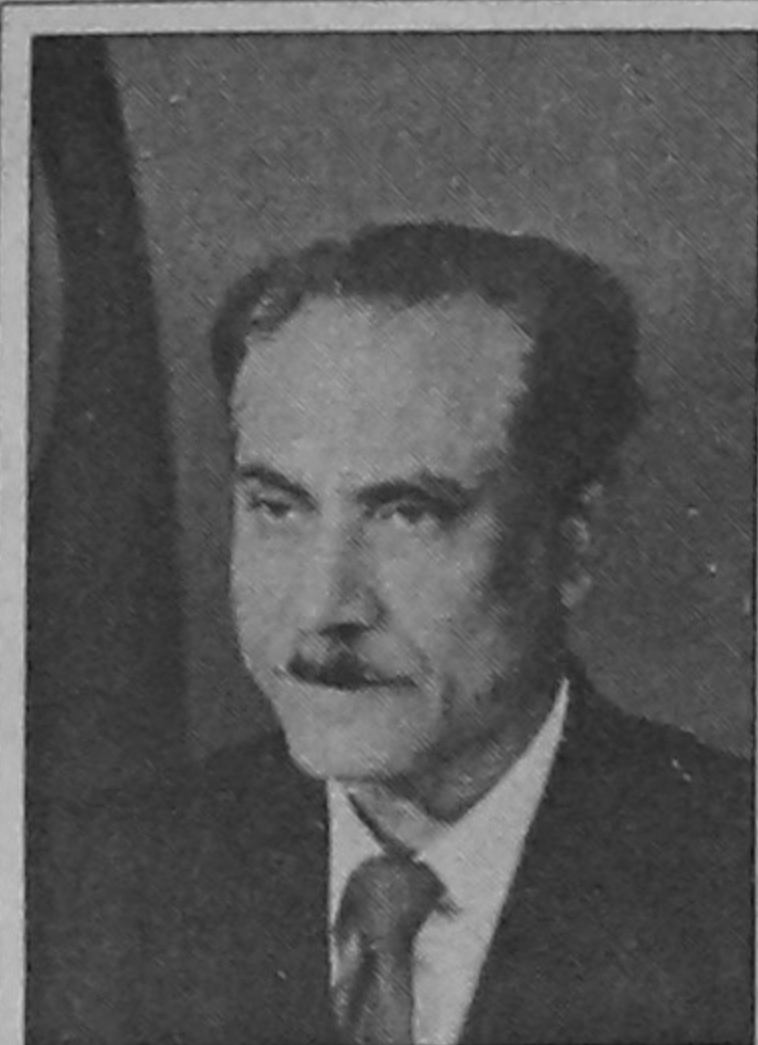


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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
ঢাকা
০৯ আষাঢ় ১৪০৭
২৩ জুন ২০০০

বাণী

গণতান্ত্রিক চিন্তা-চেতনায় উজ্জীবিত বাংলাদেশের মানুষের ঐকান্তিক চেষ্টিয় ১৯৯১ সালে সাধারণ নির্বাচনের মাধ্যমে গণতন্ত্র পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় এবং ১৯৯৬ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনের মাধ্যমে দেশে গণতান্ত্রিক প্রক্রিয়া আরও জোরদার হয়। সেই নির্বাচনের ফলে শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে বর্তমান সরকার প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়; আজ এর চার বছর পূর্ণ হলো।

জনগণের কল্যাণে দেশের সব রাজনৈতিক দল, বিশেষ করে সংসদে প্রতিনিধিত্বকারী দলগুলির মধ্যে সহযোগিতা ও সহমর্মিতার মনোভাব সম্প্রসারিত করা গণতান্ত্রিক শাসন ব্যবস্থার পূর্বশর্ত। জাতীয় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়ে বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক দলের মধ্যে একমত প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়া একান্ত দরকার এবং এটাই দেশবাসীর ঐকান্তিক প্রত্যাশা। দেশবাসীর এই প্রত্যাশা পূরণে রাজনৈতিক নেতৃবৃন্দকে আমি সচেষ্ট হওয়ার আহ্বান জানাচ্ছি।

জনগণের কল্যাণে আমি বর্তমান সরকারের গৃহীত কার্যাবলীর সাক্ষ্য কামনা করি।

শেখ হাসিনা
বিচারপতি সাহাবুদ্দিন আহমদ

The Bangalee Nation achieved independence in 1971 breaking the shackles of subjugation for a thousand year. Democracy was emancipated in 1996, the Silver Jubilee year of country's independence, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu. Then, for the last four years, the people witnessed glorious success and achievements at national and international fields. Bangla has got the status of international language and Bangladesh got a glorious position. On the 23rd June the Awami League government headed by Sheikh Hasina will complete four years. During this period the people got a new direction for development, peace and stability. This period will remain as a milestone in the history of Bangladesh despite repeated attempts by the opposition to create obstacles and chaos in the name of movement.

