

BSS, DHAKA

Following is the full text of speech of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the completion of one year of the present grand alliance government.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Dear Countrymen,

Asalamu walaikum -

On this day I took oath as the Prime Minister of People's Republic of Bangladesh after being elected by your votes.

Today one year of the opportunity that you gave me to form the government for the second time was completed.

On this auspicious occasion, I congratulate all the people of Bangladesh and express gratitude and congratulate those voters who vote in favour of me.

Thanks to those respected voters who did not give us support but they have played a role in establishing democracy by exercising their rights to franchise.

I am specially thanking the young generation who voted for the first time. They have voted in favour of the charter of change to build digital Bangladesh. Congratulations to the women folk, who gave all-out support to us.

I remember with great respect to the greatest Bangalees of all time Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman whose undisputed leadership has given us independence, own nation, own map, and red and green national flag.

With deep sense of sorrow, I am remembering my mother Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, my three brothers Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal and 10-year old Sheikh Russel, who became the target of heinous murder of 15th August of 1975.

I am remembering Bangabandhu's two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rozi Kamal, only brother of Father of the nation Sheikh Naser, labour leader Abdur Rab Serniabat and his family members - youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni, his pregnant wife Arzu Moni, Colonel Jamil and other martyrs of that night.

I am remembering the four leaders, who were killed in jail on November 3, 1975, - Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain M Mansur Ali and AHM Kamruzzaman under whose leadership and government run by Awami League we attained the victory.

With respect I remember 21 thousand leaders and workers, who became victims of political vengeance of BNP including former finance minister and member of parliament SAMS Kibria, member of parliament Ahsanullah Master and former member of parliament Momotaziuddin.

I remember 22 shaheeds including Awami League leader Ivy Rahman, who were killed in August 21, 2004, grenade attacks. Because of endless mercy of Allah I was saved. Till today more five hundred leaders and workers are passing their days physically challenged persons.

On December 29, 2004, through free, fair and neutral and internationally acclaimed elections the grand Alliance under the leadership got the mandate of the people.

This landslide victory was the reflection of your confidence and believe on me. As a result our responsibilities, duties and commitments to the people have increased manifold. Last one year we have tried to give proper return upholding their believe.

How far we have become successful will be judged by you that is by the people of this country. But you will certainly acknowledge that there was no dearth in our sincere efforts.

You know country's democratic journey has started through the December 29 election of 9th parliament after the two-year tenure of a non-elected government.

During the non-elected government rule, the country came to a standstill by creating fear in the name of anti-corruption drive and overall development and economy fell on the face, she said.

My question is who are responsible for the sufferings of those two years?

I know, any conscious citizen will say the situation was created due to misruling of the BNP-lead four-party alliance government, boundless corruption, militancy, terrorism and nepotism.

They tried to hold an election of vote rigging realizing that the people of the country will reject them. The then president and the election commission were also used in this conspiracy.

The people forged allout protest against this blue print of assuming power forcefully. The four-party alliance carried out killing and torture to the protesting people using police forces as well as their party's armed cadres. At one stage, the rule of emergency was imposed in the country.

Hindrance was made on my return home. I returned to the country ignoring the red-eye of the government and all barriers and I was arrested.

I was kept captive in an isolated jail month after month in false cases. Many other politicians were also arrested. Attempts were made to break the political parties.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Awami League leaders and workers of all levels, especially the grassroots level leaders and workers and the expatriates, for keeping the party united during that crisis moment. The nation has got back democracy for their bold role.

Side by side I would like to express my gratitude to our patriotic armed forces for their relentless endeavor in preparing a flawless voters list by deducting 1.23 crore fake voters.

The caretaker government and the election commission had created a peaceful and festive atmosphere of election where people from all creed and religions practised their voting rights.

We wanted that people could express their opinion freely in all elections, to be held in the future.

We have to be vigilant in this regard so that any evil force cannot snatch away the voting rights of the people.

Just after two months of assuming the state power, we lost 57 potential military officers at the brutal carnage at the BDR headquarters on February 25.

The Prime minister said, just after few days of assuming power, the government had to face losses of lives and assets in the southern part of the country due to devastated cyclone Aila.

It was possible to recovery from the disaster as the government took quick and effective steps.

We have taken the state power at a time when global economic recession is there and food scarcity are present across the globe.

