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**Two Years of Progress: At a Glance****Finance Ministry**

The 3-yearly budgetary framework has been upgraded into a 5-yearly framework. A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) budget has been prepared and Bangladesh Financing Fund has been created in order to promote private investments. Measures are being taken to convert this fund into a company. Arrangements were made for opening of bank accounts with a minimum 10 taka savings in order to facilitate receipt of agricultural credits and official subsidies. Steps have been taken for automating the taxation system, motivating the tax-payers through income tax fair and online submission of income tax returns.

**Planning Ministry**

A perspective plan (2010-21) has been outlined as a long-term vision with the goal of achieving specific socio-economic objectives. Work is going on for the preparation of Sixth Five-year Plan (2011-15). MDG Progress Report 2007, MDG Progress Report 2008 and MDG Needs Assessment & Costing (2009-2015) have been published. A Taka 38,500 crore annual development programme (2010-11) having 916 projects is being implemented by attaching priority to poverty alleviation, employment generation, human resource development and uplift of backward areas.

**Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry**

The accused BDR mutineers have been put under trial following the mutiny and brutal killings perpetrated at Pikhana BDR headquarters. The Jatiya Sangsad has passed the International Crimes Tribunal (amendment) Act, 2009 in order to try those people who committed genocide, crimes against humanity and war-crimes during the liberation war. The number of judges in the appellate division of Bangladesh Supreme Court has been raised to 11 from 7 for expeditious disposal of pending cases.

**Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry**

A web-site has been launched by the Local Government Division as part of an effort to establish digital Bangladesh; internet connections have been provided to all sections of the ministry. Work is in progress for preparing a database on rural water supply and sanitation in order to make rural water supply cum sanitation services time befitting. A project titled 'Economic Empowerment of the Poorest in Bangladesh' (February 2008 to December 2015) is being implemented at a cost of Taka 886.74 crore, which include a DFID grant of Taka 884 crore, for reducing the poverty of 1 million hardcore poor in Bangladesh within 2015. A pilot project has commenced from July 2009 to provide better e-services in rural areas.

**Agriculture Ministry**

The prices of non-urea fertilisers have been brought down by three-quarters. Through introduction of agricultural input assistance cards, farmers are now receiving various agricultural assistance including subsidies given by the government through 10 taka bank accounts. The discovery of genome sequence of jute with government assistance has been a big success. Other successes include provision of financial incentives, agricultural equipments for farmers with 25% subsidy, and distribution of 15,000 ribbon-tools free of cost among jute farmers for extracting jute-fibres through ribbon-retting method.

**Food and Disaster Management Ministry**

Fair price cards have been introduced for low-income population. The card-holder families are getting 20 kilograms of rice per month at a price fixed by the government. Presently, construction work of food warehouses having a total capacity of 1 lakh 35 thousand metric tons is going on. Construction of food silos having a capacity of around 8 lakh 50 thousand metric tons has also been taken up. Forty-eight thousand families affected by cyclone 'Aila' have been provided with 13,402 metric tons of rice and 96 crore taka as house-building loan.

**Education Ministry**

The National Education Policy has been unanimously approved by the Jatiya Sangsad. It was possible to hand over text books to all primary school students as well as the students of secondary schools, madrasas and technical education institutions on the very first day of 2010. As drop-out rate has declined, an initiative has been taken this year for distributing 23 crore 20 lakh text-books among students, which is higher than last year's 19 crore. Madrasa education is being modernised with the new education policy attaching more importance to it.

**Primary and Mass Education Ministry**

The present government has appointed 53 thousand 141 primary school teachers during the past two years. Around 9 thousand offspring of freedom fighters have been given teaching jobs at primary schools and another 4 thousand will also be appointed soon. Pre-primary education has been made compulsory in all government primary schools within 2011. ICT Labs have been installed in 55 primary teachers' institutions (PTI) with the goal of building a digital Bangladesh and 1,100 offices at the field level have been provided with internet connections. The 'Bangabandhu Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournament' has been launched in 2010 for the primary school students with participations from the unions up to the national level.

