

# Full text of PM's address to nation

Following is the full text of Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia's address to the nation over Radio and TV yesterday.

**My dear Countrymen,**  
**Assalamu Alaikum.**

The independence of our beloved motherland was declared in this month of 1971. On the eve of the 25th anniversary of our independence I extend my sincere felicitations and best wishes to you all. I recall with the deepest sense of respect the contribution of late leaders Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Shaheed Ziaur Rahman, General Ataul Gani Osmani and others who organised and led the country's struggle for independence and War of Liberation. I pray for salvation of the departed souls.

I remember with profound respect the martyrs of the great Liberation War. I also pay my respect to those who directly and indirectly participated in the great Liberation War. My heart-felt sympathy goes to all those who suffered injuries and damage and who lost their near and dear ones in the Liberation War.

Like every year lakhs of religious Muslims of our country this year also are participating in the Biswa Ijtema. On this occasion, a large number of Muslims male and female, from different countries of the world have assembled in our country. I welcome them all from the core of my heart. They would pray for peace, happiness and overall welfare of Bangladesh as well as for the welfare of the entire Muslim Ummah in this world and in hereafter. May Almighty Allah grant our prayers and give us his divine blessings.

**My dear brothers and sisters,**

I appeared before you three times in last four months with specific proposals. Each time I sought your wholehearted support and cooperation for the interest of the country, nation and people. I am grateful to you for responding to my

appeal by risking your life and bravely all sorts of intimidations and terrorist acts to participate in the February 16 elections.

It is because of your cooperation that constitutional continuity and democratic process has remained uninterrupted in the country. I pay gratitude to Almighty Allah for this. The nation will ever remember with thanks the sincere and brave role of all government officers and employees, different political parties, professional groups, Army, Navy, BDR, Police, Ansars and the people as a whole, involved in the election process.

This success achieved as a result of tireless efforts of all of you has created a favorable atmosphere for a solution of the present political crisis and a stronger and more effective democratic system in the country. I firmly believe that all of us would sincerely try to seize this opportunity.

**My dear Countrymen,**

You would remember, in my address to the nation on November 24 I explained the background of the prevailing political impasse. I also clearly spelt out to you the proposals and initiatives that we took to reach a solution. I requested the agitating opposition political parties to take part in the polls to further consolidate the hard-earned democracy. I also requested them to sit and discuss with an open mind what steps could be taken so that elections could be held in the fairest possible way. But unfortunately, they did not come out with a positive response to my appeal. They boycotted the elections and chose the street as the only means to get the problem resolved. Thus, all efforts to settle the issue through negotiations fell through.

In my address on February 12, I told you that parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) elections must be held within February 15 in order to protect the Constitution and preserve democracy and that is why it was imperative on our part to hold the



Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia addressing the nation over Radio and TV yesterday.

polls during the holy month of Ramadan.

I had made it clear in my address that the constitutional continuity had to be maintained to safeguard democracy which we have earned at the cost of blood of innumerable martyrs. And elections must be held within the stipulated time to keep the constitutional continuity uninterrupted. I also made it amply clear that to further strengthen democracy in future a congenial atmosphere ensuring participation of all in another election could be created only if we could advance the democratic process through this election. We were always sincere in our efforts. So, we have already taken necessary initiatives to contact the opposition

political parties.

**My dear Countrymen,**  
As your partner in the democratic movement and also as your elected Prime Minister, I am determined to fulfill my commitment. I hope, I would get your active cooperation in future like in the past in this regard. Welfare of the people is more important to us than the state power and we proved it during the movement against the autocratic regime for long nine years. We proved it again when we ensured election to the parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) within the timeframe prescribed by the Constitution.

**My dear brothers and sisters,**

The agitating opposition political parties are pressing

for an unelected person as your Prime Minister. But it is beyond our capacity, as we have said time and again, to do what the Constitution does not permit. I declared that I along with my Cabinet would relinquish power 30 days ahead of elections to be held on the basis of an understanding. I urged them to return to the Sangsad (parliament) and not to resign on December 28 in 1994.

