

Speeches of Sheikh Hasina

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

(In the name of Allah, the most merciful and the most compassionate)

My dear countrymen,

Assalamu Alaikum (May peace be upon you).

After a span of almost seven years, I have got this opportunity to serve you again. First of all, I am expressing my endless gratitude to the Most Merciful Allah for being elected by your valuable votes.

Members of the law enforcement agencies, police, BDR, Ansar, the armed forces and the administration played a neutral role in the general election held on December 29. As a result, the people were able to exercise their voting rights independently and we became victorious.

I greet all voters, new and old. My greetings go to the countrymen. I offer my warmest compliments and my profound gratitude to all.

It is our main duty to guard and uphold the independence of our country, which was achieved through the bloodshed of hundreds of thousands of martyrs and to ensure the basic rights of all our people. We want to make your life easy and comfortable.

I know the skyrocketing prices of every basic commodity like rice, dal (pulses), oil and salt have made your life hardscrabble in the past few years.

The people among you, especially those on low and limited incomes, found it very hard to manage their families. Even It was challenging for the poor people to make ends meet. I know you had to pass your days through enduring great hardship.

In our election manifesto, we have promised to resolve the problems facing the people in their lives and made a call for a change of days. You have responded to that call. You have elected us by your votes. Our government has only just passed 50 days. By this time, we have managed to bring commodities like rice, pulses, oil, fertiliser, kerosene and diesel under your purchasing power through lowering their prices. Now, commodity prices have reached a tolerable level. We have made agricultural inputs easily available. We have also taken appropriate measures to address the problems of electricity, water and other essential utilities.

Dear countrymen,

The duty of our government is to protect fundamental rights of the people and consolidate democracy through establishing people's constitutional rights, and I seek cooperation from the countrymen in discharging this duty. It is not possible to achieve economic emancipation without democracy. People cannot achieve a better life without economic development. The main target of our government is to improve lives of all by ensuring education, health care, accommodation and job creation.

At a time when our government has been working hard for the betterment of the people, some unwanted incidents are spoiling the environment. My request to all irrespective of party allegiances, for the greater interest of the nation, do not make any comment, any speech or take any action that may further aggravate the situation and disturb public safety.

Dear countrymen,

As you know, I am deeply distraught by the untoward incident that took place at the BDR headquarters in Pilkhana yesterday. A handful of talented officers of our patriotic armed forces, BDR members and civilians had to sacrifice their lives in this suicidal attack. I am deeply shocked and saddened by this deadly attack. I pray for the salvation of the departed souls. I convey my deep condolences to their bereaved family members. Arrangements are in place for proper medical treatment of those who were injured in this untoward incident. The honourable health minister himself is supervising this issue. Concerted efforts have been made to tackle the incident as it struck. Our ministers, state ministers, members of parliament and whips have taken a special initiative. Immediately, they rushed to Pilkhana and started negotiations with BDR members. A BDR team met me. They placed a charter of demands and made an appeal for a general amnesty. I listened to their problems with rapt attention. I urged them to refrain from this suicidal conflict. I requested them to surrender their arms and restore order. I also declared a general amnesty for them. I requested them to release the detained families. They accepted my proposal. I am trying to find a solution to this crisis through dialogue and not by force. In the meantime, I have declared that they will be granted a general amnesty. I have assured them of fulfilling their other demands in phases. Professional problems will also be resolved. I am requesting the BDR, Police, Ansar and the Armed Forces to refrain themselves from any provocation instigated by any vested interest. Vested quarters are also trying to muddy the situation through spreading canards and rumours. In that regard, I request everyone to be alert to this possibility. Don't take the law into your own hands, not by any means. The chain of command

must be maintained. I am requesting everyone to have patience for the sake of the country, for their own sake and for the sake of their families.

One thing you must realise is that nobody can understand more than I do the pain of losing dear ones. For that reason, I know how much grief and sadness are in the minds of those who have lost their relatives. Even in such a trying situation, I hope that you will not choose the path of a suicidal conflict. I am specially requesting you to avoid this path.

My question is: Whose chests will you shoot at? They are like your brothers. Don't shoot your brothers. Don't make your sisters widows. Don't make parents lose children. Stop this suicidal conflict. We are well aware of your problem. We are trying to resolve it with great patience. Please help me. Don't take a path that breaks our patience. Don't force me to take a tougher action for the interest of the country. Remember that conflict gives birth to more conflict. Please be restrained. Surrender your weapons. You will face no harm—I am assuring you. Those whom we have lost are an irreparable loss to the country. Their families have been the biggest losers. You must have realised this. I know this loss is irretrievable. But I don't want any further damage in taking revenge for this loss. I am pleading with everyone to maintain sangfroid. Maintain peace for the sake of the countrymen— this is my clarion call.

I have formed a high-level committee, headed by the honourable home minister, to investigate the BDR incident. This committee will pinpoint your problems and take realistic steps. You are requested to surrender your arms and go back to barracks at once. Otherwise, I will be forced to take any action for the interest of the countrymen. Don't force me— this is my request.

I want the cooperation from the countrymen and seek their prayers. I will keep working for the betterment of the countrymen. This is my promise.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez (Stay blessed)
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
