

জয় বাংলা

আব্লাহ সর্বশক্তিমান

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Bangladesh Marching Ahead

Road to Peace, Democracy, Development and Prosperity

10th National Parliamentary Elections, 2014

Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League



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The Background

Bangladesh has stepped forward towards a resplendent future. The historic phase of transforming Bangladesh into a middle income country, shaking off poverty and backwardness, has effectively begun. 42 years have elapsed since the liberation of our dear motherland Bangladesh. The emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, under the leadership of the Father of the Nation and the greatest Bangalee of all time, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is a uniquely unforgettable phenomenon of recent history. The independence achieved through the sacrifice of three million Bangalee lives is one of the greatest achievements of the Bengali Nation. Bangladesh Awami League did not only provide leadership to the Liberation War, giving birth to an independent Bangladesh, but also envisioned all major achievable goals for the nation including self-identity, state language, independence, democracy, development and prosperity of the Bangalee nation. It was under the leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that the nation put itself to the great task of building a prosperous ‘Golden Bengal’— *Sonar Bangla*. Bangladesh stood out of the wreckage of a devastating war, ever confident and promising.

But on the 15th of August 1975, with the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu along with the members of his family, the country went through unthinkable agony and crisis. On the 3rd of November the same year four national leaders were killed inside the Dhaka Central

Jail. Mushtaque-Zia circle of conspirators subjected the country once again to a regime of military rule and autocracy. The constitution was manipulated by issuing Military Ordinances and anti-liberation forces were given the opportunity to establish themselves in the political arena. Progressive thinking and the liberation forces were relentlessly suppressed. Those who committed war crimes and actively participated in genocide, the banned Jamaat-e-Islami and other communal political parties as well as their leaders and cohorts, were not only rehabilitated but were actually taken into the helm of affairs and made partners of power with the military ruler Ziaur Rahman and, at a later stage, Khaleda Zia, who shared power with those very heinous political forces. After 1975 with the power of the state in hand the military rulers took away people's rights and destroyed the electoral process. More than one political party emerged from within the cantonments. Coup and counter-coup became a matter of everyday incidence. By upholding personal and sectorial interests, by killing officers and people who fought the Liberation War and by dismissing others from active service, the glorious liberation winning army was made weak in morale and, therefore, in combat capability. State terrorism, communalism, misuse of religious sentiments, black money, muscle power, corruption, looting and criminalization became the general principles of running the state. Even though parliamentary democracy was reestablished in the wake of people's uprising in 1991, BNP – the party in power – kept the autocratic system unabated. In this way post-75 military autocrats dismantled all the achievements of the Liberation War and brought an end to the possibility of building a beautiful, happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

The Golden Age of Bangladesh (1996-2001)

This unbearable situation came to an end in 1996. Amidst the backdrop of people's undaunted struggle for democracy and the sacrifice of many martyrs, Bangladesh Awami League won the historic national parliamentary elections held on 12th June 1996. After 21 long years, Awami League was able to form government again. The daughter of Bangabandhu, Jononerti (people's leader) Sheikh Hasina took up the responsibility of running the country.

A glorious chapter brimming with successes was written largely during the five-year rule of Awami League from 1996 to 2001. Within the span of just five years, Bangladesh attained self-sufficiency in food production, price index receded and inflation came down to 1.59 percent. Meanwhile, the rate of economic growth increased to 6.2 percent. Achievements like the Treaty of Water Sharing of the River Ganges, the peace accord in Chittagong Hill Tracts, the recognition of 21st February

as International Mother Language Day and election to the UN Security Council introduced Bangladesh to the global community as a country with immense prospects.

Various initiatives taken for alleviation of poverty resulted in the reduction of poverty from an average of .50 to 1.50 percent, while the human poverty indicator came down from 41.6 percent to 32 percent. Achieving rise of 56 percentage points in the UN Human Development Index (HDI) in five years was a record. Increase of literacy rate to 65 percent, formulation of an education policy and the removal of session backlogs in educational institutions were significant achievements in the education sector. Great success was achieved in the generation of electricity and power, while transport and communication sectors received improved dramatically. In only five years' time total electricity generation was raised by as much as 4,300 megawatts. Increase in gas production and exploration, completion of the Jamuna Bridge, construction of 62,000 kilometers of paved and unpaved roads and building of 19,000 bridges and culverts were also achieved during the time enhancing country's overall infrastructural topography. Internal savings also increased from 14.7 percent of national income to 18 percent and the rate of investment increased from 20 percent to 23.1 percent. During the period 1 lakh 22 thousand small and medium size industries were established. Millions of job opportunities for the unemployed were created through the boosting of private investments. One community clinic for every 6 thousand people was established at the government's initiative. Withdrawal of taxes and duties on medical equipment encouraged the setting up of clinics and hospitals in the private sector. By abolishing monopoly in the mobile telephone sector mobile phones were made available to everyone at low price and access to information technology was opened up for all.

Rule of law and establishment of human rights were ensured by repealing the infamous Indemnity Ordinance, bringing to trial the killers of Bangabandhu and four national leaders and by establishing the Law Commission. The Awami League government also introduced the concept of good governance and formulated women's development policy that accelerated women's empowerment. In the parliament the 'Prime Minister's question hour' was introduced and the Parliamentary Committees were activated and strengthened by appointing Members as Chairman of the committee replacing the minister. A four-tier local government system was introduced by passing necessary enactments. Transparency and accountability were reinforced across all levels of the government. The spirit of the Liberation War was re-established in the social, economic, political, educational and cultural arenas. Bangladesh had actually turned around.

End of a Possibility: Bangladesh in the Grip of BNP-Jamaat Mis-governance and Corruption

With the direct involvement of a partisan Caretaker Government through rigging and manipulation in 2001 election Awami League's certain positive results were taken away by the alliance even though Awami League and BNP-Jamaat alliance got almost equal votes. For BNP-Jamaat alliance more than two-thirds of the seats were crudely engineered. Thus non-partisan objectivity of the caretaker government became questionable. The BNP-Jamaat alliance during their five year misrule turned Bangladesh into a failed state. Killing, terrorism and the rise of militancy reduced Bangladesh to a death valley. Under the tutelage of Khaleda Zia and her son Tareq Rahman and with their directives, Jononetri Sheikh Hasina came under grenade attack on 21 August 2004 when 22 Awami League leaders and workers including Begum Ivy Raman were killed. Erstwhile Finance Minister A S M Kibria, Member of Parliament, labour leader Ahsanullah Master and advocate Monjurul Imam and erstwhile member of the parliament Momtajuddin were killed along with 21 thousand other leaders and workers of the Awami League during the period. Apart from this, a good number of known and important persons of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities were annihilated. Thousands of minority men and women became targets of communal violence. Hundreds of women and minors irrespective of being Hindus or Muslims became victims of rape and mass rape. Journalists, teachers, intellectuals, cultural activists, farmers, labourers – none were spared from the terror, political violence and brutal attacks perpetrated by the BNP-Jamaat alliance. In the cabinet, known war criminals got covenanted positions. With the active support of the government extreme communal militancy was born and nurtured. Serial grenade and bomb attacks and murders turned Bangladesh into a haven for terrorists. Extra judicial killings became a norm and the rule of law disappeared. On 17 August 2005, concerted bomb explosions were organized at a time in more than five hundred spots in 63 districts of the country. During the BNP-Jamaat alliance government, on various occasions civil courts, public places like cinema halls, churches, temples and mosques, mazaars or mausoleums of the saints, offices and various places of public congregations became the targets of bomb attacks when judges, pleaders, cultural activists and workers were killed in large numbers and thousands of men and women were badly hurt or maimed for life. Bangladesh appeared to be a terrorist country. On the other hand, a total failure of governance paved the way for inefficiency, corruption and misrule stopping the previous acceleration of the development process and dismantling all incentives toward good governance and the future possibilities of the country. At the initiative of Tareq Rahman a parallel centre of power was established—an

alternate centre of government authority known as *Hawa Bhaban*. The 21st August grenade attack was conceived and organized from this *Hawa Bhaban*. This was the undeclared headquarter of all unethical, illegal and money-grabbing activities including rent seeking, kick-back and commission collection, manipulation of recruitment and transfer in administration, illegal arms and narcotics trade. People were subjected to all kinds of extortion and the life of the general masses became increasingly difficult. During each of the five years of the alliance government's time, Bangladesh became infamous as the most corrupt country of the world even by TIB ratings. The syndicates created at the incidence of *Hawa Bhaban* were responsible for artificial crisis in the market. Commodity prices increased many times, about hundred to two hundred times, compared to the previous time of Awami League's rule. Tareq Rahman, Arafat Rahman, the Ministers, Members of the Parliament and the party activists visibly tilted towards import business rather than establishing industries. They did not want Bangladesh to be self-reliant. The BNP government was clearly deeply involved in trading and different businesses for making quick money. Self-interest was more important to them than the interest of the people and the country. Many people became very wealthy within a very short time. Due to all these negative activities, a country self-reliant in food became a deficit country. *Monga* or a dire shortage of food became prevalent in some of the areas and death by starvation hit news headlines again. The poverty line went up. Community Clinics introduced by Awami League were all closed down. Literacy rate came down to 50 percent from 65 percent achieved by Awami League. The women's policy and education policy of 1997 were rescinded. Empowerment of women, investment in education and health lost priority and the acceleration that was gained during the previous Awami League regime was also cancelled out.

During their tenure BNP-Jamaat alliance government could not increase power generation. On the contrary, effective productive capacity came down by as much as 1000 megawatts; production of gas remained static. But on the other hand, Tarek Rahman and his friend's company *Khamba Limited* was given the opportunity to sell taka hundreds of crore worth of electric poles. In Kansat of Chapainawabganj district, people took to the street demanding supply of electricity. The answer was given by shooting down those who raised their voices and seventeen farmers gave their lives. Electricity and energy prices reached an unbearable level. As a result investment and industrialization became totally static. Along with this situation the prices of all agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and diesel increased tremendously. Agricultural production received a big jolt; growth in the agricultural sector came down to only 3 percent.

Administration, judiciary, Election Commission, educational institutions and police administration—everywhere and at every stage shameless activities of grabbing became the order of the day. Partisan politics and application of force against all honest efforts subdued justice and demolished governance. BNP-Jamaat alliance destroyed the country's electoral system and rendered the election time non-partisan caretaker system of governance meaningless. In order to appoint a partisan Chief Advisor, the BNP-alliance government amended the Constitution and increased the tenure of the Chief Justice by two years. They did not stop at appointing incompetent persons as Justices and Election Commissioners. They also created 1 crore 23 lakh voters who did not actually exist. They also had a clear blue-print of election engineering which they tried to implement by all means.