I also proposed that the modalities of running the administration during the 30 days when my government would not remain in power could be discussed in the parliament. We could have discussed and worked out what could be the form of government during the election pe-

riod, had they returned to the parliament. But they did not pay heed to that appeal, too.

Two-third majority is required for amendment to the Constitution. Knowing it full well they en masse submitted their resignations and did not come back to the parliament. Consequently, their seats were declared vacant at one stage. They also did not agree to my proposal to form a national government to run the affairs during the election period by returning to the parliament through the by-elections. It was they who proposed an advisory council to be formed with non-party people under the President. But they backed out when we accepted their proposal provided it was within the constitutional framework. They foiled my initiatives by imposing preconditions when I offered dialogue with them through letter more than once for a negotiated settlement of the political crisis. As a result, all efforts for negotiations failed and necessary amendment to the Constitution could not be possible due to absence of required number of members in the parliament.

**My dear Countrymen,**

I have said it earlier and will say it again. I tried my best to bring all the political parties and persons in the national elections and will continue my endeavour in future also.

Since there is no provision in the constitution and due to lack of the required number of members in the parliament, it could not be possible to reach a solution acceptable to all. By the grace of Allah, this problem will not be there any more with the formation of the Sixth Parliament following the February 15 elections. We can now take initiative to find out a pragmatic and constitutional solution of the persisting political crisis. Because we sincerely want to tackle all the problems quickly and effectively.

**My dear brothers and sisters,**

You will agree with me that there can be more than one solution to a complicated problem directly involving the whole country, people and democracy as well. So, all the probable solutions should come back to the parliament. In the interest of the nation, we are ready to accept any of the solutions, which will be the most acceptable. I would now like to place before you and all the political parties the following proposals:

- 1) Considering the overall interests of the country and the people, a non-party government will be formed to function during all national elections in future. The proposed government will take care of the day-to-day administration, but shall not take any policy decision. The Election Commission shall have the full authority and responsibility to conduct elections.
- 2) We will move the necessary bill in the first session of the Sixth Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) to amend the Constitution to this effect. Steps will be taken to pass the amendment bill in the Parliament and arrange referendum according to the constitutional requirement as soon as possible.
- 3) Thereafter, steps will be taken to hold election to the Seventh Parliament in the shortest possible time.

I call upon all the political parties to come to negotiations with an open mind immediately and discuss all these proposals and other related issues.

I firmly hope that as a result all political parties would participate in the election to the Seventh Parliament inshallah. I believe all opposition political parties, groups and professional organisations as well as all countrymen would extend all out cooperation in this regard.

**My dear Countrymen,**

Despite achieving overall economic success and remarkable development in implementing various people-oriented and development programmes undertaken by our government much of our valuable time has been lost due to frequent hartal, blockade and other activities of some opposition political parties. Production and development have been disrupted, and the people have been affected. We have lost many valuable lives and many have suffered injuries. Education has been hampered and job opportunities are shrinking. The image of the country has been damaged. The flow of local and foreign investment has suffered.

It is a matter of great regret that some people took law in their hand at different stages of the political agitation and damaged national property. People passed their days in agony. They want an immediate end to this situation and live in peace and happiness. They want guarantee of their livelihood. The government is pledge-bound to ensure these fundamental rights of the people.

I therefore appeal to all irrespective of their opinions: Let us accept the present reality. Let us not cause further sufferings to the people and damage to the country. Let us solve the crisis through discussions. People have much expectations from the politicians. Let us show our broadness by using our experience to fulfill their expectations by rising above personal and party interests.

**My dear brothers and sisters,**

We have placed patriotism and people's interests above everything. I hope that all political parties of the country would come forward with the same feeling in response to my sincere appeal.

May Allah help us all.  
Allah Hafez  
Bangladesh Zindabad

## BKB gives Tk 50 cr in 11 S-dists

**From Staff Correspondent**  
**BARISAL, Mar 3:** Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Barisal region has so far disbursed Tk 50 crore agriculture loan among the farmers of eleven southern districts of Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Madaripur, Saraijpur, Gopalganj, Faridpur, and Rajshahi upto December 31 last year.