The Post of the President

The Post of the President in our country is the highest constitutional post. Awami League nominated Justice

Shahabuddin Ahmed for the post who is neutral and acceptable to all. Nomination of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has brightened the image of the government headed by Sheikh Hasina.

Achievements in International field

Bangladesh runs its foreign policy in the light of policy guideline "Friendship to all malice to none". The main objective of this policy is to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and accelerate the pace of economic development. Measures have been taken by the government to play an effective role in the UN and its sister organizations. Efforts are also being made to further strengthen the friendly ties with NAM, Commonwealth, OIC and SAARC for increasing cooperation based on friendship. For strengthening regional co-operation Awami League government is giving full support to SAARC and taking active part in its activities. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took initiative to defuse tension created by nuclear test carried out by India and Pakistan. The world leaders have welcome Bangladesh's move.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina participated in the world Microcredit summit held in

Over 13 crore people live in our small country. If we all want to divide any major economic benefit among ourselves the per capita figure will take a very small shape. In this context, do the following data comparatively indicate any better achievement?

People live below poverty line
April 1996 : 47.9%
April 1999 : 44.7%

Per Capita calorie intake (per day)
April 1996 : 2206
April 1999 : 2283

Availability of food per head (per day)
June 1996 : 415 gram
June 1999 : 525 gram

Annual per capita GDP
June, 1996 : Tk. 10,660
June, 2000 : Tk. 14, 578

The Awami League government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has crossed four year of its tenure. Political situation, during

the period, was hostile and the nature was unfavourable. Even then, the GDP growth rate during the four consecutive years was more than 5 percent, which was totally incredible throughout the two decades before 1996. There was such a target to produce 2.5 crore tonnes of rice and wheat in the year 2001. But congenial atmosphere could not be created to achieve the target. Rather the then governments had no ability to materialise the long term plan. The following data depict clear reflection of this comment:

Foodgrain Production

1991-1992 : 1.93 Lakh M.T.
1995-1996 : 1.90 Lakh M.T.
1999-2000 : 2.43 Lakh M.T.

BNP was in power from 1991 to 1996. Food autarky is regarded as one of the foremost conditions in achieving economic self-reliance in our country. During the period, population of the country was raised by one crore although the

Four Years of Growth and Macroeconomic Stability Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Ushers in a New Era of Prosperity for Bangladesh

Shah A.M.S. Kibria

When Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971, it did not have a very positive image. Henry Kissinger made it fashionable to question the viability of the new state. Fortunately, all those prophets of doom have been proven wrong. Bangladesh have not only survived as an independent sovereign country, in recent years it has been identified as the nation with the brightest future in South Asia. A homogeneous nation without the religious, ethnic or linguistic conflicts which afflict other countries in the region, Bangladesh has slowly but steadily built up the foundations for self-sustained growth. It has developed the capacity to deal effectively with natural disasters and the vagaries of weather, coming out of such calamities with growing confidence as a nation. In less than three decades, Bangladesh have been able to reduce its population growth rate from over 3 percent to 1.5 percent. The discovery of vast reserves of natural gas has created an upbeat mood of optimism in the nation. In

fact, foreign investors are looking at Bangladesh with greater interest than ever before.

Steady economic growth and macro-economic stability during the last four years under the Awami League government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has led foreign observers to re-assess the country's growth prospects. The remarkable success of the government in coping with the worst flood of the century in 1998 without loss of life has demonstrated not only the nation's resilience but also its disaster-management capacity. The quick recovery of the economy from such a disaster astonished international observers. Indeed, despite the Asian economic meltdown in 1997 and the longest-lasting flood in living memory in 1998, the country averaged 5.1 percent economic growth during these four years, compared to the lackluster growth performance—well below five percent—during the previous two decades. The per capita income in 1995-96 was US \$ 345; in 1999-2000 it stands at \$ 386 though the corresponding figures calculated in purchasing power parity terms would be much

higher.