In 2006 disregarding constitutional obligations and public opinion President Dr. Iajuddin of BNP declared himself Chief Advisor of the non-partisan caretaker government. But in spite of all these and particularly Dr. Iajuddin's breach of trust and his efforts to render the Caretaker Government an instrument of implementing BNP blue print the then Advisors of the Caretaker Government resigned from time to time. The blue print of election engineering became clear to the public. The activities of the Caretaker Government made a fair, free and credible election an impossibility. Against this backdrop power changed hands on 11 January 2007. Emergency was declared and Elections were postponed. Dr. Iajuddin was removed from the post of Chief Advisor; a new Caretaker Government was formed with the support of the armed forces under the leadership of Dr. Fakhruddin.

The Politics of Depoliticization and Attempted *Minus Two* Formula

This new armed forces backed Caretaker Government taking advantage of the emergency started an all-out campaign of character assassination, intimidation and even outright torture. In the name of depoliticization an indirect army rule started. All political activities remained banned for a long time. Not only the politicians but also the businessmen, university teachers, intellectuals, even small traders and students became the targets of harassment and torture. The suggestion of Awami League to hold immediate elections was disregarded. By applying extra constitutional powers the tenure of Caretaker Government was stretched up to two years.

In the meanwhile, a 'minus two formula' was circulated. This theory was put forward in order to effectively keep Jononerti Sheikh Hasina (the daughter of Bangabandhu) away from politics. When she went abroad

an embargo was imposed on her return home. But Jononetri Sheikh Hasina disregarded all these threats and embargo and expressed her firm intension to return home and built up global opinion in her favour. The government was compelled to concede and Sheikh Hasina returned home holding her head high. But when she protested against suppression of political activities and pin-pointed the failures of the government's programmes she was arrested on July 16, 2007 without any warrant or formulation of any charge. False cases were lodged against her one after the other. In isolation she was subjected to mental torture, and her life was under threat.

This military-backed government made efforts to implement the 'minus two formula', tried to create rifts within the larger political parties, and made efforts to create a new king's party with the full backing of military intelligence. All these activities and the ambition of the Army Chief himself to wear the mantle of the presidency endangered the democratic constitutional process. Bangladesh Awami League helped to form a public opinion that supported constitutional process to go on, to lift the ban on all political activities and to immediately declare the parliamentary elections. Ultimately the Caretaker Government was constrained to declare the intention of holding Parliamentary Elections. Awami League declared its resolution not to participate in an election without the participation of their leader Sheikh Hasina. On national and international pressures, the situation within the country started to turn towards a positive direction. In view of our demands, a voter list was completed with the photograph of the voter and arrangements were made to use transparent ballot boxes during the polls. The Election Commission and other constitutional bodies were reorganized and reinstated. Electoral laws and procedures and the constitution of the political party were also duely brought up to date and amended. Jononetri Sheikh Hasina was freed and after two long years on December 29, 2008, the ninth parliamentary elections were held. Under the leadership of Bangladesh Awami League the Grand Alliance, or as it is called *Mahajot*, won absolute majority in the elections with nine-tenths of the parliament's seats. The people expressed their unstinted support to the Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League and its Charter for Change. On January 6 2009 under the leadership of Jononetri Sheikh Hasina, the Grand Alliance took the oath for office.

At last the crisis was overcome and the great possibilities of taking the country forward were opened up.

Five Years of Awami League government: A Changed Scenario

We have stood up to our commitments. However, our commitments and programmes were not focused on only five years. For the first time in the history of Bangladesh a political party adopted a long-term plan with specific goals and targets. We formulated “Vision-2021” spanning a decade from 2009 to 2021. A list of programmes and “Vision-2021” targets materialized in the last five years is presented below:

Our dear motherland Bangladesh has been salvaged out of uncertainty, circularity of crises and underdevelopment of the past and has been restored to the trajectory of peace, democracy and development enshrined in the spirit of the War of Liberation.

Perspective Plan 2010-21 and 6th Five Year Plan (2010-2015) have been formulated with a view to materializing “Vision-2021”. Both plans are being currently implemented.

In regard to the five priority areas identified in Awami League’s Election Manifesto of 2008, we have not only achieved desired success but we have actually been able to go beyond set targets in many respects.

Syndicates of hoarding and profiteering have been successfully cracked down upon. Consumer rights have been protected and ‘price terrorism’ has been dealt with an iron hand. Shooting up of prices of essential items like rice, lentil and flour have been restrained; price of rice has been brought down, and price of index has been stabilized within people’s purchasing power. While the rate of inflation was brought down from 11 per cent to 7.5 per cent, people’s earning and purchasing power increased on a significant scale.

The impact of the global recession was contained successfully. Exporters were given incentives to remain competitive in the world market. Not only did the economy of Bangladesh remain agile in the face of global economic downturn, it registered an annual growth of 6.2 per cent per year. Macro-economic indices of the Awami League regime when compared to those of the BNP alliance government clearly show which party is truly capable of achieving fast-track economic growth and development. If the trend of the success and development achieved by the Awami League government is continued as reflected in the comparative picture given in

Table-1, Bangladesh is sure to become a middle-income country by 2021. It is a record that this bright macro-economic scenario has been recognized all over the world with much commendation. During our regime of five years the volume of the national budget of Bangladesh has grown by 3.7 times in 2013-14 compared with 2006 owing to robust growth in national income and significant rise in domestic savings. Foreign remittance has grown by 3.6 times while foreign exchange reserve hit a historic record growing by 4 times in the meanwhile. During our regime, export earnings have grown 2.5 times while the generation of electricity crossed the threshold of 10,000 megawatts recording a growth of 3 times.

Table-1

Indices	2005-06 (BNP- Jamaat Alliance Regime)	2012-13 (Awami League Regime)
Economic Growth	6.7 percent	6.2 percent
Per capita income	USD 625 (2008)	USD 1,044
National Savings Ratio	27.7 percent	29.5 percent
Investment Ratio	24.7 percent	26.8 percent
Size of national Budget	BDT 59,030 million	BDT 1,74,214 million
Foreign Aid: New commitment	USD 1,787 million	USD 5,935 million
Foreign Aid: Disbursement	USD 1,567 million	USD 2,772 million
Remittance from abroad	USD 13 billion	USD 48 billion
Foreign Exchange Reserve	USD 3.88 billion	USD 18 billion
Export earnings	USD 10.05 billion	USD 27.1 billion
Import bill	USD 14.7 billion	USD 34.1 million
Food production	278 million tons	375 million tons
People under Poverty line	41.51 percent	26.20 percent
People in extreme poverty	25.1 percent	11.9 percent
Electricity generation capacity	3,782 Megawatt	10,000 Megawatt
Minimum Wages	BDT 1,662	BDT 5,300
Rice-purchasing power of agricultural labourers.	3.5-4.5 kg per day	10-12 kg per day

Each year during the five-year regime of BNP-Jamaat Alliance, Bangladesh earned ill reputation as a highly corrupt country. It has been possible to shake off much of that stigma in last five years. The Awami League government has re-constituted the independent Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). ACC has in the meanwhile established the unprecedented practice of summoning ministers and senior bureaucrats of the country for the sake of investigation into corruption, inquiry, accountability and transparency. The all-encompassing rampancy of corruption has been significantly curbed by using digital technology including the introduction of the “on-line tender submission” system.

Spectacular success has been achieved in the electricity and power generation sectors. The long enduring electricity crisis has been solved in the meanwhile by means of emergency measures, in addition to mid-term and long-term investments. In 2013, electricity generation crossed the daily threshold of 10,000 megawatts, which was far above the target of 700 megawatts per day. Cross-border electricity sharing has opened a new chapter of international trade. 500 megawatts of electricity imported from India has been added to the national grid. Construction of 2000 megawatt nuclear power plant at Rooppur has been initiated with Russian assistance. Establishment of two large coal-based electricity generation plants at Mongla and Chittagong has been taken up. Currently as many as 62 percent of the people of the country have access to electricity. The power sector received a significant boost as a number of new gas fields were drilled, new gas fields were discovered and two new oil fields were spotted. A huge number of industrial and household gas connections have been provided recently.

The unparalleled success of the Awami League-led government in eradicating poverty has earned international recognition. Bangladesh has achieved several MDG goals set by the UN by 2013—two years ahead of the target time. It has been possible to bring down the rate of poverty under 26.20 per cent and the rate of extreme poverty under 11.90 per cent. As many as 50 million people who lived below the poverty line touched the middle-income bracket. Disparity in income distribution has also been narrowed down to large extent.

About 10 million new jobs have been created in the private and public sectors in last 5 years. This includes 6.9 million jobs in the formal domestic sector and 2.5 million jobs in different foreign countries. An arrangement has been made whereby Bangladeshis

can now enjoy job opportunities in Malaysia for a fixed fee of BDT 33,274 only. In K.S.A, more than 4 lakh Bangladeshi workers were able to secure legal work permits by changing Iqama. A number of projects aimed at self-employment for the unemployed youth by means of training and loan are on-going. Also about 57 thousand young trainees will get employment under the programme of National Services.

Establishment of good governance was outlined in the Election Manifesto of 2008 as a priority agenda. Unfortunately the Awami League government faced challenges of unimaginable proportions from the very start of their tenure. The BDR mutiny took place on the 52nd day of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's newly-formed government. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina successfully brought a peaceful end to the BDR mutiny with utmost patience, titanic courage and wisdom befitting a statesman. She restored trust across the armed forces of the country. In the meanwhile, the trial of 18 thousand BDR personnel has been completed to dates. Another 850 of those accused have been tried according to CrPC. The BDR trial will be considered a milestone in restoring discipline and establishing human rights in military and para-military forces of Bangladesh. With the aim of getting rid of the disgrace associated with the BDR Mutiny, BDR has been re-titled Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB). A new law has been enacted in this regard.

The trial of the assassination of Bangabandhu has been completed. Also, the perpetrators of the Jail Killing of 1975 have been brought to book. These have ushered in a new era of rule of law.

In fulfillment of the electoral pledge, the trial of the war criminals of 1971 has been initiated. In the meanwhile, 10 people accused of committing war crimes in 1971 have been convicted and justice has been served. Abdul Quader Mollah, found guilty of committing war crimes, was executed in due course.

50 Standing Committees were formed in the first session of the Parliament with a view to making the parliamentary proceedings more participatory and effective. Some of the chairpersons of the sub-committees were chosen from the opposition bench. The number of seats reserved for women was raised to 50.