**Health and Family Welfare Ministry**

A total of 9,722 community clinics have been set up till now as consultation centres for primary healthcare, family planning and other services for the poor and marginalised population. 780 doctors have been appointed through the 28th BCS examination and another 3,551 on ad-hoc basis. Besides, 1722 senior staff nurses and 6,391 health assistants have also been appointed. The Drug Administration Directorate has been upgraded into a department in order to ensure production of quality drugs and strengthen the opportunities for exporting medicines.

**Home Ministry**

The Home Ministry has taken multifarious measures for containing militancy and extremism, terrorism and extortions, holding trial of war-crimes and crimes against humanity, grenade attack of 21 August 2004 and other sensational crimes. A committee has been formed headed by the state minister for home affairs for curbing and curing militancy. An industrial police unit has been created for maintaining law and order in industrial areas. The 'Bangladesh Border Guard Act-2010' has been passed in parliament for reorganising Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The government has constituted an international-standard war crimes tribunal for trying the war criminals in accordance with the election manifesto of Awami League. Machine readable passports and Machine readable visas have been introduced for lifting the quality of Bangladeshi passports to international level. The Home Ministry has taken significant measures for curtailing eve-teasing. The Mobile Court Act-2009 has been amended to bring eve-teasers under its purview.

**Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry**

1 crore 5 lakh energy-saving CFL bulbs have been distributed among 45 lakh electricity consumers for the

first time in the country for increasing their usage. As a result, around 80 to 100 megawatt of electricity could be saved. The Bangladesh Gas Act, 2010 has been passed for ensuring proper use of gas. The government has created a gas development fund for rendering assistance to various projects in the sector.

**Commerce Ministry**

A timely import and export policy has been formulated by the government for the period 2009-2012. The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has been activated and a safety stock of essentials, such as sugar, soybean oil, palm oil, lentil and gram has been built up. Arrangements have been made for open market sale of commodities through TCB dealers.

**Housing and Public Works Ministry**

Development of 43 thousand plots and construction of 4,500 flats under the purview of 32 approved projects of RAJUK and National Housing Authority are going on in full swing. A scheme has been undertaken for sanctioning 11,500 plots in four satellite towns around Dhaka.

**Labour and Employment Ministry**

The National Wages and Productivity Commission-2010 was formed to fix minimum wages for 14 private industrial sectors including garments as well as to recommend salaries of workers employed in government and autonomous enterprises. The National Child Elimination Policy-2010 has been formulated. A total of 1,556 workers have been imparted training through 66 educational courses on workers' rights and duty awareness.

**Information Ministry**

The Right to Information Act-2009 has been passed in parliament for ensuring media freedom and free flow of information. An information commission has been constituted and a policy has been framed on establishment and operation of FM radio stations in the private sector. Bangladesh Film Archives Operation and Management Policy-2010 has been formulated. Initiative has been taken for implementation of the communication programme for development of women and children (3rd phase).

**Science and Information & Communication Technology Ministry**

A hi-tech park has been set up at Kaliakoir and 80 incubators have been installed at BSRS Bhaban of Karwan Bazar, Dhaka for expanding hi-tech and knowledge-based industries in the country. A framework agreement has been signed with the Russian Federation for establishing Rooppur Atomic Energy Power Plant in order to meet the ever-increasing demand of electricity in the country. 'Bangabandhu Fellowship' has been introduced for grooming young scientists and researchers in the country.

**Foreign Ministry**

The foreign policy of the present government is guided by the pledge expressed in Vision-2021 for projecting Bangladesh in the light of the spirit of liberation war. As a consequence, Bangladesh has succeeded in establishing itself as a progressive, secular and successful country in the international arena. The government's commitment and initiatives for poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and uprooting of terrorism and militancy have generated a positive image for the country. The country has been tremendously successful in all elections at international bodies during the past two years. These include UNDP, UNICEF, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO and WTU.

**Youth and Sports Ministry**

The National Service Programme has been undertaken for creation of temporary employment opportunities for two years by involving the educated but unemployed youths in nation-building activities. The national cricket team has worn cricket series against the teams from West Indies, Zimbabwe, New Zealand and England.

**Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry**

68,000 children have been provided with pre-school education through 3,500 neighbourhood centres of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Assistance has been provided to around 1,18,000 families for improvement of their health and nutrition status and formal education has been taught to 700 students. Basic courses were conducted for 998 neighbourhood workers, refresher's training was offered to 15,000 workers and 50 officials were trained. Construction of 1180 neighbourhood centres has been completed.

