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Hasina wants multipurpose education for rapid progress

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the need for multipurpose education for rapid progress of the country as education is the main tool for poverty alleviation.

The prime minister expressed the view when the members of Standing Committee of Bangladesh University Council (BUC), a forum of public university teachers, met her at her office.

After the meeting, PM's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

Hasina mentioned that education is the main tool for poverty alleviation and her government is taking various steps for its further development as no nation could achieve its desired goal without education.

She said Awami League in its previous tenure from 1996 to 2001 had taken initiatives to set up 12 science and technology universities in the country.

But the BNP-Jamaat alliance government shelved the project out of political vengeance when it had assumed office in 2001, she said. After returning to power, Hasina said, the present government launched the 12 universities.

Hasina said her previous government for the first time allocated Tk 12 crore for research purpose. "After returning to power this time, the present government raised the allocation to conduct researches in various sectors," she said.

The prime minister said her government is providing free textbooks up to secondary level and stipends to over 1.19 crore students, and has introduced locally-managed midday meal in schools to check the dropout of students as well as to reduce the burden of their parents.

In order to help continue the study of the poor and meritorious students, the government constituted the Prime Minister's Education Trust Fund with Tk 1,000 crore as seed money.

She also mentioned that the present government was setting up multimedia classrooms and providing internet facilities to educational institutions across the country for the improving the quality of education.

The prime minister urged the teachers to maintain a congenial atmosphere on the campus. "It's your responsibility to groom the students as future leaders of the nation. And the university is for all," she said.

In response to some demands of the teachers, Sheikh Hasina suggested that they raise funds through alumni associations for the development of respective universities.

She asked them to take part in the development of the country through paying income tax regularly.

In this connection, she said all the ministers and lawmakers except the president are now paying income tax.

Putting emphasis on self reliance in all sectors, Sheikh Hasina said there is no dignity and honour of a beggar nation.

The prime minister also highlighted her government's "tremendous" successes in the fields of agriculture, economy, health, ICT and social safety net programmes.

The university teachers highly appreciated the prime minister for massive development in different sectors, including education, infrastructure and social safety net.

They said the country witnessed an unprecedented success in the education sector during the last four and half years of the present government under the visionary leadership of the prime minister.

The teachers thanked Sheikh Hasina for raising the retirement age of the university teachers to 65 years from 62.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and vice chancellors of different public universities were present.