Official sources said, the bank has fixed up a target of Tk 125 crore for disbursement as loan among the farmers during the current financial year. According to the bank statistics, of the total district-wise loan disbursement are as follows: Barisal district Tk 4.50 crore, in Pirojpur Tk 4.54 crore, in Barguna Tk 8.30 crore, in Jhalakathi Tk 4.43 crore, in Faridpur Tk 4.13 crore, in Patuakhali Tk 3.64 crore, in Madaripur Tk 5.52 crore, in Gopalganj Tk 5.20 crore, in Saraijpur Tk 3.96 crore, in Bhola Tk 3.85 crore during that period.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Krishi Bank has realised a sum of Tk 33.50 crore against the outstanding agriculture loans of 75 crore Taka in these districts.

## Various income generating projects being implemented in rural areas

**From Our Correspondent**  
**MAGURA, Mar 3:** Swarnivara Bangladesh a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) has taken up a programme to implement various projects in nine thanas in Magura, Jhenidah, Narail and Bagerhat districts, it was learnt.

According to the official sources, Swarnivara Bangladesh has been implementing the programme for paddy husking, dairy farming, cattle rearing, small trade, rickshaw van, poultry farming, removing illiteracy and sanitation work in four thanas including Stripur, Mufammadpur, Shaikha and Magura sadar in Magura district.

Three thanas including Narail sadar, Lohagara and Kalia thanas in Narail district, Kaligonj thana in Jhenidah district, Tala thana in Satkhira district were also covered by the programme.

Besides, Swarnivara Bangladesh has taken up 'Adarsh Gram Gathon Prokalo' at one village each in four thanas including Bagharpara, Monirampur, Avoynagar and Kotchandpur thanas.

## Electrician electrocuted

**COMILLA, Mar 3:** An electrician was electrocuted while repairing a power line at Lakshani on Monday, reports UNB.

The victim, Rafiqul Islam, 45, a lineman of PDB died on the spot while working on the top of an electric pole.

Another report says, some relief materials were distributed among the victims of fire at Gorjohikola in the city recently.

**Khanka - Maizbandaria** distributed the relief goods on February 22.

# Improved oven gives new life to rural housewives

From Our Correspondents

**JHENIDAH, Mar 3:** Use of improved oven is rapidly becoming popular in different parts of the district.

Arappur, Ukilpara, City Collegepara, Chaklapara, Chuadanga Sianpara, Pagla Kanaipara, Beparipara, Hamdah, Adashapara, Kanchannagar BSCIC area, Mohiskundu, Kalabagan, Paripara, Khajura, Modernpara, and some other areas of Jhenidah pousasabha were initially brought under the use of improved oven project. About 300 families of those areas are using this oven. Families who have been using the new oven are saving their time, fuel and helping in keeping the environment clean.

Talking to MA Daud, District Supervisor of the Improved Oven Project, Bangladesh Fuel Research and Development Institute of Bangladesh Council for Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR) told that they have distributed about 200 improved oven.

Another 100 ovens will be distributed soon free of cost, the District Supervisor (DS) informed.

The DS further said that each burner or oven costs Taka between 100 and 400. A double burner oven cost between Tk 500 and 600 and triple burner or commercial burner costs Taka between 2,000 and 2,500.

It was learnt from the sources that earlier the farmers produced huge compost manure using garbage, thrown straw, dead leaves and cowdung. The compost manure could be used on farm land which was helpful. But most of the families in even rural areas are compelled to use garbage, straw, cowdung or similar substances to meet their fuel crisis. As a result the farmers were to some extent deprived of the natural — manure. To overcome the problems government had taken initiatives to invent the improved oven.

It was learnt while talking to a high official of Bangladesh Fuel Research and Development Institute of BCSIR that at least 3.80 crore metric tons of



A housewife in Arappur of Jhenidah town using the new oven.

wood worth Taka about three thousand crore is being consumed in the country every year.