Assuming office after a free and fair election in June 1996, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina moved quickly to create the conditions necessary for rapid economic growth. The long-festering dispute with India over the sharing of the Ganges water was solved with the signing of a 30-year Treaty. In a rare example of magnanimity and statesmanship, the 20-year-old insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts was resolved peacefully by negotiations. Next followed a series of measures to liberalize the power, telecommunication and oil and gas sectors, opening up new vistas of economic opportunity for the country.

An export-led and private-sector oriented growth strategy, adopted by the Awami League government to accelerate economic development, was supported by solid achievements in agriculture. In keeping with her electoral commitments, the government ensured an adequate supply of fertilizer at reasonable prices, electricity and diesel oil for irrigation pumps, good quality seeds and other inputs to the farmers. A massive program of

agricultural credit was launched. The success of the credit program, coupled with the steady supply of inputs, enabled farmers to bring in record harvests in four consecutive years. Customs duty and other taxes on agricultural machineries such as tractors and power tillers were withdrawn. The farmers responded to these incentives with remarkable swiftness and vigour. The result was an average growth of 4 percent in agriculture during these four years. Despite the devastating floods of 1998 the growth in the crop-subsector of agriculture during these years is estimated at 6 percent. Food grains production rose from 19 million tons in 1996 to 24.3 million tons in the year 2000. Given the shrinking farmland area in a densely populated country, it was no mean achievement to produce 5.3 million tons of additional food grains. As a result of the near self-sufficiency in rice and wheat, imports of food grains have decreased, reducing the pressure on the country's balance of payments. In fact, Bangladesh has started exporting modest

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The Achievements of Present Government in the National and International Level

Monaem Sarker

Washington, the world Food summit in Rome, the Inter Parliamentary Union Conference in India, the special OIC Summit in Pakistan, the 9th SAARC Summit in Maldives, the D-8 Summit in Turkey, the 5th world conference for the aged in Germany, Commonwealth Summit in UK, and the OIC Summit in Iran. She earned rare honour for the country through her visits to Saudi Arabia, Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia.

The role played by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the SAARC summit held in Male was a great diplomatic success. Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Co-operation, BIMSTEC was formed in 1997 to strengthen sub-regional co-operation. Bangladesh played a leading role in forming the organization.

The UNESCO peace prize awarded to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 1998, election of Bangladesh to the UN Security Council with support of 172 states and visit of Presidents of various friendly countries including US President Bill Clinton to Bangladesh bear testimony to the glorious success of the government.

International Mother Language Day

The 21st February is a red-letter day in the history of Bangalee nation. The people established their right at the cost of blood through the language movement in 1952. The nation, inspired and united by the language movement, started struggle against the Pakistani military rule and finally started the heroic war of liberation which culminated in our independence. On the 29th March 1998, a

Canadian NGO sent a proposal to the UN Secretary General for declaring the 21st February as "International Mother Language Day." Subsequently the proposal was sent to UNESCO at the initiative and advice of the Prime Minister. On the 17th November 1999, Bangladesh's proposal was unanimously accepted by the UNESCO. By declaring the 21st February as "International Mother Language Day" UNESCO not only accorded recognition to the sacrifices made by the martyrs of language movement but also placed the Bangalee nation at a prestigious position. From now all nations, big and small, will observe their own Mother Language Day on the 21st February every year. Achievement of such a rare honour has been possible due to the efforts of the present nationalist government and support of the people.

Membership of the Security Council

For playing an excellent and constructive role in maintaining international peace Bangladesh was elected to the UN Security Council for the second time on 15 October 1999. Bangladesh was first elected to the Security Council in 1979-80. Getting membership of the security council for the second time within 30 years is a great honour for the country and success of our foreign policy.

The three nation Business Summit

Another achievement of the present government was the holding of tripartite business summit in Dhaka in January 1998. In this summit, the leading entrepreneurs, industrialists and businessmen of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan attended. The summit ended with the adoption of Dhaka Declaration. The three leaders, I. Gujral of India, Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Sheikh Hasina declared their commitment to establish a South Asian Free Trade Zone by the year 2001. The heads of government also agreed to give preferential treatment to the least developed ones.

D-8 Summit

Playing an effective role in forming the D-8 group comprising of eight developing Muslim States Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey is a notable achievement of the present government in international field. Inclusion of Bangladesh in D-8 group formed at the initiative of Turkey has enhanced the prestige of the country. Second Summit of the D-8 group was held in Dhaka on 1-2 March 1999.

