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Keep education above politics, PM's call

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Sunday called upon all irrespective of party and opinion to work with a synergy, holding education above politics, for the spread of standard education to build a developed knowledge society, reports UNB.

She made the call while addressing a function arranged for the distribution of Prime Minister Gold Medal-2006, the highest award for meritorious students of Public Universities, at the International Conference Centre (ICC) at the PMO. It was organized by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The Prime Minister Gold Medal was introduced in 2005 to encourage talented students of the public universities.

"Education is a national issue. We may have differences in many affairs but not in a fundamental one like education," she told the function and expressed her firm belief that the nation can build up a knowledge-based developed society with united efforts of all.

A total of 57 students of different universities were selected for the Prime Minister Gold Medal this year on the basis of securing first-class first position at graduation/honours-level examinations obtaining the highest marks in different faculties.

The students of about 15 public universities received the gold medals. The varsities are Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, BUET, Bangladesh Agriculture University, Jahangir Nagar University, Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, National University, Hazi Danesh University of Science and Technology and Dhaka Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Agriculture University.

There are 26 public universities in the country and the setting up of three others in the process. Twelve public universities were set up in last four and a half years under the initiative of Prime Minister Khaleda, the function was informed. There are also 54 private universities.

Reminding that the role of academics and teachers is pivotal in preserving the standard of university education and its development, the PM said, "The people hoped that the academics and teachers would always remain accountable to the nation as regards higher studies and high-level research, rising above all unexpected influence and narrowness."

She hoped that the teach-

skilled, innovative, hardworking citizens and make them capable of facing tough competition of globalization through imparting pragmatic teaching in various branches of science and knowledge.

Prime Minister Khaleda urged the meritorious students to play a leading role in national development in their professional career the way they kept the mark of proficiency in educational life.

She also urged them to keep contribution in the welfare of poor, common people, reminding that the commoners of this country have a large share of expenditure of education in the public universities through paying their tax.

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The students would get scope for repaying the debt to society through giving proper leadership to the country and the nation in the days ahead as well as establishing social peace through accelerating momentum in economic development, she observed.

Referring to various allegations published in newspapers about both public and private universities, the PM said she became upset at this, as her government has extended cooperation to all sectors of education, including higher education.

She hoped those involved in management of education, particularly teachers and distinguished personalities at whose initiative the private universities were set up, would give more attention to this matter because education without standard is merely a certificate-bearing education that practically carries no worth.

The PM also reminded that in the present perspective of the world, going abroad for higher education has become more difficult than any time before as all don't have that opportunity.

So world-standard education has to be arranged in the domestic universities, failing which the country will be lagging behind.

In this context, she posed the question why the teachers could not do this at home when the country's teachers are performing teaching with reputation in many reputed universities in the world.

Earlier, Prime Minister Khaleda distributed the medal to the recipients at the function attended by ministers, Vice-chancellors of different universities, academics, diplomats, representatives of different international organizations and guardians.

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk, State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon, UGC chairman Prof Dr M Asaduzzaman and, on behalf of the recipients, BUET student Abdullah Al Mujaheed and DU student Farzana Akhter also spoke at the function.