Despite that we have been able to reduce the prices of rice to Taka 18-20, which is now Taka 22 to 24. The price of flour was Taka 45 during the previous government which now came down to Taka 18 to 20. The prices of soybean oil reduced to Taka 80 from Taka 115 and now stood at Taka 80.

After forming the government after the last election, we found the inflation rate at 10.11 percent which was only 1.59 percent when we left the power in 2001. I have been able to reduce the inflation rate to 3.46 and 4.69 percent in July and August respectively this year.

The remittance flow has increased by 22.4 percent comparing with the preceding year and as a result of the high remittance volume the reserve of the foreign currency has crossed the 10 billion US dollar mark for the first time.

In the budget, Taka 5,046 crore worth stimulus package was allocated to keep the commerce and trade sector stable amid ongoing global economic crisis.

Our election pledges were to reduce the prices of essentials and to ensure food security. We have been able to attain success at a large scale in fulfilling the pledges.

Bangladesh had been turned not only into a food self-sufficient country, but also food surplus country during the 1996-2001 period of Awami league tenure.

But the next government was not able to continue the flow of increase of food production and make the country food import dependent. As a result the prices of food grains had increased irrationally. People had suffered huge food scarcity.

After taking the responsibility, we are distributing food among the poor through various programmes including VGF and VGD for ensuring the food security.

We distributed food at free of cost among 1.2 crore poor people during the holy month of Ramadan and price of no item was increased during Holy Ramadan last year.

The government has allocated Taka 3,600 crore subsidy for the farmers and if required the amount of subsidy will be increased.

During the last IRRI-Boro and Aman seasons, uninterrupted electricity was supplied to the farmers.

The prices of TSP fertilizer was reduced to Taka 20,000 from Taka 65,000 and DAP fertilizer to Taka 28,000 from Taka 85,000. The proper supply and distribution of fertilizer was ensured.

The fertilizer crisis was not reported from anywhere for a single day. The prices of other agri-inputs including diesel and seeds were also reduced. And as a result, the bumper production was possible.

Presently, the country has 11.5 lakh tonnes of food stock. Besides, the Aman crops have already gone to the farmers' houses.

The fair prices of agriculture product have been ensured along with increasing the target of procurement at the government level for encouraging the farmers.

The initiative was taken to distribute rice at the fair prices through ration among the garment workers.

We are considering introducing rationing for the fourth class employees, ansar, village police, "choukidar and dafardars". We have said good-bye to Monga that continued for year after year in the northern region of the country.

In line with the election commitment, the government has made water bodies' management policy 2009 based on 'Jal Jar Jala Tar'. We have ensured fair price of jute produced by our farmers.

Beloved countrymen,

"We want to build a poverty free Bangladesh".

The rate of allowance and number of beneficiaries under various programmes including increase in old age allowances and allocation of Taka 810 crore under social safety net and multi- diverse programmes for hard-core poor.

Besides, Taka 93.60 crore was allocated for the people with disabilities and in addition to Taka eight crore for stipend facilities for them.

On the other hand, Taka 607 crore has so far been distributed for the old age allowances and a project titled "One House: One Firm" is being implemented at a cost of Taka 1197 crore.

The Awami League government had taken an 'ashrayan' project for the first time during its tenure in 1997 aimed at providing the homeless hard-core poor with shelters but the alliance government stopped the project.

This time we are implementing the same project in a large scale. "We will definitely provide homes for the homeless people for free".

We have taken education as a prime technique to cut poverty and the country's overall development. Steps have been taken to increase the government's portion of salaries for the private primary schools and a number of measures for their empowerment.

For the first time primary terminal examinations were held and the results of the exam were also published.

The Second Primary Education Development Programme is being implemented at a cost of nearly Taka seven crore for expansion of primary education as well as improving its standard.

Work on setting up 40,000 new class rooms of primary schools is going on in full swing and process is on to appoint 45,000 new teachers. The government is providing 19 crore books for free to students of the government primary, secondary, technical, ebtedaye and Dakhil students. For the first time, textbooks have been kept on website.

This is for the first time the government is providing the students with free textbooks.

Biography of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the real history of thy country's Liberation War were included in the textbooks. The government has formulated a draft of the new education policy. In the light of the government's election manifesto, it has been posted on website for opinion of the people. The government has given highest priority to the education sector and as part of this Taka 7262 has been allocated in the sector.

In order to stop school drop out phenomenon, the number of stipends has been increased to 78 lakh from 48 lakh.

Steps have been taken to introduce vocational courses at secondary and higher secondary levels including madrasahs for the promotion of technical and job-oriented education.