In the wake of the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu on 15th August 1975 the Martial Administrator amended the constitution of

1972 by a military decree. The military ruler Ershad also amended the constitution of the country in the same vein. In 2006 the High Court, and in 2011 the Supreme Court, declared the martial law regimes of Zia-Ershad “unlawful” and also declared the 5th amendment to the constitution “illegal”. Bangladesh Awami League has from the beginning objected amendment to the constitution by military dictators. Awami League was committed to revert to the original constitution of the country formulated in 1972. In spirit with that, 15th Amendment Bill was placed at the parliament on behalf of the government. A 15 member Special Parliamentary Committee was formed which, for over a year, consulted political leaders of almost all the parties, constitutional experts, lawyers, members of the intelligentsia, civil society and journalists in addition to members of the general public on the proposed amendment to the Constitution. Innumerable institution and individuals also presented their opinions in writing. Elaborate discussions were held to consider all opinions and suggestion in 27 meetings. In a landmark move, the Parliament passed the Constitution (15th Amendment) Bill on 30 June 2011. As a result, the four basic principles of the original constitution of 1972 were restored. The amendment also outlawed any attempt to secure power in an unconstitutional way.

The Judiciary has been separated from the Executive. Both the jurisdictional freedom and financial authority of the judiciary have been ensured. A separate pay scale has been introduced for the judicial department.

For the first time in history, the Honourable President of the country consulted all political parties in order to form the Election Commission on the basis of the recommendation of a “Search Committee”. With a view to ensuring Commission’s independence, it has been vested with necessary financial powers and the authority to appoint its own manpower.

The Voter List has been updated. The Election Commission since assuming office has held 5,803 elections including parliamentary by-elections, City Corporation, municipal elections and local government election. These elections held in a free, fair and credible manner have elected 64,013 people’s representatives to different positions. People’s right to vote has been re-established. Awami League has proved beyond doubt that elections held during its regime can be held in a free, fair and credible manner.

Responsibility and authority of Union Parishad, Upazilla Parishad, District council and municipal authorities have been enhanced on a significant scale.

An effective independent Human Rights Commission has been established.

Equal rights for ethnic and religious minorities have been guaranteed by means of constitutional provision.

Right to Information Act (RTI) has been passed by the Parliament. Information Commission of Bangladesh has also been formed.

During last five years, Awami League government contained militancy braving the conspiracy of destroying communal harmony and a naked patronization of terrorism by BNP-Jamaat axis. Shaking off the stigma of a terrorist country, Bangladesh is now one of the safest and most peaceful countries in South Asia.

Three NRB banks have been established with the aim of engendering participation of the non-resident Bangladeshis (NRB) in nation building activities.

Many reformative steps have been taken up with the aim of obtaining a non-partisan and pro-people administration. To facilitate e-governance at all levels, computers with internet connectivity have been supplied at the divisional, district, Upazilla and Union Parishad levels. While ensuring accountability and transparency, a policy of appointment and promotion on the basis of competence, seniority and merit is being thoroughly pursued. The age of retirement for public servants has been raised to 59. The retirement age of freedom fighters working in the public service has been raised to 60 years. Dearness Allowance at the rate of 20 per cent of the basic salary has been awarded. Maternity leave entitled to female public servants has been increased to six months from four months. A permanent Pay Commission has also been instituted. During the Awami League regime as many as 4 lakh 27 thousand new jobs have been created in the public sector to be paid out of the revenue budget. As many as 1 lakh 18 thousand positions have been made permanent. It has been decided that an amount of BDT 5 lakh will be paid by way of compensation to the family, in place of BDT 20 thousand, if a public servant dies while on duty. Similarly, an amount of BDT 2 lakh will be paid if a public servant receives in-

jury in course of discharging his duties. A 150-bed modern hospital has been established in Dhaka to cater to the medical needs of government employees.

Multiple steps have been undertaken to modernize the police and other law enforcing agencies of the country. These include upward revision of pay and allowances, provision of residential accommodation and enhancement of other personal facilities.

As promised, a new division Rangpur has been constituted. Municipalities of Narayanganj, Comilla, Gazipur and divisional headquarter Rangpur have been upgraded to City Corporation. Elections of the same have been held in the meanwhile. The municipality of Myensingh has been upgraded to a City Corporation.

Apart from achievements in priority areas, the changes and advancements resulting from the implementation of important programmes are unprecedented.

The matter of attaining food self-sufficiency by 2012 is known to all. Epoch-making success seen an increase of agriculture production, diversification in agricultural production, agricultural research and modernization of agriculture. Big changes have become visible in the rural economy as a result of different measures like reduction of prices of fertilizers a number of times, introduction of distributing agricultural implements through card, the special opportunity to open bank-account against 10 taka only and granting of agricultural loan to landless farmers without security. Production of agricultural products like vegetables, fruits, oil seeds, maize, and spices is experiencing sustained rise. Discovery of jute genome, and those of more than five hundred fungi, innovation of nutrition-rich rice (Vitamin A) seeds, innovation of high yielding varieties of rice resistant to salinity, draught and water-logging and similar other hybrid varieties of agricultural commodities has brought about a significant change in Bangladesh's agriculture.

A timely Education Policy has been formulated which is being implemented. Admission of 100 per cent of children at primary level, free distribution of text books to students of secondary as well as primary level, introduction of public examination at class five and class eight, reduction of the rate of drop-out, increasing the proportion of girl-students by way of scholarship to 78 lakh 70 thousand and 129 students at the primary level, 40 lakh and 1 lakh and 33

thousand students at the higher secondary level are examples of huge progress in the area of education. 26 thousand and 193 schools have been nationalized and jobs of 1 lakh 3 thousand 845 teachers have been converted into government service. Measures were taken for upgrading the rank, salary and allowance, training and skill of teachers including headmasters. Programmes are being implemented to provide multimedia and internet connection to all educational institutions of the country by phases, establishment of computer laboratories and the transforming of one school in each district into a model school. Programmes of on-line registration, admission tests and publication of results have earned people's admiration. The Awami League government has so far set up 6 new public universities, and a project has been taken up for establishing seven more. Permission has been given for the setting up of 9 new private universities. Prime Minister's Trust Fund for Facilitating Education has been set up with a permanent fund of taka 1000 crore. It has been possible to raise the literacy rate in the country to 65 per cent.

Digital Bangladesh is no longer a dream, but a reality. In addition to the expansion of information technology in the education sector, Bangladesh now tops the South Asian countries in the use of information technology as medium of administration, banking, medical care, trade and commerce and mass communication. Internet connection has been provided at union level, and union information and service centres have been set up. In Bangladesh, 3 crore and 68 lakh of people now use internet. The number of mobile phone SIM used by the people hit a record 10 crore in the meanwhile.

Bangladesh has been awarded the South-South Award in the health sector, particularly for development in child health. At present, the rate of child mortality in Bangladesh is 53 per thousand; maternal mortality is 143 per thousand. Bangladesh achieved this target fixed up for 2015 right in 2013. Average life expectancy has reached up to 67.7 years. During the regime of the Awami League government, a total of 13,000 community clinics and 24 new Government hospitals were started. District hospitals of 100 beds were upgraded to those of 250 beds, and hospitals of 250 beds were upgraded to those of 500 beds. Number of beds at Upazilla Health Complexes was increased to 50. Seven government Nursing Institutes were upgraded to colleges, 12 new Nursing Institutes were set up, and 4 new Health Technology Institutes were floated. 1035 new private hospitals have been set up. The scope for creating and providing health-care through telemedicine and internet connection to union

and upazilla from specialized and medical college hospitals has been explored. Medicine is provided free from Government hospitals, community Clinics and Health Centres. Bangladesh is moving forward in the eradication and prevention of infectious diseases. Bangladesh is now exporting medicine to 90 countries. About 30,000 persons have been employed as physicians and nurses.

In order to enhance women's empowerment, the number of seats reserved for women in the National Parliament have been increased by 5, and made 50. To create opportunities for women's increased participation in politics, reserved seats for women in union council, upazilla parishad and municipalities have been increased to one-third of the total and women are to be directly elected to those seats. At present in Bangladesh, the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Speaker and Deputy Leader of the House are women. Number of women among the Judges of the Supreme Court, top positions of the Administration—Secretaries, Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners, top positions of police, Armed Forces and UN Peace-keepers—indicates improvement in women's empowerment. In Bangladesh, proportion of men's and women's population stand at 49.5: 50.5. This is not only balanced in demography, but is a rare reflection of our society's equal treatment of girl-children.

During last five years, about 6,000 industrial projects from home and abroad have been registered in Bangladesh. This has resulted in the creation of job opportunities for 15 lakh people. Two jute mills in Khulna and Serajganj, closed down earlier, have been reopened; the jute industry has got its life back. A number of specialized industrial zones are being set up across different regions with the aim of achieving geographically balanced industrial development throughout the country. More than 1 lakh small and medium sized industries have been set up.

Food security has been ensured for the people. Due to the attainment of food self-sufficiency, food no longer needs to be imported. Among the starkly poor in rural areas and poor of the social security belt, food was distributed under social security programmes such as Test Relief, VGF (vulnerable group feeding) and KABIKHA (food for works) programs at a low price and for free. No *monga* occurred and nobody died from hunger. Capacity for emergency storage of food has been enhanced from 14 lakh to 19 lakh tons.

Multi-directed measures were taken with a view to ensuring ecological balance and protection of forest areas, development of water resources, and maintenance of navigability and expansion of irrigation. Navigability of long routes of rivers like the Madhumati, Garai, Buriganga and Kushiara have been recovered through capital dredging. As a result of increased water-flow in the south-western regions coming from dredging of the Madhumati and Garai, protection of the Sunderbans and bio-diversity is becoming possible. Measures have been taken for the protection, strengthening and expansion of coastal dams. A National, Regional and International Co-ordinated Work-Program-2009 was taken up for the management of possible disasters and maintenance of ecological balance. The government formed the Climate Trust Fund from its own resources and other multi-directed programs are being implemented.

A huge programme of expansion of road, rail and river routes with a view to modernizing the transport system and synchronizing that with national development is being implemented and being carried forward. Work of upgrading of Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Myensingh road to four lanes is on-going. Work of regular repair of the highways is going on. Construction work of Teesta Bridge has been completed. Under the Local Government Ministry, construction-work of 29,672 kilometres of road has come to completion in addition to the construction of 1 lakh 63 thousand metres of bridge and culvert. 58 buses have been added to the fleet of the BRTC. Now there is a separate Ministry of the Railways in Bangladesh. The Railway is undergoing modernization including introduction of commuter rail and construction of 22 kilometres of new line. The project for the construction of the Padma Bridge with local funding is under implementation.

An expanded new airport is under construction at Cox's Bazaar. Four new Boeing aircrafts have been added to the Biman fleet.

Many flyovers have been constructed with a view to solving the traffic congestion problems of Dhaka and Chittagong cities. Work on the construction of the metro rail in Dhaka city has been inaugurated. Work on the construction of the 26-kilometre elevated expressway from Shahjalal Airport to Kutubkhali has been initiated. Many other flyovers are under construction.

As a result of the implementation of the Hatirjheel project, a part of Dhaka megacity has now assumed a modern and eye-catching

appearance comparable to those of the best cities of the world. This project and the network of newly constructed flyovers have given Dhaka the architectural look of a world-standard modern city.

