

PM opens Science Week Scientists asked to work for common man

Emphasising on keeping pace with the present hi-tech world, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Saturday urged the country's scientists and technologists to dedicate and apply their talent, expertise and innovative knowledge for the well-being of the common man, reports UNB.

"Our existence, progress and advancement depend on the development and welfare-oriented application of science and technology," she said inaugurating the 25th National Science and Information and Communication Technology Week at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

The "Silver Jubilee" week includes science exhibition at Osmani Memorial Hall, symposium and discussion meetings as well as study tours by various scientific institutions of the country for the young scientists.

Minister for Science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan and Director of National Science and Technology Museum and member-secretary of the central organising committee M Habibur Rahman Chowdhury also addressed the inaugural function. Science and ICT Secretary Karar Mahumudul Hassan presided.

The entire programme was put directly on Internet and a group in the USA was watching it live through the video-conferencing technology. The conferencing was projected on screen at one side of the conference centre.

Referring to new inventions and recent discoveries like human cloning and DNA mapping, Begum Zia wondered if as a nation "we will just remain a spectator."

She said: "To keep pace with the present world and accelerate the development activities in the country, we've to apply science and technology in all possible areas and also develop these further."

Underscoring the role of science and ICT for socioeconomic development and in improving the people's living standard, she said the present government has laid special emphasis on projects and programmes for making both academic and applied science and technology education easily accessible to the masses across the country.

The Prime Minister mentioned her government's plan to distribute 10,000 computers to secondary schools in the coming financial year despite financial constraints. "We want to integrate computer with education in such a way that it can contribute effectively in our economic uplift," she said.

On celebration of the "Silver Jubilee" of National Science Week, she said it is a time to assess the achievements and failures

Technology during the last 25 years.

Begum Zia recalled that the National Science and Technology Policy was framed with inspiration from late President Ziaur Rahman and a National Science and Technology Council formed under his chairmanship.

Mentioning that the BNP government in 1993 had created a separate Science and Technology Ministry, she said the present government of BNP-led four-party alliance has restructured the Ministry adding ICT related issues considering its expansion and importance in other developing and developed countries.

The Prime Minister also assured that the present government would assist the private sector for rapid development of ICT in the country.

She referred to the setting up of the government's 'Science Laboratory' (BCSIR) in the hearts of the city long ago. She told the scientists: "Now it is time to ask yourself about your contribution in the development of science and technology and in invention in exchange of the optimum facilities created by the poor people for you."

Following the inauguration of the Week, the Prime Minister went round to see a few projects set up by the school and college students at the premises, which are part of the science exhibition at Osmani Memorial Hall.