For the massive spread of girls education, systems were introduced to offer them stipends at secondary and higher secondary levels, financial assistance for buying books and paying fees

for taking part in public examinations. Tuition fees for girls were waived up to higher secondary level. In future the free education system will be introduced both for boys and girls.

We will eradicate illiteracy by 2014 in line with our election pledges.

We are committed to reach the healthcare facilities to the doorsteps of the people. The bed capacity in the existing hospitals has already been increased while steps are underway to set up specialized hospitals and institutes.

So far 875 new beds were set up in 18 district hospitals.

Works are on progress to turn the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University into a centre of excellence.

In rural areas, 10,723 community clinics were made operative which were built during the previous Awami League period with a goal to set up a community health facility for every 6,000 rural populations.

A process has been launched to appoint 6,000 doctors on ad-hoc basis to face the problem of doctor shortage at government-run hospitals. Some 5,000 nurses will be appointed soon. Thirteen new nursing schools were set up with BSC nursing course. The status and salary scale of the diploma nurses were upgraded as second class government officials.

The district hospitals and upazila health complexes are being equipped with computers, web cameras and internet facilities in phases to reach ICT based healthcare facilities at doorsteps of the people.

All the district hospitals and upazila health complexes are now providing 'Mobile Phone Health Services'.

Dear countrymen,

We have taken some important steps for development of the communication system in the past one year.

Necessary steps were taken to set up the Padma Bridge - a long cherished dream of the of people of the southern region. This will cost US\$2.4 billion. We will complete the construction of the bridge by 2013, Inshallah (Allah willing).

In order to ease the traffic jam in Dhaka city, steps have been taken to build a 32-kilometre long elevated expressway from the Airport to Jatra Bari. Similar projects will be taken for other roads also.

Primary steps were taken to build the second Padma Bridge on Paturia-Goalanda route.

We are proceeding with speed in constructing highways roads and bridges across the country.

Dhaka-Chittagong Highway is being upgraded as a four-lane road.

Programmes have been taken for development, expansion and modernization of railway. More than half of the construction works of the Dhaka-Joydebpur dual gauge railway track have been completed. Railway lines will be installed from Dhaka to Cox's Bazar.

Soon after assuming office, we took necessary steps to increase the navigability of rivers and protect their courses giving due importance on river routes and rivers.

From today, a campaign has started to free the Buriganga river from pollution.

Works are underway to launch circular water ways around the Dhaka city. To protect the rivers flowing around Dhaka city, steps have been taken to demarcate their boundary, evict illegal possessions, set up walkways in places freed from the illegal possession, and prevent pollution and afforestation.

The capital dredging programme has been taken to increase the navigability of rivers. Survey works were taken at a cost of Taka 31,000 crore for increased navigability and prevent erosions.

Works on re-excavation of the Gorai river on emergency basis was launched to prevent salinity and sedimentation in the southern region.

We have developed a fund of Taka 700 crore from own resources to face the impacts of the climate change. We have adopted Bangladesh National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BNCCSAP) to face the risks of the phenomenon.

We have firmly explained the effects of climate change in Bangladesh in the Copenhagen Climate Conference in the Danish capital. We have sought transfer of technology and other assistance. Our demand received international supports.

Plans were taken to turn Mongla Port into a facility of international standard.

The process is underway to infuse dynamism in the activities of the Chittagong Port. Container terminal has been launched in private sector.

Steps have been taken to build a deep sea port at Sonadia of Cox's Bazar.

To reduce pressure on the Dhaka city, steps have been taken to develop four satellite cities around the capital under Public Private Partnership (PPP). Projects are being taken to expand the Dhaka city.

For the first time under the supervision of BUET, the lottery results for the RAJUK's Uttara third phase and Purbachal plots were published using the information technology.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Without the development of science and technology, it is not possible to face the challenge of the 21st century and socio-economic development of the country.

Our government is working to turn Bangladesh into a middle income nation through creating ICT-based employment opportunities for ICT literate youths by 2021. Initiatives were taken to formulate National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2009 and action plans alongside enactment of several important laws and amendment of laws.

In order to build the Digital Bangladesh, computer labs were set up at different schools and colleges, UNOs and other field level government officials were provided with computer training and data entry centers were installed.

Works are underway to develop a Hightec Park on 232 acres of land at Kaliakoir of Gazipur.