Role of Bangladesh in UN peace keeping Force:

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প্রধানমন্ত্রী
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
০৬ আষাঢ় ১৪০৭
২০ জুন ২০০০

বাণী

ঐতিহাসিক ২৩ জুন, বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের একাদশ প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী এবং বর্তমান সরকারের দায়িত্ব গ্রহণের ৪ (চার) বছর পূর্তি দিবস। এ উপলক্ষে আমি সারাদেশে সংগঠনের অগণিত নেতা-কর্মী এবং দেশে ও বিদেশে অবস্থানরত বাংলাদেশের সর্বস্তরের জনসাধারণকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন। আমি গভীর শ্রদ্ধাভরে স্মরণ করি সংগঠনের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা সভাপতি মজলুম জননেতা মওলানা আব্দুল হামিদ খান ভাসানী, হোসেন শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দী এবং জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানসহ আমাদের পূর্বসূরি নেতা ও কর্মীদেরকে। তারা দেশপ্রেম, শ্রম, মেধা ও ত্যাগের বিনিময়ে আমাদের প্রাণপ্রিয় এ সংগঠন গড়ে তুলেছিলেন।

পাকিস্তানি ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন, শোষণ, বঞ্চনা, নিপীড়ন ও নির্যাতনকে পালিয়ে দলে জাতির জনকের দূরদর্শী ও নির্ভীক নেতৃত্বে আওয়ামী লীগ বাঙালি জাতিসত্তার অজয় শক্তিকে উর্ধ্বে তুলে ধরেছিল। বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামের সুদীর্ঘ পথ-প্রক্রিয়ায় ভাষা আন্দোলন, শিক্ষা আন্দোলন, সামরিক শাসন বিরোধী স্বাধিকার আন্দোলন, উনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান, ৭০-এর নির্বাচনে ঐতিহাসিক বিজয়, ১৯৭১ সালের অসহযোগ আন্দোলন এবং মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের নেতৃত্ব প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে আওয়ামী লীগ আমাদের জাতীয় ইতিহাসে গৌরবমণ্ডিত ভূমিকা পালন করেছে। বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের ইতিহাস তাই বাঙালি জাতির সংগ্রামের ইতিহাস। ইতিহাসের এ অধ্যাক্রান্ত ধার্মিক দেয়ার জন্য ষড়যন্ত্রকারী কুচক্রী মহল বারবার পেছন থেকে আঘাত চেষ্টা করে। স্বাধীনতার মহান নেতা জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধুকে সপরিবারে নৃশংসভাবে হত্যা করা হয়েছে ১৯৭৫ সালের ১৫ আগস্টের কাল রাতে। ঘৃণ্য কুচক্রীরা একই বছর ৩ নভেম্বর কারাগারের অভ্যন্তরে বর্বরোচিতভাবে হত্যা করে জাতীয় চার নেতাকে। সামরিক জাতির শাসন শুরু হয় হত্যা, ক্রা ও ষড়যন্ত্রের মাধ্যমে। ক্ষমতা দখলের রাজনীতিতে জনগণ ভোটের অধিকার হারায়, গণতন্ত্র হয় নির্বাসিত। ষড়যন্ত্র ও চক্রান্তের জাল ছিঁড়ে করে সামরিক স্বৈরশাসনের বিরুদ্ধে আইনের শাসন ও গণতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠা, জনগণের ভোট ও ভাতের অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠায় আমাদের সংগ্রাম বিজয় অর্জন করেছে। গণমানুষের অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তির লক্ষ্যে আমাদের কর্মীদের ত্যাগ ও সংগ্রামের ফলে এ সংগঠনের শেকড় জনগণের হৃদয়ে প্রোথিত হয়েছে। জাতির জনকের স্বপ্নের 'সোনার বাংলা' গড়ে তোলার জন্য বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের কর্মীরা অমৃত্যু সংগ্রাম করে যাবে বলে আমার বিশ্বাস।