Child labour has been banned in many industrial sectors. Multifaceted programs have been undertaken with a view to ensuring children's health, education, sports and a joyful childhood that may follow from a ban on discrimination and persecution.

Many programs including the formation of the Autism Trust Fund have been undertaken nationally and internationally for the welfare of those with learning difficulties and particularly autistic children. Apart from what was the result of the personal initiatives of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, initiatives of her specialist daughter, Saima Wazed Hossain, created much awareness about autism at a national level, leading to enhanced awareness at the UNO and international also and the subsequent passing of positive resolutions there.

A revised Labour Law is being implemented for the well-being of workers and employees. After two phases of wage increases, the minimum wage for garments factory workers now stands at 5,300 taka, reflecting an increase of 3,700 taka since 2010.

Monthly allowance of insolvent freedom fighters has been enhanced from 900 taka to 3000 taka. A number of housing projects, income-enhancing buildings and commercial complexes are being implemented. Construction-work of Victory Tower of the Liberation War at the Suhrawardy Udyan Dhaka has been completed. Memorial towers are being constructed at 13 places of face-to-face battles in 1971. Special reception has been accorded to the foreign friends of the Liberation War to recognise their important contributions to our efforts in 1971.

Free flow of information and freedom of mass media have been guaranteed. The Act of Right to Information has ensured people's opportunity to have access to information. Steps have been taken to declare newspaper as an industry. A large number of television channels and FM radio stations have been granted license to operate. A large number of community radio stations have been operating on a local basis. The Eighth Wage Board has been formed for upward revision of the salary and allowance of journalists.

Children, adolescents, young men and women are being given sports training in 64 districts and at six government colleges. Projects for constructing a stadium at each district and, in phases, at all upazillas are being implemented. During this period, Bangladesh has earned a reputation for organizing a number of international tournaments. Success has come to cricket, weight-lifting, golf and hockey at Asian and international levels.

Multi-directed cultural activities have enriched the free flow of non-communal and democratic tradition of Bengali culture. The 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the 90th Anniversary of Nazrul's composition of "Bidrohee" and Nazrul's 113th birth festival were observed at the joint initiative of Bangladesh and India. A modern gallery on the Liberation War has been set up at the National Museum, a Writers' Museum has been put up at Bangla Academy, Bangla Grammar has been compiled at the initiative of Bangla Academy, activities of the International Mother Language Institute have taken off, and a law has been passed for preservation of the tradition and heritage of small ethnic groups and related measures have been duly taken. Ancient urban civilizations and Buddhist Viharas could be located at Uwary-Bateshwar and Bikrampur, and excavation has been going on at other archaeological sites. Measures have been taken for the preservation of archaeological treasures.

New warships, fighter planes, helicopters, radars, tanks, missiles, and other military vehicles, implements and armaments etc. have been purchased for the Army, Navy and Air Force with a view to enhancing the defense capability of Bangladesh. Promotion, retirement age, salary and allowances and other facilities for members of the Armed Forces have been enhanced. The contribution of the Army to the Hatirjheel Project, construction of Mirpur Road Flyover, Elevated Expressway and the Marine Drive from Cox's Bazaar to Teknaf have been greatly appreciated by the nation. A UNO Complex has been built at Rajendrapur Cantonment for training of the soldiers taking part in UN Peace-Keeping Missions.

Because of the foreign policy followed by the Awami League, the image of Bangladesh has become brighter and its stature has increased. Bangladesh has won sovereignty over 1, 11,631 sq. kilometers of sea areas (which is 75 per cent of the total area of Bangladesh) as a result of a peaceful solution to the maritime dispute with Myanmar. Friendship with neighbouring countries like India, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka has become stronger and mutually co-operative programs between two or more countries have been expanded.

Treaties about identifying the land border between Bangladesh and India and about handing over the Chhitmahals have been signed. Initiatives have been taken to produce electricity by using the river current based on collaboration with India, Bhutan, and Nepal at a sub-regional level. To stop the movement of the Rohingas and deal with Rohingas currently living in our country, Bangladesh is continuing its diplomatic efforts. Bangladesh is participating actively in SAARC, BIMSTEK, D-8, Asian Regional Forum (ARF), Asia Co-operation Dialogue (ACD), Asia Europe Meeting (AsEM) and other important forums to pluralize the fields of co-operation at regional, sub regional and international levels. An active role is being played in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to look after the interests of our country. Bangladesh is also playing a part in different initiatives taken in the economic corridor of Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM). Member countries of BIM-STEK have decided to found its headquarter in Dhaka. Awami League has given special priority to the issues of increasing co-operation with the members of the Muslim community all over the world, upholding the interests of the emigrants and non-resident citizens and climate change. The resolution of our government to not let any of the separationist, militant or international terrorist groups use our land has ensured safety and stability in the south-Asian region.

Bangladesh's active role-playing contribution and proposition under the leadership of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in many forums including the United Nations have been highly appreciated. The United Nations has taken into account the model Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had proposed for peace and prosperity.

For achieving success in different aspects of internal and international affairs, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been awarded MDG Award 2010, Indira Gandhi Peace Award 2010, South-South Award 2011, UNESCO Cultural Diversity Award 2012, FAO Diploma Award 2013, and South-South Co-operation 2013.

The Opposition's Politics of Non-Cooperation, Destruction and Conflict

The BNP-Jamaat Alliance could never come to terms with their defeat in the 2008 electoral race. They adopted a course of non-cooperation, conspiracy and conflict right from day one. BNP, in league with Jamaat-E-Islami, made several abortive attempts to incite rebellion in the military

and thereby threaten the democratic process, using the infamous BDR mutiny. Ever since the beginning of the trial of the war criminals of 1971, the BNP leadership has desperately tried to save the war criminals. They have systematically caused chaos throughout the country with acts such as mass killings, inciting communal and religious hatred, deploying the extremist religious group styled “Hefazat-E-Islam”, setting fire to mosques and thousands of copies of the Holy Quran, indiscriminately killing police, army and BGB officers and burning members of the public to death. Against the backdrop of the war crimes trials and the cancellation of the registration of the Jamaat-e-Islami as a political party, BNP has now chosen to take up the mantle from Jamaat themselves. They abstained from attending Parliament and refrained from cooperating in the process of amendment of the Constitution despite the fact that they took salaries, allowances other facilities available to MPs. They blocked all means to a compromise on the question of an election time government and a peaceful solution to political crisis by refusing the invitation for a dialogue extended to Begum Khaleda Zia over the phone from the Prime Minister.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance in the name of uninterrupted *hartal* have engaged themselves in the conspiracy of destabilizing the country. In the wake of the trial of the war criminals, and the cancellation of the registration of Jamaat, BNP itself has taken up the role of Jamaat. As they had denied the independence of Bangladesh, the spirit of the War of Liberation and the constitutional values of the country, they have now indulged in overturning the development process initiated by the Awami League Government under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina during the last five years. They seek to render Bangladesh into a terrorist and militant state and take the country to a dark age.

The people of the country will fight out all conspiracies of evil forces by participating in the upcoming national parliamentary election to be held in a free, fair and credible manner. The people of Bangladesh will not let their country become a land of terrorists and militants.

Following a landslide victory in the election of 2008, Bangladesh Awami League, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formed government on 6th January 2009 and paved a way to peace, democracy, development and prosperity for the people of this country. Bangladesh must be carried forward along that road. We have started working on the materialization of the “Vision-2021”, declared in the election manifesto of 2008. We have kept almost all of our promises. Many of the projects are on their way to completion, while many more development projects adopted in the meanwhile are waiting to be implemented. Once all these

projects are implemented, Bangladesh will become a middle income country. Bangladesh Awami League is firmly resolute to transform Bangladesh into a prosperous country free from hunger, poverty and illiteracy. We want to celebrate the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in 2020 and the 50th Anniversary of our Liberation in 2021 by carrying out this solemn duty.

Now we are looking beyond 2021, extending our vision to the year 2050—a time when Bangladesh will be recognized as a prosperous and developed country in the eyes of its people and the rest of the world. Bangladesh Awami League has formulated their manifesto for this election to point out the things that we must do in order for this glittering dream of the future to materialise.

The National Charter for Peace, Democracy, Development and Prosperity

Bangladesh, despite accumulated problems and impediments of the past, has been on the highway of development and prosperity since 2009 under the dynamic leadership of the people's leader Sheikh Hasina. We must move forward along this way. The people of the country want peace, not conflict. They do not want to go back to any unconstitutional regime or to autocracy. They want to keep the radiant march of democracy ongoing. The people want sustainable development and a safe, vibrant, happy, beautiful and prosperous Bangladesh for the new generation. In order to implement the hopes and aspirations of the 160 million people of Bangladesh and, above all, in commitment to our assertion to build the golden Bangla dreamt of by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu, we announce here the national charter and the programme “Marching Ahead Bangladesh”.

Our Objectives and Declaration

The ultimate objectives of Awami League are to achieve socio-economic freedom of the people and to build a developed and prosperous country free from hunger and poverty. With this end in view the development and progress made during 2009 to 2013 will be sustained. The unfinished and under-implementation development programmes and projects taken up during 2008 to 2013 will be completed in time. Initiatives will be taken to implement on a priority basis the programmes and projects which have been prepared

or approved and of which necessary funding provisions are already decided.

Our immediate objective is to implement the Vision- 2021. The Perspective Plan 2010-21 has been prepared to facilitate this. This Perspective Plan will be re-evaluated and adjusted to our present Election Manifesto 2014. The implementation of the Sixth Five Year Plan and the preparation of the Seventh Five Year Plan will be done by 2015. If the Perspective Plan and the Five Year Plans are implemented the per capita income will increase to 1500 dollar in 2021 from the present 1044 dollar. The growth rate of the economy will rise to 10 per cent from the present 6.2 per cent and the poverty indicator will come down to 13 per cent from the present 26 per cent. The production of electricity will increase to 24000 megawatt from the present 10000 megawatt. The share of industries in national income owing to industrialization will rise to 40 per cent from 25 per cent and the labour manpower will reach 25 per cent from 15. Our immediate goal is to upgrade Bangladesh to a genuine middle income country.

Our long term objective is to advance Bangladesh to the level of the first line developed countries of the world. We shall prepare an outline of a long term Development Strategy in this regard. After the implementation of Vision- 2021 we shall prepare in several phases the specific Perspective Plan and subsequent five year plans to achieve this long term objective.

The ultimate goal of all our activities is to build in the spirit of the War of Liberation a peaceful, secular, democratic and equal society and state that is free from enmity, strife, oppression and disparity. Our only pledge is to lay the foundation for a safe and prosperous Bangladesh for the children and young people of today and for the people of the next generation.

Our Priorities for this Term: Good Governance, Democratization and Decentralization of Power

Peace and Stability: Peace, discipline and stability will be established in all spheres of national and social life by eliminating violence, terrorism and communalism. The safety of the lives of the citizens and their basic rights of actions and movements will be ensured.

