

Magura declared illiteracy-free

MAGURA, Dec 5: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the government has chosen education as a major strategy for poverty alleviation as illiteracy is one of the main obstacles to overall development, report agencies.

"After establishment of people's right to vote, we have embarked upon a greater responsibility of meeting nation's all basic demands, including the right to food through implementation of the poverty alleviation programme undertaken by the present government," she said while addressing a public meeting at the local stadium here.

The meeting was organised to declare Magura an 'illiteracy-

free district' with the implementation of the work on 'Bikoshito Magura' under the government's "Total Literacy Movement (TLM).

The work on "Bikoshito Magura" was launched in March 1997 and more than 200,000 adult men and women were given education to free the district from the curse of illiteracy.

Underscoring the importance of literacy, the Prime Minister said economic emancipation is not possible without total elimination of illiteracy from the country.

She said the rate of literacy in the country has now increased to over 51 per cent. Overall national development will be hindered unless the remaining huge illiterate population can be turned into a human resource freeing them from the curse of illiteracy.

"That's why our government has been implementing an integrated programme for the development of education and to free the country from illiteracy by the year 2006," she said.

The Prime Minister mentioned that her government made highest allocation for the education sector in all its budgets.

She said 5,000 new primary schools will be set up across the country by the year 2000 as part of establishing at least one school in every village. Some 20,000 satellite schools will also be set up during the period.

Under the 5th Five-Year Plan, she added, some 3,160 secondary schools, 325 colleges and 12 universities would be set up in the country.