

Free education if economy gets better: PM

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha - Dhaka

THE prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, said the education will be completely free in the country if the economy gets better in future.

The prime minister said this while distributing stipends among female students from newly introduced first ever Education Trust Fund, created for students of graduate or equivalent level, at her Tejgaon office on Dhaka on Sunday.

'Educated youths will be the actual force to free the nation from poverty,' the prime minister said, adding that an educated nation can stand in the world community keeping its head high.

'We don't want to hear anymore that any student

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stopped education because of their guardians inability to pay tuition fee or buy books,' the prime minister said.

Expressing her great pleasure for having the opportunity of handing over the cheques of stipends to the students, the prime minister said, 'I was long been dreaming for such a mechanism to help the students to pursue their studies.'

The government has allocated Tk 1000 crore for establishment of the trust fund this year to help the students. From the interest of the fund, the government would distribute Tk 75.15 crore among 1.33 lakh female students.

A student will get a total

of Taka 4,900 a year which will include monthly stipend of Tk. 200, examination fee of Tk 1000 and Tk 1,500 for buying books, officials said.

The prime minister said male students would also get stipend from the trust fund in future.

Planning minister AK Khandker, education minister Nurul Islam Nahid, education secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and managing director of the fund Iqbal Khan, spoke among others, on the occasion.

The prime minister said during the previous tenure, her government had taken a project to make all districts free from illiteracy one after another. But, the subsequent BNP government shelved the project, like community

health clinics and other ones taken for country's good.

'But now we want to put in place such a system which the next government cannot annul,' she said.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangabandhu made the primary education fully free and female education free-of-cost up to class eight despite immense economic hardship after independence.

'I have learned the importance of education from Bangabandhu and I have got inspiration from him,' Sheikh Hasina said.

The prime minister said the government has allocated Tk 1000 crore to the trust fund at the initial stage. She urged the benevolent persons and education lovers to donate money to this fund

saying that they will get tax waiver facility because of the donation.

Sheikh Hasina said, the government is pledge-bound to arrange free education including stipend for female students so that they can continue their higher study.

'I am hopeful that the successful implementations of this initiative would pave the way to overall development through female education and women empowerment,' she said.

'Our journey has started. The fund will be bigger and more money would be deposited. With the support of the government and private entrepreneurs, we would be able to constitute bigger fund in future,' the prime minister hoped.