Constitution and Parliament: The Constitution will be protected and the democracy and the democratic institutions will be established on more solid basis. All necessary steps will be taken to make the Parliament effective. Necessary rules and regulations will be framed to ensure the accountability of the members on their collective and personal activities inside and outside the Parliament, transparency and responsibility to the people.

National Consensus: Initiatives will be taken to create national consensus among all political parties, classes & professional organizations, civil societies irrespective of groups and opinions on basic issues such as upholding democratic process and ensuring uninterrupted development.

Trial of the War Criminals: Communalism- Terrorism: The trial of the war criminals will be completed and the sentences will be implemented. The criminals involved in murder, terrorism, putting the Holy Quran to fire, setting fire to the industries & factories, uprooting fishplates of railway lines, destroying properties of people & the state including cutting roads, attacking the minority communities, destroying the places of worship, arson, looting and felling of trees in the name of movements in a bid to foil the trial of the war criminals, will be tried. Steps will be taken to rehabilitate the economy, including supporting affected mills and factories, to give assistance to the affected persons and to reconstruct the institutions destroyed by sabotage. The right to practice respective religions of all citizens will be ensured. Equal rights and equal opportunities of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, anthropological identity, gender and social status will be ensured.

Judiciary and the Rule of Law: The independence and the esteem of the judiciary will be protected. Steps under implementation to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the judiciary, including the necessary legal reforms undertaken in order to make justice available to people at all levels and to dispose of cases in minimum possible time by removing case congestion, will continue in future. Equal application of law for all, the rule of law and the measures for establishing human rights will be strengthened. An Ombudsman will be appointed and the independent Human Rights Commission will be made a more effective institution.

Election System: The initiatives taken in the meantime to establish a reliable and permanent election system will be integrated and put on a solid foundation. The Election Commission has been estab-

lished as an institution more powerful, efficient and independent than before. It will be made more powerful and effective in future. The reforms in the election system will continue as per the needs of the time.

Decentralization of Power, Local Government and Administration: Power will be decentralized with a view to empowering the people and encouraging greater citizen participation in the operation of the governmental and national development activities. More authority and responsibility will be delegated to the Zilla Parishad, Upazilla Parishad and Union Parishad through democratic reorganization of the present centralized administrative structure. Various development programmes related to education, health, law & order, infrastructure development and social security will be placed to the local government as per hierarchical status. Integrated work plans will be taken to make the local government systems at each level more powerful and responsible. In order to establish good governance in all spheres of governmental and social lives, transparency, accountability and responsibility will be enhanced. Administrative reforms and the procedures for enhancing efficiency and facilities of the government officers and staff will remain on-going. E-governance will be expanded to all levels.

Curbing Corruption: Legal, political, social and institutional initiatives in curbing corruption will be strengthened. The effectiveness of the Anti-Corruption Commission will be enhanced further by increasing the power and efficiency of the organization. Strong measures will be taken to resist bribery, unearned income, black money, rent seeking, loan default, tender-grabbing & muscle power, and to eliminate corruption. Accountability of citizens of all levels as regards their own assets and means of earning will be ensured.

Police and Law and Order Forces: All branches of the law and order forces have been made stronger and more efficient and equipped with modern equipment for providing security to the people and peace in industries and to make development works, goods transportation & import-export smooth, and to resist rent seeking & terrorism with strong hands. They will be developed further in future in concurrence with the needs of time. Police and other law enforcing forces will be kept free from party influences. The improvement in the standard of living, the enhanced facilities regarding accommodation of the family members, education and medical treatment will follow the same trend in future. Initiatives will also be taken to decentralize the police administration.

Improvements in the Standard of Living, Prices of Goods and Macro Economics

Steps will be taken to continuously improve the standard of living of the people, enhance their means of earning and keep the price of food and essentials stable and within their purchasing power. The pace of progress in indigenous production will be kept on-going and the production and supply of food related consumer goods will be ensured. Around the clock surveillance of the marketing system will be given highest priority. Consumer rights will be given an institutional shape and the business syndicates will be faced with the help of the consumers. Any attempt to create artificial crisis in the market will be restrained with strong hands.

In order to ensure socio-economic progress and growth, the balance of macroeconomics will be strengthened. The collection of revenue will be increased through administrative efficiency. The principle of customs duty will be business friendly. The deficit expenditure of the government will be kept to the minimum. The principle of currency conversion will be flexible. Deficit control and balance will be maintained in foreign transactions. The macroeconomic balance will keep inflation in control. The principle of the recovery of full cost will be applied in public procurements and subsidy will be aimed at reducing the suffering of the people and for the purpose of providing special services.

Our Important Socio-Economic Programmes

Industrialization

Industrialization is one of the pre-requisites for making Bangladesh a middle income country by 2021. In order to create employment and lay the foundation for industrial civilization, highest importance will be given to attracting investors from home and abroad and non-resident Bangalees for investment. The industrialization strategy will involve an increase in facilities related to physical infrastructure, simplification of laws and rules for reducing administrative and bureaucratic complexity and delays, making one stop services effective, curbing corruption, creating an investment friendly political and social environment, expansion of internal markets & simultaneous diversification of exportable goods and providing the investors with reasonable revenue and financial incentives. For this the integrated industrial policy and strategy paper as prepared will be upgraded further in future.

The willing and efficient industrial entrepreneurs of the identified prospective industries like food and agricultural processing, ship building, light engineering, medicine, plastic, dolls, household items, IT, leather and chemical industries will be given financial support. The pace of regeneration and modernization of the jute industry will be accelerated. Entrepreneurs will be encouraged to establish new industries in the context of the prospect of the alternative use of jute created by the discovery of the genetic code of jute. The garments and textile industries will be made stronger, safer and more competitive.

The projects for establishing special economic zones and industrial areas will be implemented speedily. Establishment of agriculture based and other small and medium industries in *mofussil* and marginal localities, and the full use of the facilities of industrialization of the existing EPZs will be encouraged. The creation of infrastructure in less developed areas and the provision of revenue and financial assistance will receive priority.

Loans at low rates of interest and refinancing arrangements will continue for the labour intensive small, medium and cottage industries. Special arrangements and other assistance to female investors in small and medium industries will continue and be expanded further. Those who have paid customs & taxes and bank loans as per schedule and have demonstrated special efficiency in organizing will be given assistance on priority basis.

Special assistance will be given to the rural industries including traditional weaving, copper, bronze and pottery. The widening of internal and external trade, the expansion of the market and the increase of export will be encouraged. The increase of manpower export, the profitable and productive investment of remittances from abroad and the expansion of tourism industries will be extensively assisted. Special steps will be taken to ensure trouble-free transportation and movements of domestic and export goods.

Power and Energy

The pace of progress in the Power and Energy sector will continue and be made faster. In the process of achieving the targets of the middle term and long term programmes of electricity production, prepared and being implemented by the Great Alliance Government, the supply of electricity to every household in Bangladesh in the next five years will be ensured. The production of power will

rise to 16000 megawatts by 2016. The target for the production of power in 2021 had been fixed at 20000 megawatts. This target has been upgraded to 24000 megawatts in view of industrialization, increased demand for electricity and enhanced power production capability. In order to meet the increased demand for electricity, initiatives will be taken to implement the proposal for power production-sharing through bilateral, tri-lateral and regional cooperation with neighbouring countries such as India, Nepal and Bhutan, along with increasing internal production. The use of solar energy will be made easily available and extensive through the planned installation of 30 lakh solar panels. The construction of Rampal Power Plant and Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant will be completed in scheduled time. Establishing a dependable long term solution to the power and energy problems of Bangladesh will be a key objective for the proper economic use of coal resources. An already taken project intended to create a plant which will generate 1300 megawatts of coal will be implemented and the required coal will be imported. The share of the coal based power production will be around 50 per cent by 2030.

Rational extraction and use of gas will be ensured. The principle of empowering the national institute BAPEX will continue. More rigs, modern equipment and technology will be procured to strengthen BAPEX in the exploration and extraction of oil and gas. Priority will be given to the exploration of new gas and oil fields. Attempts of cooperation with other countries and organizations will be strengthened after upholding national interest in the exploration and extraction of gas in coastal and deep sea areas of Bangladesh. The initiatives to distribute gas in the remaining north and western districts will continue. Steps to reduce waste by increasing efficiency in electricity and gas management will be on-going. As the reserve of natural gas is limited, the on-going process of importing NLG from abroad will be completed. In order to achieve this, necessary infrastructure including an NLG terminal will be constructed in Maheshkhali Island.

War Against Poverty

The success of the Grand Alliance Government in eliminating poverty will continue. The success of Bangladesh in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of the United Nations in creating a society free from hunger and poverty is internationally acknowledged. The objective of Awami League's strategy on the elimination of poverty is to bring down the ratio of poverty below

15 per cent i.e. to 13 per cent. Meanwhile the rate of the elimination of poverty has improved to 2.4 per cent from 1.7. If the achievement keeps on exceeding the target as at present, the poverty ratio will come down to below 15 per cent in the next five years ahead of 2021. The present trend of eliminating disparity will continue.

Social Security

The dynamism achieved in the rural economy through poverty reduction and the creation of a sustainable security net for the ultra-poor will be strengthened further. In addition to attaining food security for the people and the free distribution of food for the ultra-poor and distressed, other programmes innovated by Awami League Government such as food for work and test relief, 'one house one farm', asrayon (sheltering), housing, model village, cluster villages and 'return to home' have proven successful. These programmes will continue. Apart from this, the Old Age Allowances, Distressed Women Allowances, and the Allowances for the Widows and Abandoned Women will continue as usual. Programmes for the employment of the poor will be increased in the village levels in phases. The rural population will be encouraged to keep savings and a rural savings bank will be established. Special arrangements for social security programmes for poverty stricken areas will continue. Co-ordination will be made among the programmes taken under a social security strategy so that objectives are achieved quickly and effectively.

The initiative to introduce pension schemes in private institutions in the light of the current economic climate will start from 2018. A National Pension System for ensuring social security to all will be finalized in 2021.

Employment

The main objectives of the Employment Policy of Awami League are to create product oriented employment and to transform the inefficient populace into semi efficient and efficient manpower. To achieve this objective the following steps will be implemented: a) the vocational and technical education system will be recast to develop human resources and coordination among various institutions will be strengthened; b) employment will be created through the development of rural infrastructure and the progress of civil works; c) the medium and small sized industries sector will be strengthened; d) self-employment will be strengthened though the provision

of loans to trained youths and young women in particular; e) the “national service” programme, introduced currently for employment for two years, will be extended to all districts in phases; f) export of manpower for foreign employment will be increased; g) the existing employment opportunities in the agricultural and service sectors will be extended further, and extensive social employment and other steps will be taken and implemented. For this, human resources development and the education and training systems of vocations and professions will be coordinated and expanded.

