

## PM alerts nation against reappearance of coronavirus wraths



DHAKA, Jan 7, 2022 (BSS) – Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today asked for countrymen’s extra caution against quick-spreading new coronavirus variants, warning that the crisis was yet to be over, and urged all eligible people to be vaccinated in quickest possible time.

“The crisis is yet to end,” she told a nationwide televised address coinciding with the completion of the third year of third consecutive term of her government.

Sheikh Hasina called for stricter maintenance and enforcement of health guidelines as a new surge of coronavirus was quickly grasping the globe again, even after exposing Bangladesh and most other countries to a “deep crisis” in 2020 and 2021.

“I urge the people who are yet to get the jabs to take the vaccine immediately (while) health protocols must be followed (as well),” she said.

The premier said the inoculation campaign was underway in full swing while her government took steps to expedite the drive setting a target afresh to vaccinate one crore (or 10 million) people every month from January.

Sheikh Hasina said nearly half of the country's population or 7.58 crore people so far received the first COVID-19 vaccine dose and nearly 5.46 crore people got the second one while the authorities started administering the third or booster dose last month.

"We have 9.5 crore doses in our stock" right now, the premier said.

The incumbent Awami League government under Sheikh Hasina's leadership assumed office for the third consecutive term on January 7, 2019 following its landslide victory in 11th parliamentary election on December 30, 2018.

Economy:

The Prime Minister said the pandemic affected Bangladesh economy as it had its onslaughts on other countries with many nations facing disasters but her government managed to recover the losses with "your (countrymen's) help".

She said her government was trying to keep moving the wheels of the country's economy by giving necessary policy supports and various progressive financial stimulus packages since the onset of the crisis.

She said the government so far announced 28 stimulus packages worth over Taka 1.87 crore and 56.76 percent of the amount was disbursed by October last year, befitting 6.74 crore individuals and 1.18 lakh organizations.

She said Bangladesh secured the number one position in terms of GDP in South Asia with 5.43 percent growth during the last fiscal, also heightening the per capita income to US\$ 2554 in 2021.

The premier said different global watchdogs praised Bangladesh's economic performance with World Economic Forum predicting the country to be 24th largest economy by 2030 while the Economist placed it in ninth position in a list of 66 successful emerging economies.

"The 2021 was a year of unprecedented recognition of our development. We achieved final recognition of becoming a developing nation last year. The achievement is a matter of joy and pride for the Bengali nation as it coincided with celebrations of the Mujib Year and golden jubilee of the country's independence," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the country was currently leading South Asia in various socio-economic indexes as the outcome of her government's policy initiatives with a holistic approach, primarily whipping out poverty, developing health system and empowering women.

She said the policy initiatives simultaneously resulted in reduction in mother and children mortality rate, increase of average life expectancy.

"Bangladesh has progressed a lot in the last 13 years. . . It has been possible as the people have kept confidence in us," she said in an apparent reference to her government's successive elections to power.

The premier said her government was working with a target to turn Bangladesh into a welfare-oriented, developed and prosperous country by 2041 and "We hope you (people) will stand beside us as you did in the past to this endeavour".

She said all her government's endeavour to build a prosperous future for the new generation while the country also largely relied on the "unending vigour" of younger generation in building a progressive Bangladesh confronting all the odds.

"I firmly believe our generation after generation will march ahead with keeping their heads high," Sheikh Hasina said.

Conspiracy:

The Prime Minister, however, said despite the development spree, anti-Bangladesh and anti-Liberation elements were reactivating staying at home and abroad to thwart the country's march forward.

"They are trying to mislead people with false, fabricated and imaginary information on social networking sites. They are also trying to make us misunderstood by our development partners in foreign countries," she said.

Sheikh Hasina urged people remain alert against these elements and allow them not play ducks and drakes with fate of Bangladesh's people.

The Prime Minister said the development journey could not be hampered anyhow as the Awami League is always with the people as it believes that the people are the sources of all power.

Corruption, communalism and militancy:

Sheikh Hasina visibly outlined the governance policy at the onset of the fourth year of her government announcing that it would take tougher stance particularly against the three menaces --- corruption, communalism and militancy.

"We have taken a tougher stance against corruption. No corrupt elements irrespective of party affiliation and whatever powerful they might be are not or will be spared," she said.

The premier said the Anti-Corruption Commission was working independently to lash out corrupt elements but added that a social campaign was simultaneously necessary to whip out "the disease".

She said Bangladesh handled the militancy with an iron fist under an announced "zero tolerance" policy against the menace and simultaneously her government was committed to uphold the country's tradition of interfaith harmony as a secular country.

“Followers of different religious faiths are living together maintaining mutual tolerance and will do the same in future as well,” Sheikh Hasina said.

#### Development Plan

The Prime Minister said her party -- Bangladesh Awami League -- had announced a manifesto titled "Bangladesh on the Path to Prosperity"

before the Eleventh Parliamentary Election in 2018, aiming to build a hunger-poverty-illiteracy free non-communal Bangladesh through

establishing an efficient, service-oriented and accountable administration and wiping out terrorism-militancy.