Sources informed that the existence of forest in our country is only nine per cent out of required 25 per cent. Due to fall in number of trees in the country forest resources is fast vanishing which is completely a threat to our environment. To ensure natural balance BCSIR authorities have invented improved oven.

They started their programmes initially in Jhenidah, Magura, Jessore, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Pirojpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Gajipur, Tangail, Brahmanbaria, Habiganj, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Sunamganj, Feni, Manikganj, Nataganj, Chittagong, Comilla, Cox's-bazar, Mymensingh and Kishoreganj districts. To

extend the programme, authorities had given training to the interested persons.

Sources further informed that in existing system of cooking both in domestic and commercial way fuel between 5 to 10 per cent is used properly. The rest 90 to 95 per cent fuel is misused due to our ignorance. And if the improved oven is used in the country massively, at least 50 per cent of the fuel would be saved. At this about 50 crore maunds of fuel wood worth Taka about 1,500 crore would be saved every year. Further, sources said improved oven is not health hazardous as it produces minimum quantity of smoke. Using the new oven the utensils will not be covered by layer of carbon.

District Supervisor of improved oven project, Jhenidah, further informed that they had given weeklong training to 12

male and 13 female entrepreneurs, so far. Those trained persons have been motivating the local people to use the new oven and the merits on the use of the oven, sources said.

Shirin Akter, a college student of Kalabagan area in Jhenidah town informed that the new oven was constructed about four months back in their house. Earlier at least 12 maunds of fuel wood was needed for cooking for their 12 member family. But after installation of the improved oven, only three maund of fuel wood is required per month.

Further, Shirin said, their kitchen no longer becomes dirty as the smoke goes out through a chimney or pipe. They can cook food within half an hour instead of one and a half hour as was needed before, she added.

## 25-yr rural electricity power supply plan in Faridpur dist

**From Our Correspondent**  
**FARIDPUR, Mar 3:** Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS), Faridpur district unit has taken up a 25-year electrification programme at a cost of Taka 105 crore to bring 1,900 kilometres of rural areas of the district under the programme.

According to an official source, the programme is scheduled to be executed in 25 years, beginning from 1995.

Thana-wise break up of the programme is as follows: 217-km will be brought in Faridpur sadar, 54-km in Char Bhadraesan, 106-km in Sadarpur, 130-km in Bhanga, 298-km in Nagarkanda, 160-km in Boalmari, 81-km in Alfadanga and 138-km in Madhukhal.

Besides, five sub-stations will be installed at Kanipur, Bhajandanga, Bhanga, Boalmari and Nagarkanda for proper distribution of electricity.

The source also said that the cost for each kilometre under the programme will come to Taka 5 lakh. Besides, the samity has taken up another programme to facilitate irrigation of the district with financial assistance from IDP.

As many as 1,944 villages under 79 unions in 8 thanas will be brought under the programme.

5,707 shallow tubewells and 348 deep tubewells will be commissioned across the selected areas of the district.

## One kidnapped by Shantibahini men in CHT

**RANGAMATI, Mar 3:** A man was kidnapped by so-called Shantibahini activists from village Ugalchhari in Bagachhari thana in the district on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The man, Mohammad Ishaque, 30, was abducted by the Shantibahini men while he was taking rest at a tea-stall on way to fishing in the Kaptal Lake. The reason behind the abduction could not be known immediately.

The kidnapers took him to forest areas. Local elite were trying to secure his release. Tension was prevailing in the area.

## Shops looted in Patuakhali

**From Staff Correspondent**  
**BARISAL, Mar 3:** A group of armed dacoits 20 to 25 in number swooped on at least fifty shops of various goods and committed dacoity in Bablatala Bazar of Kalapara thana area of Patuakhali district last Sunday midnight.

At least 60 persons were injured during the incident. Dacoits blasted at least 15 to 20 crackers and fired nearly 10 blank shots to create panic in the bazar area, witnesses said.

Dacoits beat up some people of different shops and injured by lethal weapons during looting.