**Industries Ministry**

The National Industrial Policy-2010 has been formulated for transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income industrial country by the year 2021. The price of fertilisers has been reduced thrice to bring it within the reach of farmers. A record 17 lakh 7 thousand metric tons of salt have been produced during 2009-10 and work is progressing on framing a national salt policy.

**Cultural Affairs Ministry**

An initiative has been taken for a national cultural development programme in order to strengthen cultural activities in the country. A special allocation of Taka 100 crore has been made for the cultural affairs sector in the national budget of 2010-11. A plan has been devised for setting up a 'Golden Bangla Cultural Ring' with the inclusion of historical places linked to the country's independence.

**Land Ministry**

Scanning and digitisation of 1129 street maps of Bangladesh's international border adjacent to India's West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura states have been completed. A target has been fixed for distribution of 5000 acres of khas lands among 46 landless families per upazila in the country during 2010-11 fiscal year. The Soil Management Act, 2010 has been passed in parliament.

**Posts and Telecommunication Ministry**

Optical fibres have been set up for installation of a 72-point video-conferencing network between the Prime Minister's Office and 64 offices of Deputy Commissioners. International incoming call rate has been reduced by 4 cents so that expatriates could communicate at minimum cost. Tele-talk mobile phone network has been made operational in 3 hill districts. The Post Office (Amendment) Act, 2010 has been passed.

**Shipping Ministry**

Establishment of a deep-sea port at Sonadia island of Cox's Bazar district as a nationally important priority project has been taken up. The Benapole land port is being modernised at a cost of Taka 40 crore through improvement of infrastructure. A project has been readied to establish 1 maritime university and 6 new marine academies.

**Environment and Forests Ministry**

The government has prepared a strategic plan for tackling the adverse impacts of climate change and a climate change trust fund has been created for the purpose. The Environmental Court Act 2000 has been amended for setting up offices of the environment department as well as environmental courts in 21 districts. National environmental medal has been introduced. A

policy has been formulated for the conservation of spotted deer. Rules have been framed for waste management of ship-breaking yards.

**Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry**

Smart-cards containing biometric information of expatriate workers have been introduced. An expatriate welfare bank has been established for providing easy loans to expatriates, receipt of their remittance, investment of remitted money for the country's development and upholding the rights and welfare of expatriate workers. Initiative has been taken for establishing 30 technical training centres (TTC) in 30 districts as well as 5 marine technology institutes at a cost of Taka 9 thousand crore.

**Fisheries and Livestock Ministry**

A perspective plan has been prepared for fisheries development, keeping in mind the development targets of Vision-2021. The fisheries department is working to enhance the production of meat, milk and egg through 27 development projects.

**Religious Affairs Ministry**

An interactive website has been launched for disseminating information and making the hajj management effective (www.hajj.gov.bd). Permanent deposit of Hindu Religious Welfare Trust has been raised to Taka 16 crore and the deposit of Buddhist Religious Welfare Trust has also been enhanced. A Christian Religious Welfare Trust has been set up for the first time.

**Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry**

Tourism Policy-2010 has been drafted, special tourism act 2010 has been formulated providing for special tourism areas and tourist police unit has been instituted. Construction work of 'Kuakata Motel and Youth Inn' has been completed at a cost of Taka 10 crore 97.26 lakh. A programme has been chalked up to construct 'Bangabandhu International Airport' having all facilities of global standard.

**Water Resources Ministry**

Initiative has been taken to implement large-scale projects for dealing with natural disasters resulting from global warming; land reclamation from the sea and construction of the Ganges barrage is also being taken up. Discussion is continuing at the joint rivers commission level between India and Bangladesh for the sharing of Teesta waters during dry season.

**Textiles and Jute Ministry**

The present government has enacted the Compulsory Use of Jute Products Act, 2010 to enhance the use of jute and jute goods in packaging. Work is progressing fast on setting up a 'Khulna Textile Palli' with the goal of industrial growth in the southern region.

