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## Top importance should be given to literacy: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday said top most importance should be attached to the child, women and adult literacy to remove the curse of illiteracy from society, reports BSS.

In a message on the eve of the International Literacy Day, the Prime Minister said despite improvement in child literacy due to technological development, modernisation, influence of mass media and social consciousness, a big chunk of the population is still in the grip of illiteracy. This is disrupting the overall development of the country, she said adding, her government is determined to remove it.

Sheikh Hasina urged all irrespective of caste, creed, faith and sex to work unitedly to materialise the government commitment to drive out illiteracy from society by 2006, as literacy is the birth right of all citizens.

She said it is heartening that extensive public consciousness has been created in society. The Non-formal Education Department has been doing important work all over the country in this regard. Bangladesh achieved the UNESCO International Literacy Award as a result of the public and private initiatives, which has enhanced the image of the country globally. All citizens deserve credit for this, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken extensive and unprecedented steps to extend education to all levels of national life, and for introduction of the Universal Primary Education Programme. "We want to carry forward the programmes of the Father of the Nation", she said.

The Prime Minister said elaborate initiatives have been taken to formulate national educational policy, increase literacy rate, extend adult literacy and education to all levels of national life.

Sheikh Hasina expressed her hope that with the cooperation of people illiteracy will be eliminated from the country.

She wished the day a success.