The role of the informal sector is very important in arranging employment for all employed and pseudo employed persons by 2021. The share of the informal sector in national income is 30 per cent; 45 per cent of the employment of the labour force comes from informal sector. Necessary funding and supply of technology will be made for the flourishing of cottage industries, weaving, rickshaws and van, and opportunities will be created to increase the efficiency of existing manpower. In order to reduce pseudo unemployment and poverty the informal sector will be made more dynamic and productive and its relationship with the formal sector will be made closer.

Agriculture, Food, Land and Rural Development

Meeting the demand for nutrition of the people and the trend for achieving self sufficiency in food will be integrated. Ensuring food security while taking into consideration the increase in the number of population, ensuring Bangladesh has a food surplus, making the country an exporter in food and having a dependable crisis period reserve will be the main objectives of agricultural development. For this the tradition of providing fertilizers, seeds, irrigation, subsidies in agricultural inputs, loans in subsidized rates and ensuring proper prices for agricultural products will be kept on-going. The system of providing loans to share croppers without collaterals through Krishi Bank will continue. The transparency and efficiency that has developed in the distribution of agricultural inputs and subsidies through cards to avoid irregularities and corruption will continue. Policies aimed at increasing irrigation facilities and preserving and utilizing surface water will remain on-going.

Attempts at making varieties in the production of various crops other than rice, such as wheat, maize, vegetables, oil seeds, spices & fruits and flowers, leaves and herbs will be strengthened. The production of edible oil will be increased to meet the demands of the country.

Revenue and financial support will be provided at manufacturer level to increase production of fish, eggs, poultry, cattle and salt and for export after the country's needs have been met. Industries based on agricultural products will be encouraged specially and will be given incentives. In order to increase the production of sugar, high yielding varieties will be invented and per acre production will be increased. At the same time emphasis will be given to extending beet cultivation. Steps will be taken to reduce the cost of production by modernizing the sugar mills, stopping waste and corruption and creating facilities for food processing to make the mills profitable.

Agricultural research will be given the highest importance. The trend of discovering new genetic codes for jute and other cash crops and inventing draught, salinity and high water tolerant high yielding varieties will be moved ahead. Innovations in biotechnology and engineering and their utilization will be given due importance.

The policy devoted to ensuring food security, curbing inflation and increasing efficiency in food management for maintaining stability will continue. Not only the quantity, but also the availability, of nutritious balanced food for every individual will be ensured. The policy of buying food grains at motivational prices and keeping sufficient reserves of food will continue in order to incentivise agricultural production.

To ensure safe food free from impurities and chemical elements a "Safe Food Authority" will be constituted in the process of the implementation of the "Bangladesh Safe Food Act- 2013", which was passed to stop the mixing of impurities and injurious chemical elements in food.

A scientific land management policy will be taken to control the alarming rate of reduction of habitable land and water bodies owing to industrialization, housing and increasing urbanization. The digitalization of the record of all land in the country will be completed in the next five years. A long term work plan will be implemented to achieve maximum rational utilization of land and preservation of natural environment. Government owned land, water bodies and land emerged from rivers and sea will be distributed to landless, homeless and ultra-poor citizens on a priority basis.

Creating employment in rural areas, extension of urban facilities to rural areas and the reduction of migration to towns and cities will be the objectives of rural development. Every Union headquarter

will be turned into a planned rural township. Upazilla headquarters and the advanced industrial centres will be developed into modern urban or suburban areas by providing improved housing, education, expansion of agro-based industries, medical services, electricity, gas, drinking water and drainage systems.

Education and Human Development

Education and human development will play a pivotal role in our national development. Highest importance will be given to maintaining uninterrupted continuity of the policies adopted during the tenure 2009-13 and the successes achieved. The present Education Policy will be implemented on a priority basis, and the necessary allocations in the education sector will be increased.

The level of primary education will be upgraded to class eight from class five and education up to class eight will be made free of fees. To encourage women's education, the stipend programme for female students will remain on-going. Scholarships are already being given to students up to Degree classes from the currently constituted Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust Fund. These activities will be extended further. Distribution of free text books will be increased in line with the rate of admission and the number of students. In order to achieve 100 per cent literacy the non-formal education programme for adults will be implemented.

The improvement of the standard of education will get highest importance. In order to achieve this, the reduction in student teacher ratio from primary to higher secondary level, creation of required posts & appointment of teachers, teachers' training and the use of communication technology and multi-media in classrooms have been started. The use of these new facilities will extend to all institutions in future. The infrastructure facilities of the educational institutions will be increased continuously. The teachers of secondary and higher secondary levels will get separate pay scales, and a permanent pay commission will be constituted. More effective steps will be taken to stop drop outs at primary and secondary levels.

Development of human resources is one of our key priorities. The predominance of children and young people in our population demands special importance to this issue. Meanwhile we have taken an overall strategy for human resources development in cooperation with some development partners. In respect of vocational and technical education, coordination and cooperation among various insti-

tutions and between private sector and government initiatives will be strengthened further as part of this strategy. The curriculum will also be updated and made relevant as per needs of our students. The continuing task of recasting the training facilities in vocational and technical education and in various professions and technologies will be completed and implemented throughout the country. The existing programme of establishing technical schools in each upazilla will be completed soon. For the expansion of vocational and technical education throughout the country, the work plan for introducing vocational training courses in secondary and higher secondary schools and madrasas will also be implemented and extended. In addition, the programme of establishing a model schools in each upazilla will be implemented. The initiatives which have already been taken to introduce computer and honours courses for upgrading the madrasa education in line with the mainstream education will remain ongoing.

The programme of establishing a university in each district by phases through government and non-government initiatives in order to improve higher education and solve problems associated with admissions will continue. The policy for giving approvals for establishing universities of adequate standards in the private sector will continue. Scientific research and practicing sciences in public and private universities will be encouraged.

Strict measures will be taken to eliminate terrorism, political malpractices, grouping and session jam from educational institutes. The administrative and organizational system of the public universities will be made more democratic, transparent, and accountable. Side by side, the university ordinances will be re-evaluated and necessary amendments will be made so that educational activities are not hampered due to petty groupings of the teachers. The organizational system of schools and colleges will also be made free from grouping, will be more democratic, and participative by local people, responsible, transparent and accountable.

Science and Technology

In the context of a huge population, scarcity of natural resources, and accelerated urbanization and industrialization highest priority will be given to optimize use of cultivable land and water bodies with a view to maximizing productivity in the agricultural sector particularly in research and development (NRD). With the aim to build a developed and prosperous country special emphasis will be

given by the state on scientific research and development of technology and knowledge. Along with the creation of opportunities for scientific research, scientists and researchers will be given impetus with regard to emoluments and tenure of service so that they are able to complete their research and engage themselves with new inventions and discoveries.

Great possibilities in the science and technology sector can be utilised by taking proper steps in creating implementable programmes which will be updated from time to time. In the primary and secondary levels of education, opportunities for IT learning shall be expanded by providing teachers' training, proper laboratories, multi-media use and expansion of internet connections. In the primary and secondary levels, IT education shall be made compulsory. In the area of higher education, computer education shall be expanded significantly.

Expansions of software industry spread of IT services, establishment of high-tech and Software Technology Parks as well as ICT incubator and computer village programmes have already started. Programmes of implementation in this area shall be accelerated. At the same time assistance will be on-going on outsourcing and software export.

10.3 Speedy and wide-spread internet services such as 3-G have already begun around the country. Similarly 4-G will also be introduced. The programmes of building up digital Bangladesh will go on and a knowledge based society will emerge.

Health and Family Planning

11.1 Implementation of health policy and programmes shall be on-going. To ensure health services to all, 13 thousand community clinics are now working. Arrangements shall be made for child and mother care and proper facilities for safe child birth will be provided in community clinics and union health complexes. For this purpose, each health centre will give priority to the employment of trained nurses and female doctors. In order to reduce maternal death rate to the MDG target of 143 per thousand in 2015, the programmes in this area will be further strengthened. Endeavours will be made in all the community clinics to provide the facilities to examine blood pressure and blood sugar for patients with diabetes. Efforts to reduce infant mortality rate and to improve child health care will go on. Within the year 2021 average life expectancy is targeted to rise to 72 years. With a view to reducing population growth rate, the birth control

policy shall be implemented by providing accessible reproductive health care services. Improvements will be made in monitoring the services of field health workers so that their presence is ensured and there is a marked improvement in the services as well as in the position of availability of medicines. Specialized health care facilities will be introduced at Upazilla levels from district levels by phases and this effort will be accelerated. Tele-medicine system shall also be expanded significantly.

In order to provide safe and arsenic free drinking water to all, as well as to arrange for sanitation and chemical free food items, efforts will be made and accelerated further.

- 11.3 All efforts will be made to improve the standards of health care education. Medical specialists and educationalists will be involved in the process of ensuring proper standard and quality of public and private medical colleges and hospitals. Healthcare and medical education controlling entities will be targeted to improve their capacities and efficiencies. Training facilities for higher education in nursing and medical technology shall be created and expanded.
- 11.4 Infrastructural, institutional and technological facilities shall be increased to improve the standard of education on indigenous medicines including Unani, Ayurveda and Homeopathy.
- 11.5 Efforts will be directed towards combating contagious disease and at the same time planned efforts will be made to create and expand facilities to deal with the alarming prevalence of non-contagious diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.
- 11.6 The programmes taken for the welfare of the disabled by Awami League Government will be further strengthened. Scientific practical work programmes will be taken in hand and be implemented to provide for the education, nutrition, physical and mental development, employment, movements and social status of autistic and other disabled persons.

Empowerment of Women and Gender Equality

Women's development policy-2011 shall be firmly pursued and implemented. In all areas of national and social life, not only will numerical equity be ensured but opportunities will be created so that women's participation in society and workplaces steadily increases. In the higher echelons of administration and other institu-

tions, the policy of encouraging more female engagement will continue.

- 12.2 Proper implementation of enactments relating to stopping violence, sexual abuse, harassment and disparity towards women will be vigorously pursued and implemented and the same strictness will follow with regard to the trafficking of women and children.
- 12.3 Freedom to choose professions and free movements at the work place of women will be ensured. Side by side with political efforts to prevent anti women propaganda by misinterpreting religious tenets in order to confine women within the households, proper social movements and strict legal actions will be initiated. Proper assessment will be made for female labour and proper emoluments ensured. In the field of trade and industry, as well as in the services sector the special incentives already provided to women entrepreneurs will be continued and expanded.

