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Govt firmly committed to eradicate illiteracy by 2000

# Maintain democratic spirit, says Khaleda

Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia on Friday urged all patriotic citizens of the country irrespective of party affiliations to actively join the literacy programme to make it a success within the shortest possible time, reports BSS.

"Let us declare in one voice that we will free our country from the curse of illiteracy by the year 2000," she appealed to the people of all walks in observance of the International Literacy Day.

The Prime Minister said her government had taken all steps to remove illiteracy to accelerate the pace of development, and make the

people conscious of their rights, dignity and responsibilities.

"We are firmly committed to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2000," she affirmed.

Begum Zia also gave utmost importance on education to help maintain the hard-earned democracy and democratic spirit. "We have to continue the present trend of education to live as a dignified nation," the Prime Minister said.

Organised by the Primary and Mass Education Division at Osmany Memorial Hall Auditorium, the function was addressed also by Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury as special guest, former Education Advisor Mr Azizul Huq, noted educationalist Dr Abdullah al-Muti Sharfuddin and Secretary of the Primary and Mass Education Division Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed.

The Prime Minister

distributed awards among the best teachers for their notable contributions in the programmes of non-formal education, basic education and adult education. Each award received a medal, cash and a certificate.

The Prime Minister said her government has been making the highest budgetary allocations in education sector every year.

Referring to the introduction of compulsory primary education and food-for-education programme, increase of enrolment rate in primary schools to 92 per cent Begum Zia said these measures had helped raised the rate of literacy to 37 per cent in the last four years.

She said the government had also introduced non-formal education and adult education programmes side by side with the formal education.

The Prime Minister said that the citizens of

Lalmonirhat district had now been freed from the curse of illiteracy through the cooperation of the people of all shades of opinion.

The programmes of 'overall education movement', she said, had been taken in the district of Bhola.

She hoped this movement would be expanded to each district and thana of the country.

Non-formal education programme, Begum Zia said, would be introduced throughout the country from next January.

Referring to the introduction of free education for the girls students at secondary level outside the municipal areas the Prime Minister said this programme would be introduced in the municipal areas also from the next year.

Infrastructures in the field of education, she said, had been strengthened to ensure education for all.

The objective of huge investment in education sector, Begum Zia said, was to build a production-oriented, dignified and workable human force.

Bangladesh, Begum Zia said, was a signatory to the World Declaration on 'Education for all' and the Delhi Declaration

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## Khaleda

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of the nine highly populous countries.

In his speech Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury underlined the need for imparting life-oriented and production-oriented education to the people. He also urged all political parties to play a responsible role in the eradication of illiteracy.

Mr Azizul Huq said a remarkable progress had been achieved in the field of education, in the last few years.

In this regard he mentioned to the introduction of compulsory primary education, increase of enrolment in the primary schools and progress in the non-formal education.

Dr Abdullah Al Muti Sharfuddin said a 'dramatic progress' had been achieved in the case of women education in the country during the last few years.

He said living standard of the people had improved, which created hopes among them.