

IPSA declared a university

# Innovate agro-tech to boost food output: PM

SALNA (Gazipur), June 19: The Institute of Postgraduate Studies in Agriculture (IPSA) has been declared a University by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also the Chancellor of this institute, made the declaration at its second convocation ceremony here this morning.

Speaking on the occasion Sheikh Hasina called upon the agriculturists to put in their all-out efforts to set up a sustainable system of agricultural production for building a beautiful Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty and pollution.

"Innovate an environment-friendly agro-technology for the interest of our posterity" she urged them.

"My government, which is committed to build a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' attuned to the dream of Father of the Nation 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has attached the highest priority to

agriculture for the development of the country and prosperity of the nation, she said.

The Convocation ceremony was also addressed by Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury, IPSA Rector Prof D AM Ashraful Kamal and Scientist Emeritus and Ex-Member (Agriculture) of the Planning Commission Dr S M Hasanuzzaman.

Earlier, attired in orange colour ceremonial gown, Sheikh Hasina entered the convocation venue leading the Chancellor's parade to the thunderous cheers and ovation of the grand assembly.

Members of Parliament including Rahmat Ali, Ahsanullah Master, Akhteruzzaman and Meher Afroz Chumki, members of the diplomatic corps, Awami League Central Publicity Secretary Abdul Mannan, educationists, high civil and military officials and the elite were present on the occasion.

Chancellor Sheikh Hasina conferred Ph.D degree on five fellows and M S (Master of Science) degree on 102 participants who successfully completed their course. She also awarded certificates to them.

The Prime Minister said, "Our economy, earnings and livelihood are mainly dependent on agriculture and now it is a great challenge to feed the ever increasing population of the country."

She said that the demand for food would increase by fifty per cent during the first ten years of the twentyfirst century and the variety of food people would require would also change simultaneously with the economic growth. "We are still dependent on import of foodgrains and other crops which is not at all desirable."

The Prime Minister said that it was essential to reduce the dependence on import.

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## Innovate agro-tech

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through increasing domestic production of agricultural goods. The present government, she said, keeping this in view has already formed the National Commission for agriculture considering the importance of this sector.

The Prime Minister underscored the need for innovation of sustainable environment-friendly agricultural technologies so that the productivity of the land was not endangered due to continuous use of the same land for crop cultivation.

The Prime Minister said that the production of foodgrains increased to 20 million tonnes for the first time in the country this year. "It is the result of the pragmatic steps taken by the present government in the agriculture sector," she added.

"The development of our education system has got the top-most priority," she said, adding "we have been taking effective measures for giving our education system an applied nature and for making it congenial to the flourishing of talent." She said with this end in view the government had formed the national committee to frame an education policy which would submit its report soon.

The Prime Minister said the entire world has now turned into a "global village" due to development of science and technology. Similarly with the introduction of free market economy the country entered into an age of tough competition not only in trade and economy but also in agronomy.

She expressed her happiness to note that the research laboratories of IPSA are well-equipped with the financial and technical assistance of the governments of Japan and the USA.

Referring to the various steps already taken by her government in the agriculture sector, the Prime Minister said these steps were taken for making available fertilizer, seed, insecticides, irrigation machinery and other agro-inputs to the farmers.

The feasibility of production of 2.5 crore tons of wheat and rice by the year 2002 has already been studied and that the report submitted by the Committee constituted for this purpose is now under review, the Prime Minister said.

Besides, she said, considering various aspects, a high-level 'Krishi Commission' has also been formed to put forward recommendations for the development of agriculture.

The Prime Minister pointed out that a new agriculture extension policy has also been formulated for the development of agriculture extension management.

The Prime Minister pointed out that with the achievement

of independence our great leader the Bangabandhu formed the Quadrat-e-Khuda Education Commission to make the education system practical and production oriented. The reports of the commission was prepared in the spirit of the Liberation War but it was not implemented after the tragic event of 1975.

Speaking on the occasion Begum Motia Chowdhury said that considering the present trend of food shortage and population boom there is no alternative to making agro-production system more dynamic and speedy.