



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presenting 'Rokeya Padak-2002' at a function held at the Osmany Memorial Auditorium on Sunday.

PM calls to work for welfare of women

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Sunday called upon all, irrespective of political affiliation, to work from their respective positions for the development and welfare of the women, reports BSS.

"Half of our population are women. The nation cannot develop and society cannot progress keeping them aside," she said at a function organised to distribute Begum Rokeya Padak-2002 at Osmani Memorial auditorium here Sunday morning.

The Prime Minister adorned Dr Zohra Begum Kazi, the first Muslim female physician of the subcontinent and Professor Begum Akhtar Imam, the first female teacher of Dhaka College and first provost of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University, with gold medals.

The last BNP government of Begum Zia introduced the prestigious award for women in 1995 after the name of Begum Rokeya, the pioneer of women education in the country.

Women and Children Affairs Minister Begum Khurshid Jahan Haq presided over the award giving ceremony attended mostly by women working in both private and public sectors.

Both the octogenarian recipients of the award in their brief speeches expressed their utter happiness on receiving the award from the Prime Minister and said it was the best gift of their lives.

The Prime Minister hailed the recipients of the award and said that the whole nation, not only women would remind their contribution to the uplift of the

women folk.

She paid glowing tributes to Begum Rokeya and said that she had dedicated her whole life for the emancipation of women.

"We will be benefited if we can uphold Begum Rokeya's ideology to make the women educated and self-reliant," she added.

The Prime Minister said educating women and making them self-reliant financially are required most for their emancipation and empowerment and equality with man. So, the government is working hard in this regard, she added.

Begum Zia recalled that it was Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman who first integrated women with the mainstream of development work in the country.

President Zia ensured participation of women in all spheres of the society, state and administration which led to the present position of women in the country, she said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that women were proving their worth in civil service, police, judiciary, armed forces and other non-traditional professions.

Begum Zia said her government, in persuasion of the path of Shaheed Zia, is implementing different programmes for development and welfare of women.

She mentioned various steps taken by her government including free education and stipend for girl students and the initiative to establish Asian University for Women.