 2041.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the organizers of today's program Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief including all disaster management professionals, volunteers, humanitarian agencies and other cooperating persons and institutions.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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