Children, Adolescents and the Young Generation

Access to education, sports, entertainments and creative cultural activities will be ensured and expanded for children, the adolescents and young people so that their need for nutrition and physical and mental development is properly looked after. The UN Charter for the preservation of rights of children will be followed and the National Child Policy will be updated. Multi-level programmes will be taken up to ensure a happy childhood for the children and facilities will be made to instil a sense of history, love for knowledge and scientific approach to life. Following the garments sector, the use of child labour in industrial sectors will be stopped by phases. Child abuse, and particularly abuse of girl children, and violence will be stopped and their security will be ensured. The use of children in political activities and as human shields during acts of terrorism and violence will be strongly combated and subdued.

- 13.2 The majority of our population are the young people. Bangladesh is a country of young people full of life and creativity. Awami League will take all possible steps to make all facilities wide open to them in order to provide these young people with the education, employment and opportunities they need to develop their capabilities and talents to the fullest extent. We hope that they will become capable of shouldering national leadership in the days to come. The Awami League will invite the new generation to take the responsibility of building up a prosperous Bangladesh of tomorrow.

Transportation: Roads and Highways, Railway, Aviation, and Water Transport.

The existing means of transportation in the country are not sufficient to cater to the needs of the ever expanding economy. Based on priority, the existing road networks will be maintained, improved and expanded, including increasing the number of lanes on a priority basis. Particular focus will be given to: a) Completion of the on-going construction of the Padma Bridge, b) Building a tunnel under the river bed of Karnafuli River in Chittagong, c) Finishing the construction of the four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka–Mymensingh highways, d) Construction of the country’s third sea-port at Payrabandar in Patuakhali. In addition, the construction of the four-lanes on the Dhaka-Mongla and Dhaka-Tangail-Bangabandhu Bridge will be expeditiously implemented. The existing roads will be widened and new highways will be built to meet the ever increasing demands of the economy.

14.2 Necessary technical and other ancillary steps will be taken to see that the second Jamuna Bridge and the second Padma Bridge are completed within the next five years. A project for creating a deep sea port at Sonadia will be implemented.

14.3 Bangladesh Railway will be thoroughly reformed giving due weight to the eco-friendliness and cost potential. Increased investments in the railway sector will also continue. Measures will be taken to repair and modernize the existing rail tracks and rolling stocks, as well as raise the railway’s passenger and goods carriage capacity. New rail tracks will be laid to connect Khulna with Mongla and the number of tracks on the present Narayanganj-Dhaka-Gazipur and Dhaka-Chittagong rail routes will be increased. New rail tracks will be laid to connect Dhaka with Mongla, and Chittagong with Cox’s Bazar. Circular rail tracks around Dhaka will also be built. Manpower will be increased and efficiency levels will be raised to ensure the Railway’s commercial competitiveness. All measures will be taken to make the railways a profitable and efficient entity.

14.4 The initiatives taken by the Awami League Government to increase the transportation capacity of Bangladesh Biman, thus transforming Biman into a profitable entity, will have to be further strengthened. Four new Boeing airplanes have been procured. Biman’s international competitiveness will be raised and its reliability level heightened through the procurement of more aircrafts and the combatting of wastage, inefficiency and corruption. From 2014 the Dhaka-New York flight will be reintroduced.

Expansion work on Dhaka and Cox's Bazar airports will be implemented, and construction of Mongla Airport will be taken up afresh.

Finalization of the location and inauguration of the construction of the proposed modern Bangabandhu International Airport designed to serve as an inter-regional communication hub in the outskirts of Dhaka will be accomplished.

14.5 The vast project to revitalize the waterways by digging key rivers will be strengthened further. The waterways of our riverine country will be reclaimed by digging the riverbeds of the gradually filled-up rivers making them more navigable. Aside from increasing the navigability of the rivers, overhead projects already undertaken to revitalize the abandoned waterways of the country through dredging will also continue. Dredgers have been procured for this purpose. Dredgers to be used solely in Mongla Port have been bought. Existing operations designed to augment the goods handling capacity of Chittagong and Mongla ports and to keep the river channels navigable through regular dredging will also continue.

14.6 Steps already undertaken to prevent accidents on highways, railways, and river ways and to build up a safe road network will continue.

Prevention of Drug Addiction

Drug addiction in our country is increasing at an alarming rate. The youth of our country are the main victims of drug abuse. Necessary measures will be taken to save our society and youth from the dangers of drug addiction. Trading, trafficking and drug use will be diminished and targeted. Usage of other drugs, like tobacco, which has harmful effects on health, will be discouraged by regulating the production and marketing of all the tobacco related products. Necessary measures shall be taken to eliminate other anti-social activities such as betting.

15.2 Efforts from all Government and Non-government Organizations will be taken to rehabilitate drug addicts. Prevention measures to stop production, trafficking and trading of drugs will be taken in unison with neighbouring countries.

Climate Change: Environment and Water Resource

Bangladesh is one of the worst victims of climate change resulting from global warming. The initiatives taken by the Awami League Government to resolve the resulting crisis and to preserve the eco-system will be con-

tinued and expanded. The Work Plan taken in 2009 by the Government to cope with climate-change will be updated and evaluated. Financing the Climate-Trust Fund will go on and more assistance will be sought from the international community.

16.2 Special importance will be attached to the preservation of existing forests, creation of new forests, preservation of bio-diversity, and sustainable forestation in coastal areas. In addition to the above mentioned steps to prevent natural disasters, coordinated plans will be adopted and implemented to preserve water resources, prevent river erosion and flooding, prevent salinity and deal with drought. Initiatives will be taken to implement the Ganga-Barrage Project with a view to expand the irrigation facility, preventing salinity, augmenting the flow of sweet water in the areas surrounding the Sundarbans and increasing power generation.

16.3 Waste treatment in the cities and megacities will be modernized scientifically to save the cities from air and water pollution. The technical and legal measures already undertaken towards that end will be implemented with more vigour. Effective measures shall be taken to control sound pollution.

Labour and Manpower

Awami League is firmly committed to put in place a Labour Policy compatible with Chapters 15, 28, 38 and 40 of the Constitution of the country as well as with the ILO convention and to implement multifaceted measures to implement labour welfare. The government's on-going programme for fulfilling minimum wages for workers and adjusting such wages in pace with living expenses, inflation and growth rate of the economy, will go on. Towards that end, the role of the Wages Commission and the related laws of the land will be brought under sharper focus. In parallel with steps to provide trade-based training for workers, and the resultant increase in their productivity, their right to trade unionism will also be ensured.

Minimum wages and a safe work-environment for workers will be ensured. Maintenance of security and peace in the industries will be given special priority. All factory workers, agricultural labourers and those below the poverty line will be provided with rationing facilities.

17.3 Migrant workers and the remittances sent by them are the life line of our economy. Policies aimed at increasing the number of trained workers abroad and funnelling their remittances to profitable investments will be formulated and implemented.

The recently established Emigrant Welfare Bank will offer loans in soft terms/interest to intending workers, facilitating their movement abroad and finding permanent employment on their way home. More technical institutions will be established to train workers vocationally to increase overseas employment remittance. Procedures already underway to open new Labour Wings in our missions in 23 countries across Europe, Africa and Asia, with a view to augment export of our manpower, will be expedited.

Urbanization: Planned Development

According to the census held in 2011, the number of people living in the cities is about 40 million, while the rate of urbanization is approximately 28 per cent. Except Nepal, Bangladesh remains the only country in South Asia to post a maximum annual growth of 5% in its urban population. But there is currently no corresponding increase in urban facilities. Unplanned urbanization is causing untold sufferings to city dwellers. Awami league will draw up and implement a coordinated urbanization plan for the whole country in future.

Employment and urban facilities will be created in villages, with a view to curbing the migration of people from villages to cities. Planned living districts and rural towns will be created in the Union headquarters, upazillas and industrial estates, sub-districts and industrial areas. The government will tackle the effects of unplanned urbanization, such as the diminishing of arable lands and water bodies, and ensure the optimum use of land.

18.2 The master plan drawn up for developing Dhaka city will be implemented expeditiously. The on-going projects for setting up the four proposed satellite cities will be completed soon to minimize the burden of a rising population on Dhaka. Construction of the planned flyovers and elevated expressways will be completed in due time with a view to easing the unbearable traffic in Dhaka. The plan to build metro-rail, monorail, and circular rail will be implemented on a priority basis. In addition, many more flyovers, tunnels and elevated express ways will be built. The plans drawn up to ensure balanced geographical profiles of divisional towns will be further expanded and executed. Urban facilities in the older cities including district towns will be increased.

With a view to creating urban facilities and ensuring planned urbanization, steps will be taken to raise public and private investments in this sector, coupled with decentralization of city administration.

Media and Information Rights:

Unhindered freedom for the media and uninterrupted flow of information will be maintained. Public Awareness will be raised to ensure effective and fruitful functioning of the Information Commission, and to protect the citizens' right to know, as well as to keep all public functions transparent and accountable as envisaged in the relevant law of land.

As a result of the phenomenal expansion of the information technology, the importance of social networking and online media has increased manifold. Necessary guidelines will be formulated to prevent the abuse of online newspapers and social networks, and to ensure that they act responsibly.

Newspapers will be declared as an industry, and given required incentives. More licenses will be given to launch community based radio stations in far off corners of the country.

19.2 The Eighth Wages Board, formed to increase the salary and providence for the broadcast journalists will be implemented. Security for the journalists while at work will be ensured.

Freedom of Culture and Religion

The policy followed by the Awami League -led Govt. to nurture and nourish the secular and democratic traditions of Bengali culture will be maintained. State patronization to achieve excellence in all sectors of art and culture including Bengali literature, fine arts and crafts, music, Jatra, theatre, cinema and publication of creative writings will be strengthened. Institutional initiatives intended to preserve progressive culture; traditional folk arts, fairs and festivities will be duly encouraged.

The programme to build open air theatres in every upazilla will be continued. Archaeological explorations, research and excavations will be encouraged. More museums will be built to preserve and display the heritages of our land.

20.2 Freedom of religion will be ensured for every citizen. No law contradicting the Quran and the Sunnah will be passed. All creeds and doctrines of different religions will be shown due respect. A modern mosque will be built in every district and upazilla. Other religious institutions will be renovated and developed.

20.3 Communalism and terrorism will be uprooted at any cost. To invigorate mutual respect among peoples from different religious values

and to ensure their peaceful co-existence, protection by the law will be strengthened side by side raising social awareness. Politics based on religion will be prohibited and a liberal humanitarian society will be developed.

Pride in our Liberation War and Welfare for the Freedom Fighters:

In all the aspects of our national and social life, the values and pride of our liberation war will be held high. Programmes and projects initiated to prevent the distortion of the history of our Liberation War and to preserve its memories will be completed. Identification of all the places related to the memory of our war and building mausoleums on those sites will be continued. Site-museums and libraries will be built on the sites which bear the memories of our fight for freedom and its fighters.

The Awami League government's policy to recognize and honour the freedom fighters – who are the greatest sons of the soil – providing allowances to freedom fighters that are not well off, providing healthcare, old-age protection, and maintaining a quota system for their work in government jobs and educational institutions will continue.

