

## PM urges primary teachers to help fight poverty

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has laid special emphasis on removing poverty and hunger from the country, and considered education as the main tool to fight the malice, reports UNB.

"We are working hard to free the nation from poverty and hunger and trying to develop education as the main tool to fight against poverty," she said while exchanging views with the leaders of Primary Teachers' Oikya Parishad at her office yesterday morning.

"Our struggle for economic emancipation is going on," said the Prime Minister, calling upon the primary teachers to lend their total support to the struggle against poverty and illiteracy.

The Prime Minister said her government wants to remove illiteracy from the country by the year 2006 and mentioned that the government has been able to raise the rate of literacy by four per cent in last 17 months.

She said country's constitution has ensured the right of education for all and her government wants to reduce the dropout rate of children from

the schools. "You have an important role in this regard," Hasina reminded the teachers, who are the main architect of education.

The Prime Minister recalled the support of the primary teachers for the restoration of democracy and hoped that the teachers would extend their all-out support to the humanitarian activities of the government.

Sheikh Hasina said her government was assessing the overall situation of the education sector, particularly in the primary sector. "We have identified areas and steps have been taken to set up schools where there was no primary school." She added, steps have also been taken to repair the damaged schools.

Non-formal education for elderly people is going on for increasing literacy rate, she said adding "We are trying to do everything to raise the literacy rate. However, we cannot do everything overnight."

Convenor of the Central Committee of the Parishad Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Sufia Khatun and Mohammad Abdul Awal Talukder also spoke on the occasion.

Deputy Minister for Primary and Mass Education Prof Zinatunnesa Talukder was present.