

Work hard to reduce illiteracy: Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Wednesday reiterated her government's political commitment to ensure education for each and every citizen in the country, reports BSS.

"There is no short-cut way to attain self-reliance and ensure overall national development without education. It's the high time for a new journey towards development as the new century dawning around the corner," she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing the concluding ceremony of national primary education week 1994 and prize distribution function at Osmani Auditorium in Dhaka Wednesday morning.

She listed the measures undertaken by her government to overcome the odds of primary education in the past three years and said we have given highest budgetary allocation in primary education and expanding the primary and adult education in the country to attain

our cherished goal.

Begum Zia said the main objective of education is to develop human resources but in our country, two-thirds of adult population are illiterate and it is impossible to make the poverty alleviation programme a success without literating the huge population.

The Prime Minister said her government has formulated a work-plan to ensure education for all in the shortest possible time and making effective the non-government primary school side by side the government schools by raising the participation of people.

She said a project is being implemented in the country to re-construct and repair the 8,830 registered non-government primary schools and government is spending Tk 427 crore for this project.

With the implementation of the project, she said liveliness is being witnessed among the rural pupil and the number of

child students rose to one crore 40 lakh in the country in 1993.

The Prime Minister called upon all to work sincerely for drastically reducing the illiteracy rate and said we have to sustain the liveliness trend of the rural pupil and we have to provide primary education to all citizen.

She said it is true many guardians could not send their children to school because of poverty and from this realisation we have launched food-for-education programme experimentally.

More than six lakh students are being benefitted from the programme and guardians sending their wards to schools

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instead of putting them to work for their livelihood, she added.

Begum Zia said her government has initiated massive programme to spread education and brought pragmatic changes in education management for successful implementation of the country-wide education programmes.

The Prime Minister underscored the need for involvement of guardians, local leaders and people's representatives in the overall education man-

agement and said it is not possible for the government alone to implement the massive activities in ensuring education for all.

She said a large number of problems have already been solved by appointing more than 13,000 primary teachers and providing equipment besides building infrastructure of primary schools. She added that of the appointed new teachers 60 per cent are women.

Begum Zia said considerable development is seen in the field of primary education as the importance has been laid to the training of the teachers by re-casting the entire training process. The number of drop-outs has also declined markedly, she said and added there is no reason for self-satisfaction at the situation as still a large number of children are leaving schools without completing their primary education.

The Prime Minister reminded the teachers that irresponsibilities in discharging their duties would not be tolerated.

Commending the teachers who received the national awards for their outstanding role in advancing the primary

education in the country, she said these awards are the symbol of recognition of their sincerity, hard work, qualification and their responsibilities and love for the nation.

Begum Zia described the teaching community as the centre point of the education system and said traditionally they are in a honourable position and the primary education programme will surely be successful if the teachers can be sincerely encouraged by their sense of responsibilities.

The education is the foundation of the country's overall development, but the rate of literacy could not be raised due to long time negligence. The traditional trend would not be effective until the situation is changed soon.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, State Minister for Education Yunus Khan, Primary Education Secretary Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed and Director General of Primary Education Abdus Sobhan also spoke.

Begum Zia distributed medals and certificates among the 106 winners of national Primary Education Week 1994.