Different ministries, divisions and organisations are working for implementation of the e-governance. All divisions, districts and upazila administrations were brought under video conferencing.

The past BNP-Jamaat alliance government adopted corruption as their policy. There was no sector which remained beyond the clutches of graft. As a result, the development was halted.

We want to make a corruption free country. Steps have been taken to strengthen institutional structure and reform those for checking corruption.

Anti-Corruption Commission has been working independently. Bangladesh was included in the list of 10 corrupt countries of the world during the period of four-party alliance government.

Bangladesh got rid of the blame with in a year of Awami League in power. New national pay scale has been given to the government officials and employees from July 1, 2009.

Medical allowances and net pension of the pension holders have been increased.

Civil service act has been formulated while promotion policy has been amended and made time befitting. A huge number of honest, efficient and talented officers have been given promotion.

My dear countrymen,

You know, during last seven years, demand of power increased massively. But production was not increased. The four party alliance looted thousands of crores of taka from power sector. They failed to add even one-megawatt power in five years.

Power production was 3,808 megawatt while we assumed the office, which is increased to 4,296 now. At present, demand of power is about 5500 megawatt. The government has taken short and long term programmes to meet the deficit.

After we assumed office, new power stations with 728-megawatt capacity has been set up. More power stations with 1,000-megawatt capacity will be set up by this year.

No steps were taken during last seven years for development of energy sector. Stock of gas and oil discovered meanwhile has been updated to ensure energy security. Steps have been taken to formulate national energy policy and coal policy. Gas explorer organization BAPEX has been strengthened.

Our government is working for country's industrial development. The government is providing assistance for formulating industrial policies, attracting foreign investment, flourishing women entrepreneurship and setting up environment friendly industries.

Efforts have been strengthened to create employment increasing overseas investment. Import duty of basic raw materials has been reduced from 7 to 5 percent.

'Trade Marks Act 2009' has been passed to spread industry and commerce, protecting intellectual rights and recognizing creative works.

Despite global recession, 4.5 lakh workers got overseas jobs in a year. Remittances sent in 2009 are 22 percent more than previous year.

During performing holy Umrah I called on the Saudi King and took steps to remove complicates related to 'ekama'.

In response to my request, decision was taken to cancel quota system on manpower entry to the Saudi labour market.

As per the election pledge, steps have been taken to provide employment for youths under national service for the first time in the country.

We are working for inducting women in the mainstream of development and for their empowerment. The position of women in government, administration and Armed Forces in no way less than the developed nations.

Conscious countrymen,

We are working for strengthening local government system and decentralization of power. Upazila parishads, after long time started its activities through elected chairmen and vice-chairmen.

We want to ensure freethinking, freedom of opinion and free flow of information. The cabinet approved a proposal to amend Crpc 1898 to uphold freedom of opinion. Right to information rules have been formulated based on Right to Information Act-2009. Information Commission has been formed and it started functioning.

In last year 66 bills were passed in the parliament to establish rule of law, good governance, financial discipline and environmental development.

Separation of judiciary has been given a permanent shape.

Law has been passed for trial of the war criminals. Primary venue has been selected for setting up tribunals. Trial process will begin shortly, Inshallah.

Human Rights Commission has been formed and Human Rights Commission Act formulated.

Reelection of Bangladesh to UN Human Rights Council for the tenure 2009-2012 is recognition to this.

The blame what Bangladesh achieved, as a country of human rights violation and terrorism, during the period of four party alliance government, is no more.

Honourable countrymen,

The Armed Forces are the symbol of our independence and sovereignty. Awami League government in its previous tenure took massive steps for development and welfare of the Armed Forces.

We are continuing our efforts. Members of the Armed Forces brought dignity for the nation participating in UN Peace Mission. The government is making all efforts to send more troops to UN Peace Mission.

The government has undertaken various plans to modernize and develop the Armed Forces. Steps have been taken to increase ration of army personnel, increase leave of the army personnel working in UN Peace Mission and providing VOIP telephone facilities.

Bangladesh University of Professionals has been set up incorporating educational institutions of the Armed Forces.

After BDR mutiny, assistance has been given to the members of martyred families.

The government has taken as challenge resisting militancy, terrorism and extortion.

We shall ensure trial of all killings including killing of four national leaders, grenade attack on August 21, ten truck arms case in Chittagong and bomb attack on lawmaker Fazle Nur Tapash.

The government has taken effective steps so that militant and terrorist act cannot take place in Bangladesh.

