

# UNPRECEDENTED PROGRESS OF BANGLADESH UNDER VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

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Bangladesh, once one of the ten poorest countries in the world, is now the 41st largest economy in the world and getting enrolled in the list of LDCs. Because of the dynamic and prudent leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has been elevated to a developed country status and has been placed in a dignified position in the world map. The country has established itself as a role model of development through achieving unparalleled success in all areas, including economy and development, social policy, culture, law and order and foreign policy.

The transformation process from 'Bottomless Basket' to robust economy has not been so easy and uptrend. Since Bangladesh's independence, the country has been facing many hurdles due to local and international conspiracy. The darkest chapter of history for the nation was recorded on 15 August, 1975 through assassination of greatest Bengali of all times and father of nations Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members excepting for his two daughters. After August 15, 1975, Bangladesh and its economy sank into a spell of deep darkness - the process of building a happy and prosperous golden Bengal initiated by the Father of the Nation came to a halt.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a legend of this generation and transformer of a modern Bangladesh, is the blood heir to Bangabandhu, the torch-bearer of building a Golden Bengal. After enduring long 15 years of struggle and oppression, she formed a government in 1996 with people's mandate and focused on changing the destiny of the people and opened a new horizon of opportunities in 1996.

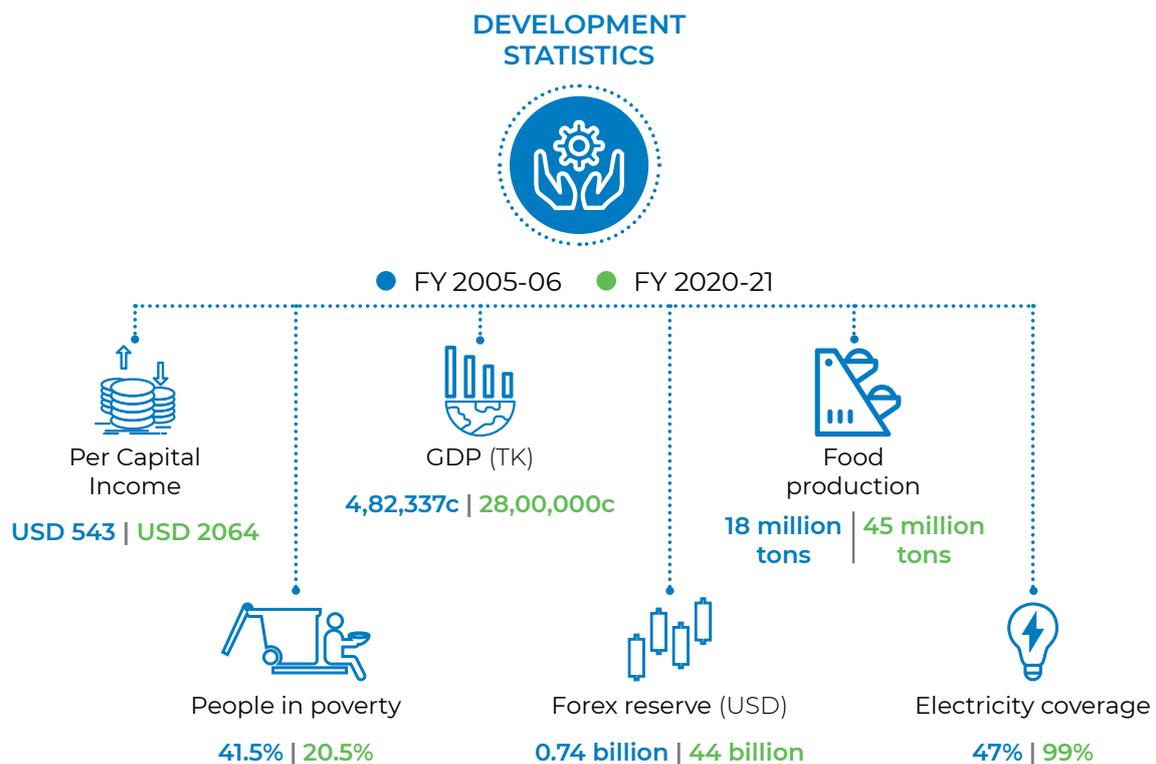
1996-2001: During her first premiership, She built a solid economic foundation by re-establishing the ideals of independence and the spirit of the Liberation War at all levels, institutionalizing democracy, repealing the infamous Indemnity Ordinance and establishing rule of law by instituting the trial of the cases for killing of the Father of the Nation and the jail murders, preserving human rights and peace, unprecedented development in the agriculture sector, women's empowerment, Meaning micro-credit programme, providing homes to the homeless through the Housing Fund, allowances for valiant freedom fighters, formulation of new health policy to ensure health for all - development of nationwide hospital system and establishment of community clinics, removing longstanding economic indiscipline, adoption of timely and modern education policy for the development of education, introducing stipend system for female students of secondary schools, and measures for the preservation of the environment.

Other notable achievements during her first premiership are:

- Average GDP growth 5.5%
- Average CPI inflation 4.4%.