নির্দলীয়-তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের অধীনে ১৯৯৬ সালের ১২ জুনে অনুষ্ঠিত অবাধ নির্বাচনে জনগণের রায় নিয়ে স্বাধীনতার পর বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ দ্বিতীয়বারের মত সরকার পরিচালনার দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করেছে। সেই থেকে দেশের অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তির লক্ষ্যে আমরা নিরলসভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছি। আমরা গঙ্গার পানি চুক্তি ও পার্বত্য শান্তিচুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করেছি, '৯৭-এর দুর্ভিক্ষ' এবং '৯৮-এর প্রলয়ঙ্করী বন্যা' অসহনভাবে মোকাবিলা করেছি। দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনের লক্ষ্যে আমরা ব্যাপক সমন্বিত কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করেছি। বিগত চার বছর আমরা ক্রমাগতভাবে শতকরা পাঁচ ভাগেরও বেশি উচ্চ অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি অর্জনে সক্ষম হয়েছি। আমাদের সরকার দেশ থেকে সন্ত্রাস নির্মূলের লক্ষ্যে 'জননিরাপত্তা আইন' এবং 'নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতন দমন আইন' প্রণয়নসহ ব্যাপক পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছে। দেশের দক্ষিণ পশ্চিমাঞ্চলে আমাদের সফল ও আন্তরিক পদক্ষেপের ফলে জনজীবনে স্বস্তি নেমে এসেছে। সকল ক্ষেত্রে স্বচ্ছতা ও জবাবদিহিতা নিশ্চিত করার ফলেই আমাদের এ সাফল্য অর্জন সম্ভব হয়েছে।

এ দেশের গণমানুষের আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতিফলন ঘটুক বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের সামগ্রিক কর্মকাণ্ডে। আমি আমাদের সরকারের সকল কার্যক্রমে জনসাধারণের সার্বিক অংশগ্রহণ ও অকুণ্ঠ সমর্থন কামনা করি।

জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু
বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক

শেখ হাসিনা

PROSPERITY, SOLVENCY AND HUMANITY

AJAY DAS GUPTA

dependent country, had to win over the debate against the donors on the issue of giving subsidy to agriculture sector in this age of globalisation. Tk. 411 crore subsidy was given only to import fertilizer during the last 4 years. Farmers were charged with only Tk. 1.75 for one unit of electricity for irrigation, production cost of which is Tk. 2.63. Bold decision are needed to take such steps, which the donors did not like.

The success achieved in agriculture sector was not confined in rice production. The production of wheat has also increased. The production of potato this year, about 28 lakh M.T. is more than the double of

previous years average annual production.

Bangladesh still depends on other nations for a few agriculture products like sugar, edible oil and pulse. During the past four years, the agriculture policy was followed and programmes implemented under an efficient management. If that trend is continued for next years, no doubt more successes could be achieved in this sector.

The success achieved in agriculture sector during the last consecutive years has widened the possibility of setting up of agro-based industries. The government is also providing incentives

including tax exemption in this regard. Tk. 100 crore has been allocated under the equity development fund in the budget of fiscal 2000-2001 as incentive for the entrepreneurs, who want to set up software, agri-products and food processing industries. These two sectors also have great prospects in the country's export market. Although the volume of export earning increased largely and names of many new items are being included in the export-list. In this regard, the government has rightly identified the thrust sectors.

Industrialisation in the era of globalisation is not so easy. However, reduction of import duty in the nineties caused damage to the local industries. Many of these became sick and to some extent, some active industries were shutdown. To overcome these problems, the government had to take various steps in the interest of local industries.

Infrastructural facilities were built up and the entrepreneurs are being provided with special custom and income tax provisions.

The country's real power generation capacity in 1995-96 was 2105 megawatt. This was increased to 2700 megawatt in 1999-2000. Average generation rate was increased by 19.5 percent during the last four years as 302 megawatt of power came from private sector. Moreover, projects are being implemented following the signing of agreements to generate about 1000 megawatt of electricity. Power and energy sectors are attracting a large number of foreign investors beside private local entrepreneurs.

21 thousand metre long bridges were constructed during these four years, out of which the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge alone has the length of 4800 metres. The 11th longest bridge of the world was opened to traffic on 23 June 1998, just two years back.

Over 2000 vehicles ply over the bridge everyday. Train also operates from the east end of the bridge connecting the entire western zone railway. The donors did not want railroad over the bridge. It is the present government specially Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who took the initiative to set up the rail line over the bridge. Now, construction work of the 100 km long Joydevpur-Bangabandhu Bridge east end rail line is going on in full swing. With the completion of this line, the whole area of Bangladesh will come under a single railway network like the existing country-wide road and highway network.

Indexes, presented at the outset of this article indicate better life and living condition in Bangladesh now-a-days. Similar pictures are also seen in education, health and environment sectors. Number of students in educational institutions

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