**Liberation War Affairs Ministry**

The cabinet has approved the construction of independence glass tower at Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan at a cost of Taka 137 crore and work has started on it from February 2010. Freedom Fighters' Complexes are being constructed in all the districts at a cost of Taka 118 crore and in all upazilas at a cost of Taka 806.55 crore for the welfare of freedom fighters.

**Social Welfare Ministry**

The number of beneficiaries in old age allowance scheme has been increased to 4,75,000 during 2010-11 and its allocation has been raised by 291 crore taka. Allocations for insolvent and disabled people have also been raised by Taka 42.96 crore. Allowance scheme for widows and deserted women is also being implemented.

**Women and Children Affairs Ministry**

The parliament has approved the Curbing and Prevention of Family Violence Act, 2010. Alongside 6 other divisions, one-stop crisis centre has also been set up at Rangpur division for curtailing women's repression. Rallies, human-chains and seminars have been organised for generating awareness against eve-teasing.

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed

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**Changes will there be in Bangladesh**

articulated buses will be added to the above fleet of the BRTC during the current fiscal year. In addition to this the following projects have been approved to bring dynamism in the communication system.

- ★ Construction of a fly-over on the Mirpur- airport road and an overpass on Banani rail crossing
- ★ Construction of an overpass on the Jurain railway crossing in Dhaka city. The Under-consideration Projects for Reduction of the Traffic Jam:
- ★ Construction of grade separator along the Gabtali - Asadgate - Russelsquare-Science laboratory - Plassey route for reduction of the traffic jam in the Dhanmondi area.
- ★ Development of Gabtali-Swarighat road
- ★ Construction of the link road from the 2nd Burhiganga bridge to 1st Burhiganga bridge (Babubazar-Postagola)
- ★ Upgradation of the road from the 2nd Burhiganga bridge approach to Mawa link into 4-lane.
- ★ Construction of the third Burhiganga approach road (including 3 bridges and a link to Atibazar).
- ★ Upgradation of Tongi-Ashulia-EPZ road to a 4-lane facility. Construction of Eastern Bypass

**Expansion of Railway Services :** The present government has started to develop the railway as a service-oriented and passenger-friendly safe means of communication since it assumed responsibility. As a measure of reform, decision has been taken to make a separate railway division. In the mean time, a good number of significant projects have been taken and as a result of implementation of those the railway network will be extended to different regions of the country. The Padma Bridge shall be made a rail-ready bridge, so that after inauguration of the Padma bridge the railway services can be made available to the people of south-west region of the country. In the first phase, about 8k.m. new broad gauge railway tract shall be constructed up to Bhanga from Dhaka via Padma bridge. The said railway tract will be connected with the existing railway through Faridpur-Pachuria via Bhanga. The new broad gauge railway line shall be constructed up to Dhalarchar from Iswardi via Pabna and up to the graveyard of farther of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Kashiyan. Bangladesh Railway has started the work of a new 327 Km broad gauge and a128 metre gauge railway line. Apart from that, seven new projects have been undertaken to be financed by ADB giving priority to the connectivity between regional and sub regional zones.

Another initiative to construct railway line up to Agartala from Akhaura and up to Mongla port from Khulna in order to augment the co-operation between regional and sub regional zones has been approved. Necessary steps have been taken to provide facility to use Ruhunpur-Singabud broad gauge railway route by Nepal transit traffic and to convert the Radhikapur-Birol meter gauge railway line into broad gauge so as to facilitate Nepal transit traffic and railway transit link up to Bhutan.

Development activities of the country, namely, a vast part of ADP are implemented by the Ministry of Communication. Ministry of Communication transmits project related information to Dhaka Office of Transparency International to maintain accountability and transparency in major public procurements so as to ensure transparency in procurements of the government. As for example, elevated express way project, project for upgradation of Dhaka-Chittagong highway into four lanes, etc. such initiatives may be treated as self motivated accountability from Ministry of Communication on behalf of present government.

Various programs implemented by Ministry of Communication during the last two years are, in the mean time, becoming visible. Ministry of Communication will, in keeping with election manifesto, be successful in establishing a strong roads and railway network after implementation of the ongoing projects. Benefits of that will be reflected in the socio-economic sector of the country.

Translation: Shahana Akhter