- signing the Hill Tracts Peace Treaty,
- signing of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty,
- recognition of International Mother Language Day,
- reducing poverty rate to 44.3%,
- raising the average life expectancy to 63 years,
- introduction of old age allowances for the first time in the history of the country,
- introduction of distressed women allowances,
- establishment of the Disability Foundation,
- introduction of **'one house one firm programme'**,
- setting up of the Employment Bank,
- improving literacy rate from 44% to 65%,

After a stagnation of long 8 years, the wheel of fortune of the people of Bangladesh started turning again after the formation of the government under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2009.



Due to prudent economic policy, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has upgraded economic growth forecast for Bangladesh compared to their previous forecasts. According to IMF, global economy will grow by 6.0 % in real term in 2021 and 4.4% in 2022. Whereas, their forecast for Bangladesh is 5.0% in 2021 and 7.5% in 2022. The World Bank forecasted global GDP growth at 4.0% and Bangladesh's at 3.6% in FY2020-2021, and also forecasted Bangladesh's GDP growth at 5.1% for FY2021-2022. The Asian Development Bank has forecasted initially Bangladesh economy to grow by 5.5% to 6.0% in FY2020-2021 and 7.2 Percent in 2021-2022 which later trimmed at 6.8%.

The government has taken effective strategies for development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Ready-made garment industry leather and footwear industry, Jute industry, Pharmaceutical industry, Ecommerce, Tourism industry and export diversification and improvement of export products. Blue economy has already opened new horizon with immense potentialities for Bangladesh.

Furthermore, Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) attached with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is endeavoring to establish Economic Zones in potential areas of the country with a view to encouraging rapid economic development through diversification of industries and augmentation of employment, production and export. With that target, BEZA has till now got approval to establish 97 economic zones countrywide comprising 68 Government and 29 Private EZs.

It is a matter of inspiration that Govt's timely implementation of all mega projects in the infrastructure sector, such as the Padma Bridge, Padma Rail Link Bridge, Karnaphuli tunnel, Dohajari-Cox's Bazar Railway construction, the Rampal power plant, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Payra Sea Port, the Matarbari Power Plant in Moheshkhali, and Dhaka Metrorail, etc will accelerate the growth rate.

Moreover, the government has made notable progress in implementing the concept of 'My Village-My Town', one of the main concepts espoused by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and a pledge made in the Election Manifesto-2018. The goal under this plan is to ensure that the village as a whole is provided with access to amenities that are available in the town and are required to lead a better life.

Bangladesh has also reached a unique height in the last 12 years through the maximum and efficient use of information technology. Establishment of High-tech Parks is a praiseworthy and time effective initiative. Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority is setting up 39 Hi-Tech Parks/Software Technology Parks in different parts of the country, out of which 7 are ready for investment. Janata Tower Software Technology Park, Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park, Jessore and Sheikh Kamal IT Training and Incubation Center, Natore are now operational.

In spite of the pandemic, the government of Bangladesh, led by the able leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, has been able to maintain the macroeconomic stability of the economy with prudent fiscal policy and accommodative monetary policy.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been conferred with various honorary degrees, accolades and awards in recognition of her outstanding contribution to peace building, upholding democracy and socio-economic development and leadership excellence.

She was conferred honorary doctorate by Boston University, Bridgeport University, Barry University in the USA; Waseda University in Japan; University of Abertay in Scotland; Vishwa-Bharati University and Tripura University in India; Australian National University; Catholic University of Brussels; People's Friendship University and State University of Petersburg in Russia; Dhaka University and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agriculture University. The University of Dauphine in France conferred diploma on her for her outstanding contribution to strengthen democratic process and empowerment of women.

She was also honoured with awards for her outstanding contributions to social work, peace and stability. These include: UNESCO's Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize 1998; Pearl S Buck Award 1999; CERES Medal by FAO; Mother Teresa Award; MK Gandhi Award; Paul Harris Fellow; Indira Gandhi Peace Award 2009; Indira Gandhi Gold Plaque in Kolkata; Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, Medal of Distinction in 1996-97 and 1998-99 and Head of State Medal in 1996-97 by the International Association of Lions Clubs, Global Diversity Award in the UK; and two South-South Awards. UNESCO honoured

her with “Tree of Peace” in recognition of her outstanding contribution to promotion of girls’ and women’s education on September 8, 2014, Award for Regional Leadership in Women’s Political Empowerment by Women in Parliaments Global Forum and Visionary Award by Global South-South Development Expo-2014. She has featured on 59th place in the 2015 Forbes’ list of 100 Most Powerful Women.

She was conferred on the United Nation’s highest environmental accolade ‘Champion of the Earth Award 2015’ in policy leadership category for her forefront role at home and abroad to face the adverse impacts of climate change. The International Telecommunication Union gave her the ‘ICTs in Sustainable Development Award 2015’ for her outstanding contributions in spreading information technology in the country. Our Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina dubbed as the ‘Mother of Humanity’ for providing humanitarian support to Rohingya refugees.

The nation on September 28, 2021 celebrated the 75th birthday of Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We wish her good health and long life. We hope that Bangladesh will be able to realize SDG Agenda 2030, Vision 2041 and Delta Plan-2100 under her visionary leadership.

*Sources: National Budget Speech 2021-22*

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