All members of the law enforcing agencies have been brought under rationing system.

Within four months of assuming the office, the government introduced hundred percent ration for all members of police and increased its amount.

Steps have been taken to introduce rationing system for BDR, Ansar, VDP, Fire Service and Department of Prison.

To increase the manpower of Bangladesh police, plan has been taken to recruit 32,000 new policemen in the force. The restructuring of BDR is in progress to make it a more effective force.

The most glorious chapter of the history of Bangali people is the great war of liberation. the government has taken various projects for preservation of the history of liberation war and its memories and to increase the welfare of freedom fighters. Government has allocated abandoned homes to 142 freedom fighters' families on the basis of prices fixed at 1972 market price. The honorarium of freedom fighters and martyrs' families has been increased. The retirement age of freedom fighter government officers and employees has also been raised from 57 years to 58 years.

The government has ensured better haj management and a total of 59,000 people performed haj this year without impediments.

Welfare trust has been set up for helping the country's five lakh Imams and Muazzins. Grants to Hindu- Bhudha and Christian Kalyan Parishad has been increased. Five lakh children and adults are given pre-primary education under a Masjid based programme, in addition to facilitating four and a half lakh children getting Quran teaching under the programme. The sports sector has started to witness success with steps taken to bring improvement in this sector. Our cricket team won victory over West Indies and Zimbabwe in test and one day series. It won one day series against Zimbabwe. We returned football to a level of dignity by introducing Bangbandhu SAF Football Tournament. The selection of Bangladesh to host SAF games in 2010 and co-host the World Cricket tournament in 2011 has increased the country's image abroad.

The government has taken massive development programme for Cox's Bazar and Kuakata to develop the country's tourism. Moreover all tourist spots all over the country having attractions to visitors would be developed.

Dear countrymen,

The basic principle of Bangladesh's foreign policy and external relations is 'friendship to all and enmity to none.' I have already visited brotherly Muslim countries and neighbours on bilateral basis, in addition to attending several international conferences. I addressed the 64th session of the UN general assembly in Bengali to demand the induction of Bengali as the official UN language. I attended the international conference on climate change and met heads of state and government of 25 selected countries to raise the demand of the affected nations including Bangladesh. I attended the conference of 10 troops contributing nations to UN peacekeeping forces on invitation of the US president and raised the demand for involving Bangladesh in formulating peacekeeping policies.

We said that if elected we would strengthen the country's democratic institutions. We will make Parliament effective. This is for the first time in the history of Bangladesh we have set up 48 parliamentary committees and standing committees in the very first session of Parliament. Seven MPs of other parties were given the post of chairman of various committees. It also happens so for the first time in the country's history.

Dear countrymen,

We are committed to respect the trust and faith you have reposed on us. We want to build a nation which is self reliant in food by 2012. We are planning to make education free up to degree level by 2013. We want to arrange housing facility for all homeless people by 2015. We want that not a single person will remain homeless in the country.

We want to ensure generation of 7000 MW electricity by 2013 and growth rate to hit 8 percent by 2013 to free the country from poverty. We want to reduce child mortality from 54 per thousand to 15 and maternal death from 3.8 per cent to 1.5 percent by 2021.

Insah Allah, we will achieve success in our activities with collective efforts, fellow feeling and support of all of us. We want to come out of traditional politics to start the beginning of a healthy positive political trend. So we call upon the opposition party to come back to Parliament and play their role.

Dear countrymen,

Time has come to repay the debt of all those people who won the country's freedom 38 years ago responding to the call of Bangabandhu by sacrificing their lives. It will be possible only when all the poor and deprived people will get two daily meals, a place for housing and medical treatment. We want to make sure a better life for all.

The country will celebrate golden jubilee in 2021. The year 2021 is the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We want to build a Bangladesh by 2021 when there will no corruption, misrule and darkness of illiteracy. There will be no poverty. People will be able to live with honour, dignity and prosperity.

We dream to build a Bangladesh by 2021 that will be rich in education and culture, knowledge and science and highly endowed with technology to be known as Digital Bangladesh. Our future generation will stand in the global community by that time to say in pride I am a Bengali, Bangladesh is my country. Bangla is my language. This is the lesson the Father of the Nation has left behind for us. We are moving with this dream. Let us get united in search of this enlightened path. Let us build Sonar Bangla rising above narrow personal, group and party interest.

Thank you all.

Khuda Hafiz.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu. Long live Bangladesh.