

# Stay alert against anarchy ahead of next election: PM

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday asked the people to remain vigilant against the anti-liberation clique which has started plotting to seize power through the backdoor ahead of the next general election. “I would like to urge everyone to keep a watchful eye so that none can snatch away the rights of the people through conspiracy. At the same time everyone should be alert so that none could create anarchy and damage the lives, livelihood and properties of the people in the name of movement,” she said.

The premier was addressing the nation on Friday evening through state-owned Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, marking the 4th anniversary of her current government formed on January 7, 2019 following the 11th national election held on December 30, 2018. Hasina said the next national election will be held at the end of this year or early next year. But the anti-liberation, power-hungry plunderers of public assets have already active in creating anarchy. “Their aim is to create a chaotic situation and seize state power through the backdoor, and impede the progress of democracy too,” she said in her 25-minute speech delivered at 7:30pm.

The premier, who is also the president of the ruling Awami League, said the conspirators have employed hired intellectuals and statement-givers at home and abroad with looted money to malign Awami League. “They are trying to mislead people by spreading libels, false and fake information through social media. Don’t be misled by their falsehoods,” she said. She requested the political parties and institutions that believe in democracy and the rule of law not to allow and fuel any weird idea (mooted by the cliques ahead of the next election) that would undermine the constitutional process. “We expect a free, fair and impartial election (to be held next time),” she said, adding that this is the first time a law has been enacted in Bangladesh to constitute an Election Commission. She said the current Election commission has been constituted under that law through a search committee. “The Election Commission was given financial independence. The Commission is working independently and will continue to do so in the future. The government will continue providing all assistance to the Election Commission for holding fair and peaceful elections,” she added.

She said Awami League is a party of the people that believes in the peace of the people and the power of the people. “If the people make the party winner by voting for it, Awami League will continue to discharge the national responsibility of building the country. If they don’t make it the winner, then we will go to the line of the people. But wherever we are, we will serve the people,” she added. On the occasion of the 4th anniversary of her current regime, the prime minister extended her sincere greetings and congratulations to the citizens at home and abroad. She also wished them a very happy Christian New Year of 2023.

Focusing on the progress of the country during her governments since 2009, she said the image of Bangladesh has become brighter in the world arena in the last 14 years. “Today none treats Bangladesh as a country of floods, droughts and disasters. Bangladesh is now an emerging economy and a role model for development,” she said. PM Hasina said Awami League has been in the charge of governing the country for 14 years in a row after the formation of government in 2009. “Our country has progressed a lot. But we have to take it forward further. Achieving a developed and prosperous Bangladesh is our goal. After building Digital Bangladesh, our next goal is to build a Smart Bangladesh,” she said. She said the use of robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, biological technology and digital devices will be ensured in all fields including the industrial, trade-business, health, education and agriculture sectors in a bid to build Smart Bangladesh, having smart government, smart population and smart industrial factories. “Emphasis has been placed on research in all areas,” she added.

The PM focused her government's successes in bringing the cent percent population under electricity coverage, strengthening road and rail connectivity, increasing food production, implementation of different large projects including Padma Bridge, metro-rail, Bangabandhu Tunnel under Karnaphuli River, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Dhaka-Mawa-Jajira Expressway, Bangabandhu-1 Satellite, 16-km Dhaka Airport-Kutubkhali Elevated Expressway projects, and setting up 100 economic zones. She said the prices of daily essentials including fuel have soared also in Bangladesh as it happened at abnormal rates in the world due to the Russia-Ukraine war following the Covid-19 pandemic, sanctions and counter-sanctions imposed by the Western countries and Russia. "We are purchasing some commodities at higher prices and distributing those at lower prices to the people with limited incomes," she said adding that 10 million families can purchase rice at Tk 30 per kg and edible oil, pulses and sugar at affordable rates through TCB's fair price cards, while five million families can buy rice at Tk 15 per kg in a month. The PM depicted the present scenario of Bangladesh in different social and economic indicators, comparing to the situation 16 years ago at the end of BNP-Jamaat alliance rule. She said the per capita income increased to US\$ 2,824 now from US\$ 543 in the 2005-2006FY, while poverty rate declined to 20 percent from 41.5 percent, the average life expectancy increased to 73 years from 64.5 years and the literacy rate to 75.2 percent from 45 percent.

She said the GDP increased to US\$ 460.75 billion in 2021-22FY from only US\$ 60 billion, the size of national budget to Tk 678,64,000 crore in the 2022-23FY from Tk 61,057 crore, the export earnings to US\$ 52.08 billion in 2021-22FY from US\$ 10.52 billion, and the remittance inflow went up to US\$ 22.07 billion in 2021-22FY from only US\$ 4.80 billion. She said the reserve of foreign currencies increased from only US\$ 3.5 billion in 2005-06FY to US\$ 48 billion in 2021, but declined to US\$ 34 billion now due to the global economic downturn and high inflation. Still Bangladesh has a sufficient reserve to meet the five-month export expenditures, she added. The PM said the allocation against the social safety net programmes rose to Tk 113,576 crore in the current fiscal year from only Tk 373 crore in 2005-2006FY, while the subsidy to the agriculture sector went up to Tk 40,000 crore from Tk 592 crore. She said the electricity generation capacity has increased to 25,826 megawatt now from only 3,600 megawatt at the end of BNP-Jamaat regime and the population under the electricity coverage to 100 percent from only 45 percent in the same period. "We ensured electricity facilities to cent percent people in 2022. We illuminated all the houses," she said. Hasina said Bangladesh is currently the 41st largest economy in the world. Today, Bangladesh has graduated to a developing country from a least developed country, she said.

Noting that Bangladesh has attained a revolutionary development in the communication sector, she said her government constructed and reconstructed hundreds of highways as well as bridges over major rivers, including Padma Bridge, Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge, Teesta Bridge, Payra Bridge, 2nd Kanchpur Bridge, 2nd Meghna Bridge, 2nd Gomti Bridge in the last 14 years in order to establish an uninterrupted road and rail connectivity. PM Hasina said some 100 bridges were simultaneously opened in a single day in November last, while some 100 roads were inaugurated simultaneously in a day in December last. "This is a unique achievement in the development history of the country," she said, adding that some 718 kilometers of highways have been upgraded to four or above lanes in the last 14 years. "Today, the people have started reaping the benefits of our visionary plans," she said. Noting that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dreamt of building an exploitation-and-deprivation-free Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal), she urged all to come forward to realize his dream by building a happy-prosperous non-communal Bangladesh. "Let's work to build a smart country and bring smiles on the faces of the common people of this country," she told the nation.