Minority, Small Ethnic Groups, Underdeveloped Communities and Chittagong Hill Tracts

Through enacting the 15th Amendment to the Constitution in the Parliament, Awami League has re-established the four state principles of the '72 Constitution. As a result of this granting of constitutional right and honour to all religions, small national entities, ethnic groups and tribes, there will be an end to discriminatory conduct towards religious and ethnic minorities and violation of human rights. Constitutional obligation to safeguard their life, property, places of worship, distinctions of their life-style and culture will be strictly upheld. Landed property, homestead, forest property, water-bodies and other properties will remain well-protected. The work of the Hill Tracts Land Commission will continue to take special measures for protection of small ethnic groups' rights to land, water-bodies and forest-property including rights of those of plain land. Special quota for the children of non-advanced and non-developed ethnic groups, *dalit* and tea-garden workers will be there in the matters of education, job and facilities and advantages.

The still-unimplemented pledges and clauses of the CHT Peace Accord shall be implemented. The development of the Hill districts will be sped up, geo-natural features of the three Hill districts will be protected and forest areas, animal resources and the beauty of mountain peaks will be saved.

Defence

The policy adopted by Awami League to keep the Armed Forces above all controversies will be upheld. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman drew up a Defence Policy in 1974 to enhance their capability to defend the security, sovereignty and integrity of the country. The present Awami League Government has formulated the Forces Goal-2030 in this light, and implementation of that will continue. Works to procure necessary armament and vehicles, ensuring education and training to build up the Army, Navy and Air Force as stronger and more modern forces, have been going on and will continue.

Internal self-rule, discipline, administrative and management capacity of the Armed Forces will be upheld. Promotion and upgrading of posts have already taken place. Strict pursuance of policies of employment, posting and promotion on the basis of seniority, merit skill and competence will be ensured.

Implementation of multi-faceted welfare programs including those of education, medication, housing and retirement benefits of members of the Armed Forces will continue.

23.3 Initiatives for maintenance and expansion of scopes of participating in the UN Peace Keeping Forces will continue.

Sports and Sports Management

Topmost priority will be given to the enhancement of Bangladesh's proficiency and standard in international competitions of cricket, football, hockey, volleyball, golf, weight-lifting, swimming, gymnastics, etc. For this, arrangements for upgrading management facilities, financial motivation, physical training of the sportspeople and enhancing physical and mental competence will continue. Transparency of sports organizations and the National Sports Management Council will have to be increased. Politicization, corruption and mismanagement will not be tolerated.

Children, adolescents and youths will have to be made adept in different sports through putting-up of sports organizations, social and cultural organizations at all educational institutions of all levels and from remote areas to district levels. Arrangements will be made to provide access to sports fields and grounds, stadiums and sports implements, goods and trainers.

Formation of NGO and Legalized Civil Society

No interference will be made at the NGO Bureau and from the part of other Government authorities into the legal activities of registered organizations. Each and every organization will be run as an autonomous organization and according to its own rules, which will have to be congruent with prevalent laws and the Constitution of the country. Sources of income, transparency of income and expenditure and accountability of each organization will have to be ensured. NGOs and registered civil society organizations receiving foreign aid must not get involved in the political process of the country.

Foreign Policy

The foreign policy enriched by the spirit of the Liberation War, which the Grand Alliance Government led by the Awami League has reinstated, will be pursued further on the basis of Bangabandhu's principle of 'friendship for all and malice to none.' The intended goals of Bangladesh's foreign policy are non-interference by one country into another country's internal affairs, inter-state relationship on the basis of sovereign equality, expansion of mutual co-operation and development partnership and securing of national prosperity and respectability through these.

Bangladesh's friendly relationship with neighbours, including India, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan has been strengthened and mutual and multi-party co-operation have been expanded. Co-operation with India including mutual trade and security collaboration, apportioning of water of common rivers, demarcation of land boundary and transfer of enclaves will be carried forward. Initiatives for production of hydro-electricity and joint management with the help of common rivers on the basis of sub-regional co-operation with India, Bhutan and Nepal will continue. Patient efforts will continue to be there at bi-partite, regional and international levels in matters relating to the illegal migrations of Rohingas from Myanmar, repatriation of Rohingya refugees and Rohingas illegally staying in Bangladesh. Bangladesh borders will be transformed into borders of peace.

Bangladesh will continue to participate in all important meetings including ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asian Co-operation Dialogue (ACD) and Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). Initiatives will be taken for making meetings like SAARC, BIMSTEC, D-8 more fruitful. Bangladesh's interests in the Indian Ocean will be safeguarded through more effective participation in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). There will be active participation in the initiatives of Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar economic corridor.

Strong efforts will continue for establishing Bangladesh's rights in the continental shelf of the Bay of Bengal. All initiatives will continue for maintenance and exploration of all bio-vital, mineral, marine and fisheries resources in the areas where our rights have already been established and also in the areas where our sovereign rights will be secured through our legal interaction with India.

No concession will be given to forces of terror, international terrorism and separatism. Mutual co-operation among South Asian countries for contending forces of terror and separatism will be enhanced, and international co-operation will continue in this regard.

Solidarity of the Muslim Ummah and areas of co-operation within the structure of the Islamic Co-operation Council (OIC) will be further strengthened and made fruitful. Along with maintenance and expansion of the present labour market in Saudi Arabia, countries of the Middle-East and Malaysia, initiatives for searching and expanding new labour markets will continue. Efforts for diversifying trade-contacts in these regions also will continue. Work will continue to intensify and diversify relationships of co-operation with countries of the Far East including Indonesia, countries of the ASEAN and countries of the Pacific region including Australia. Nine new missions will be opened, and ten newly-opened missions will be activated.

Friendly relationship with the developed and leading countries including the USA, UK, European Union, Japan, Canada, Russia and China will be strengthened further. Co-operation with these countries in all probable areas including trade, investment, infrastructural development and manpower development will be maintained.

Effective initiatives will be there for active protection of the rights of the migrant workers and all expatriate Bangladeshis and securing their just rights.

International co-operation will be carried forward for facing challenges in areas of climate change, food security and fuel security.

Active participation of Bangladesh in the UNO will continue. We shall go forward with our diplomatic initiative for democratization of the UNO, international economic bodies and their decision-making processes. Special diplomatic initiatives will be there to make Sheikh Hasina's People's Empowerment Model adopted by the UNO more popular and acceptable.

A Call to the Nation

Dear Countrymen,

We have kept our word. We have honoured the pledge we made to our people in the Election of 2008. We performed with sincerity and trust our duty to implement the programmes in order to overcome the problems and crisis that had been created earlier. In many cases we exceeded the targets of achievements. We know and recognize that our successes during the last five years were possible due to the unstinted support of people from all walks of life and their toil and sweat. It was possible also due to the involvement of our meritorious young people and their inspired participation in nation building. You have also proved beyond doubt that nothing great or glorious can be achieved without selfless sacrifices. Our dear countrymen, we congratulate you on your achievements. We take this opportunity to convey our best wishes to our brave and hard-working youth who are full of vibrant life. Today we are able to spell out loudly the fact that coming out of the darkness of the past Bangladesh has now stepped towards a bright, resplendent and sparkling future. We are all co- travellers in the path of life.

We have pledged to create a hunger and poverty-free, developed Bangladesh by 2021 and keeping this end in view we have created a constructive condition to follow that path of progress from which we will not be deterred. In order to implement the Vision- 2021 we have put before you the specific orderly programmes of the second term — the National Charter- 2014. We trust that in order to keep the pace of development and progress unabated and in order to push the country forward to the path of peace, democracy, development and prosperity you will give Bangladesh Awami League another opportunity to serve you. If the people take the right decision, then within five years Bangladesh shall be able to produce food in excess of its own needs and food security will be a certainty, the problem of malnutrition will disappear and poverty will vanish. Illiteracy will fade away, educated and trained human resource will abound, the base of an advanced culture and civilization will be created, electricity will reach every household, unemployment will be reduced to zero with crore of young people getting employed, health care for all will be ensured, trade and commerce will expand signifi-

cantly, communication system will completely transform itself, planned cities and townships will grow, the capital city of Dhaka will be free of traffic jam and shall turn into a uniquely beautiful mega city and digital Bangladesh will step into prosperity and progress. Politics will be free from enmity, violence and confrontations. Bangladesh will come out of the morass of corruption and criminalization; a tolerant democratic system will then be a reality.

Within the next five years we shall present to the nation our vision—a new Perspective Plan to be styled “Rupakalpa-2041”. The Bangladesh of 2041 will be a peaceful, prosperous, happy and developed society, transcending the middle income stage. Good governance, people’s capability and empowerment shall be the guiding principle of this robust progress. Within the span of this time frame the three-tier local government system will be firmly entrenched and developed. Planning modality and financing strategy will be determined through mutual discussion and synthesis between the central and local governments; and basically the local government shall be the authority responsible for its implementation. With this end in view, the authority of the state shall play a complementary role and the local government shall be the main executive force for its implementation. Empowerment of women, exclusive arrangement and programmes for the marginal people, expansion of educational facilities and communal harmony shall be the main driving creed. To go forward the lion’s share of government budgetary allocations shall be ear-marked for the local phase and the local administration shall be responsible for administering the programme. A decentralized administrative system will become the hallmark of Bangladesh. This system will evolve by ensuring democratic conduct, tolerance, discussion and understanding and finally an unwavering dedication to public welfare. The future of our Motherland shall be determined by the new generation, the young people of Bangladesh- a generation vibrant and fully alive to the need for creating a prosperous Bangladesh. We are placing this Manifesto ‘Bangladesh Marching Ahead’ in the name of peace, democracy, development and prosperity in their hands.

Dear Countrymen,

As in the past we sincerely seek your unique support and trust. We seek your vote to have the opportunity to serve you once again. Please vote for the symbol of Boat which is the symbol of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu, the symbol of Haque-Bhasani- Suhrawardy, as well as the symbol of independence and freedom. Please come together by forgetting

all differences and let us all go forward in the path of peace, development, democracy and prosperity. We want an end to all violence, killings and spillage of blood once and for all. Let us all together build up the Father of the Nation's *Sonar Bangla*, the golden Bangla of his dream. In this struggle to build up our beloved country, victory of the people is inevitable.

We put our trust in Almighty Allah.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu. Long live Bangladesh.

রূপকল্প-২০২১ এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে বাংলাদেশ



বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ নির্বাচন পরিচালনা কমিটি
বাড়ি- ৫১/এ, সড়ক- ৩/এ, ধানমন্ডি আ/এ, ঢাকা- ১২০৯
ফোন- ৯৬৭৭৮৮১, ৯৬৭৭৮৮২, ৮৬৫২৩৮৮, ফ্যাক্স- ৮৬২১১৫৫
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