Seriously injured Arab Ali, 32, Wadud, 25 and Siddique Master, 50, were later sent to hospital for treatment.

## BWDB official faces corruption charges

**From Our Correspondent**  
**FARIDPUR, Mar 3:** District anti-corruption bureau has lodged a case with Kotwali thana against Shahidullah, Sub-Assistant Engineer of Faridpur district Water Development Board for allegedly taking bribe from the Shukunia Embankment Rebuilding Project Committee under Nagarkanda thana.

It is reported that 1,14,773 metric tons of wheat was sanctioned for rebuilding the aforesaid embankment in the fiscal year 1994-95 under Food for Work Programme. While passing the delivery order (DO), the Sub-Assistant Engineer demanded Taka 55 thousand of the convener of the project as bribe for himself and his other superior officials.

The total amount of Taka 55 thousands was realised from the project-convener in two instalments before passing DO for the wheat sanctioned for the project.

The district Anti-Corruption Bureau received a complaint of this from a source in compliance with the complaint of Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan, District Anti-Corruption Officer in-

## A profitable crop yet to become popular

From Our Correspondent

**JHENIDAH, Mar 3:** Sunflower cultivation is gaining popularity in Jhenidah district. According to reports, 48 hectares of land was brought under sunflower cultivation last year and this year it was cultivated on 52 hectares in the district. All the six thanas, Jhenidah sadar, Saikupa, Harinakundu, Kaliganj, Kotchandpur and Mohespur were brought under the programme.

Golan Siddique, a farmer of village Sonadah in Saikupa thana of district said that Saikupa thana agriculture extension Department arranged a demonstration plot on cultivation of Sunflowers in his five decimals of land. Agriculture Extension Department (AED) had supplied necessary seeds, fertilizers and other input for the purpose.

After seeing successful results Siddique to the farmer Sunflower on additional 29 decimals of land on experimental basis.

Siddique spent Taka 800 to cultivate the crop of 'Kirony' variety. He was expecting about seven maunds of Sunflower seeds. At least 115 kilograms of oil would be produced from the seeds which would bring about Taka 6,000, he hoped.

Ashrafuzzaman, headmaster of Nadrapa Juba Milan High School in Saikupa thana said that AED authorities motivated him to cultivate Sunflower crop on two decimals of land in his school. At least 20 kilograms of Sunflower seeds is expected to be produced from the land, the headmaster said.

## Newsmen condemn arrest of JP leader

**JHALAKATI, Mar 3:** Journalists of the district condemned and protested the arrest of Editor of the Ittefaq Anwar Hossain Monju, reports UNB.

In a joint statement the district Press Club and Journalist Association protested the attack at the residence of Editor of the Inquilab and demanded immediate release of Monju and punishment of the miscreants involved in the attack.

The statement was signed by Club President Shamsul Islam Chand and Secretary He-mayet Uddin Himu and Association President Chittaranjan Dutta and Secretary Mohammad Abdur Rashid.

## Road construction works in Barisal remains incomplete for long 15 yrs

**From Staff Correspondent**  
**BARISAL, Mar 3:** The construction works of Patuakhali-Kuakata via Amtali and Kalapara are yet to be completed. The works of this road has not been completed during last 15 years of time due to several reasons, local sources said.

The construction works of the 70 kilometres long road was undertaken during 1980-81 fiscal year by the Roads and Highways Department.

During that time the initial expenditure was estimated at 17.50 lakh Taka and was scheduled to be completed by 1989-90. But it is still remaining unfinished for different reasons including fund constraint, official sources said.

It is to be mentioned here that 30 kilometres road between Patuakhali and Amtali was completed last year.

Another 18 kilometres long road between Amtali and Kalapara may be completed during this financial year. But still then the works of the rest of the portion will remain unfinished.

Local sources said, due to fund constraint betwin carpeting works is not being started yet.

**MAGURA:** Egg buying and selling business is booming in the district as number of farms increases. Dealers like the one on the bicycle knocks door to door to buy eggs. This way a dealer collects about 100 eggs a day.