Bangladesh will be an upper middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income prosperous country by 2041, she said, referring to the

Eight Five Year Plan (2021-2015) which is being under implementation involving with an estimated cost of Taka 64,95,980 crore.

Sheikh Hasina added that generation of around 1,16,70,000 employment has been targeted in this period while poverty rate will come down to 15.6 percent and extreme poverty rate to 7.4 percent after the implementation of the Eighth Five Year Plan (EFYP). She continued that in the last year 2025, the GDP growth rate will be 8.51 percent.

In addition to the EFYP, implementation of the Prime Minister's 10 initiatives will be continued that is expecting to help alleviating

poverty, the premier said .

## Mega Infrastructures

Mentioning the Year 2022 will be a milestone for Bangladesh in terms of infrastructure development, Sheikh Hasina said in a few months

later, in June, they are going to inaugurate the much-awaited Padma Bridge, which has been completed with own funds overcoming many conspiracies and obstacles.

She said the bridge, is expected to contribute 1.2 percent to GDP, will connect the southern part of the country directly with other

regions, including the capital.

Besides, by the end of this year, she said, they have planned to launch the 14-km metro rail from Uttara to Agargaon. In this

connection, she said, train movement has already started experimentally in this part and hoped that it will bring a revolutionary change in the transport sector in the capital, Dhaka.

In addition, she revealed that the country's first tunnel will be opened in Chattogram next October under the river Karnaphuli.

The premier went on saying that work on other mega projects is also going on in full swing and they are expecting the first unit of

Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant with a capacity of 1,200 MW, the largest development project in the history of the country involving Taka

113,000 crore, would be commissioned by April next year.

## Power and Energy

At present the daily power generation capacity has stood at 25,235 MW, revealed the premier, requesting the countrymen to recall their memories regarding the power supply situation before the

Awami League government took over in 2009 as at that time the total power generation capacity was 4200 MW.

"We've fulfilled our promise in word to word," she said, referring to her commitment of providing electricity to 100 percent of the

people in "Mujib Barsho" and the Golden Jubilee of Independence.

As part of the long-term plan, she said, a 1320-megawatt power plant has already been set up in Payra while a total of 7,800 MW power

plants are being constructed at Rampal, Payra, Banshkhali, Maheshkhali and Matarbari.

Now, gas supply to the national grid has been raised to 2,525 million cubic feet from 1,744 million cubic feet in 2009, Sheikh Hasina said, adding that liquefied gas is being imported from 2018 to meet the continuing demand for gas.

Sharing the good news with the countrymen at the beginning of the New Year of getting gas hydrate in the Bay of Bengal, she said at proximately 17 to 103 trillion cubic feet gas hydrate has been found there.

#### Self-sufficiency in Food

Today, Bangladesh is self-sufficient in food production, Sheikh Hasina said at present the production of granular food grains stands at 4.55 crore metric tons.

Making public that Bangladesh has stood in third position in the world in rice, vegetable and onion production, she said this

revolution in agriculture has been achieved through continued policy support and incentives.

In addition, Bangladesh has also attained self-sufficiency in fish, meat, eggs and vegetables, the premier said, adding that it ranks

second in terms of growth rate of fish production in inland open water while ranks first among 11 Hilsa fish producing countries.

## Transportation and Communication

The head of government said they've first integrated rural development into the mainstream development process as the country's

villages have always been out of development during the past governments.

She said Awami League in its 2018 election manifesto "My Village, My City" pledge to expand modern urban amenities in every village.

Now, paved (Paka) roads have been constructed in almost all the villages across the country, she said and added that around 66,755 km

of road development and construction of 394,000 bridges and culverts have been done along with construction and expansion of 1,767 Union

Parishad complex buildings, 1,025 cyclone centers and 326 Upazila Complex buildings in rural areas from 2009 to 2021.

Sheikh Hasina said during the period, around 458 km of national highways have been upgraded to four or more lanes while work is

underway to upgrade another 887 km of highway to four lanes and above.

She added construction of 46.73 km Elevated Expressway from airport to Kutubkhali in Dhaka will be completed by 2023.

At present, the premier continued, 37 projects are being implemented involving Taka 13,371.45 crore with a view to turn Bangladesh Railway into a modern and time-befitting public transport, while feasibility work is underway to set up a circular railway line around Dhaka.

Sheikh Hasina said from 2009 to 2021, over 451 km of new railways track have been installed and 1,181 km of railways track have been

rehabilitated along with construction of 428 new railway bridges.

She said the construction work of 4.8 km long Bangabandhu Railway Bridge over the river Jamuna is progressing fast.

Besides, they have incorporated 12 new state-of-the-arts Boeing and Dreamliner aircraft in the fleet of state-own Bangladesh Biman

Airlines along with three Dash-8-400 aircraft, she added.