

Govt transforming Coast Guard into three-dimensional force: PM

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Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government has been turning Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) into a modern and three-dimensional force adding ultra-modern smart technologies, ships and helicopters to face the 21st century's challenges.

"None will lag behind. The coast guard will be made capable to face the 21st century's challenges with inclusion of modern technology based ships, helicopters and the force's communication system development," she said.

The premier said this while addressing a function marking 29th founding anniversary of the BCG and the BCG Day-2024 at the Coast Guard Headquarters in capital's Agargaon area.

She said her government is going to add high quality modern ship, maritime surveillance system-incorporated hovercraft and high speed boats to the coast guard fleet to make the force more modern and stronger.

At the same function, the premier also inaugurated Bangladesh Coast Guard Vsatnet Communication System and newly constructed six physical infrastructures at the BCG stations at Kutubdia, Maheshkhali, Mirsarai, Sandwip, Nidraskina and Shahpari Outpost.

The inclusion of the V-Satnet Communication System that will connect the coast guard with the Bangabandhu Satellite-1 will enhance the force's communication and operational abilities, Sheikh Hasina said.

She said, "We have already given approval to purchase two helicopters and formed an aviation wing for the coast guard to make it a three-dimensional force."

The premier said her government has also consented to buy 4 more OPVs, 2 maritime version helicopters for patrolling and ensuring safety and security at the deep sea area.

She stressed securing the vast maritime borders saying nowadays 90 percent business are being done by the marine ways.

She said her government has also nodded to construct nine replacement ships for the force.

The head of the government said already 16 ships and 138 boats were inducted to the force's fleet to strengthen its capacity.

The prime minister said they will increase the existing manpower of the force to 15000 in phases with its modernisation to enhance capability to ensure security in the vast sea areas and protect its resources.



Sheikh Hasina said a dockyard is being built at Gazaria in Munshiganj aimed at constructing, repairing and maintaining the vessels and ships.

The prime minister said her government is working to enrich the tourism sector alongside taking initiative to turn Bangladesh into an attraction hub of both the east and west.

She highly praised the coast guard personnel for standing beside the innocent and helpless people in the coastal belts by warding off many criminal acts.

She asked the BCG personnel to perform duties and responsibilities as the friend of the people.

Sheikh Hasina reiterated her government's commitment to transform the country into developed, prosperous and smart Sonar Bangladesh by 2041.

"The coast guard will play a special role in building the smart Bangladesh," she hoped.

She said the coast guard had emerged as a force in 1994 in line with a bill brought in the Jatiya Sangsad by the then opposition party Awami League.

The prime minister said the AL government has always attached priorities to the development of the Bangladesh Coast Guard.

Coming to power for the first time in 1996, she said her government took massive initiative for the force's development providing required logistic supports including giving lands for building its zones, adding different types of vessels and making infrastructure development.

Then, after coming to power for the second time, she said various infrastructures including coastal crisis management centre, accommodation of the officers and sailors of bases, officers' mess, sailors' quarters and administrative buildings have been built at the coast guard stations and outposts in coastal and remote areas.

The prime minister said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman enacted "The Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act" in 1974 to establish the legal rights of the countrymen over the sea and marine resources.

She said the United Nations (UN) formulated such a law in 1982.

She also said her government has established rights on a vast maritime area after winning legal battles with neighbouring India and Myanmar maintaining friendly relations following the path of Bangabandhu.

The prime minister conferred Bangladesh Coast Guard Medals, Bangladesh Coast Guard (Service) Medals, President Coast Guard Medals and President Coast Guard (Service) Medals on its former and current personnel for their contribution and bravery.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Public Security Division Secretary of the ministry Md Mustafizur Rahman and BCG Director General Rear Admiral Mir Ershad Ali were present at the function.

At the outset of the programme, a smartly turned out contingent of the Bangladesh Coast Guard also gave a state-salute and guard of honour to the prime minister.

A short video documentary on Coast Guard Vsatnet System was screened.

Later, the prime minister enjoyed a cultural programme.