

Kids must not take written test

PM suggests admission to class-I without test

UNB, Dhaka

Stressing that education is a basic right, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said children must be allowed to enrol in class-I without a written admission test.

"When a child reaches the age appropriate for enrolling in class-I, he or she should have to be admitted, and there's no need to sit for test with printed papers because this is his or her right, not a matter of test," she said.

The PM made the comments while addressing the inaugural function of the International Literacy Day 2015 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

She also directed the primary and mass education ministry to repair and improve the conditions of the primary schools so that children could get admitted to school in their respective areas.

Underscoring the need for having area-based schools,

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she said there is no objection if the children of the elite class study at expensive schools, but it has to be ensured that the children of the common people could study at government primary schools. And for this, the conditions of these schools must be improved.

The PM also suggested ensuring arrangements for accommodation at schools in the country's hills and char areas.

She urged all concerned to turn the country's huge population into human resources and then human capital to further develop the country.

The country's literacy rate was 71 percent as of June, she said. "Literate mothers could teach their children about health, nutrition and discipline from early childhood . . ."

Mentioning that the "Bangladesh Literacy Programme" is being implemented with an outlay of Tk 452 crore to eradicate illiteracy and create skilled manpower, Hasina asked the authorities concerned to make sure this programme is implemented properly.

She also called upon the local public representatives, the well-off sections of the society and the local administration to voluntarily introduce midday meals at the schools to further reduce the number of dropouts.

A fund could be set up and operated by each school management committee in association with the guardians where donations could be received to provide midday meals, the PM added.

She recalled that the Father of the Nation formed the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission and as per its recommendation, he had nationalised some 36,165 primary schools and the jobs of 157,724 teachers.

Noting that literacy rate normally increased in all countries in the course of time, she said, "But in our country, it came down to 44 percent from 65 percent during the five-year rule of the BNP-Jamaat government in 2001-2006."

The PM said her government ensured 100 percent enrolment of

children eligible for going to school by 2011. Besides, there was an announcement for ensuring "Education for All" by 2015.

She added that her government also introduced the midday meal programme for primary students to prevent dropout, and local people had been engaged in the programme. As a result, she said the dropout rate had come down to 20.09 percent from 80 percent in the 80s.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman Fizar was the special guest at the function. Beatrice Kaldun, head and representative of Unesco Dhaka office, also spoke at the programme presided over by Primary and Mass Education Secretary Mesbah ul Alam.