

Create more scope for education of poor students: PM

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PRIME minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday stressed taking more initiatives so that the country's poor and meritorious students have a greater access to education. 'More initiatives should be there so that the poor and meritorious students get greater scope of education and higher education,' she said while presiding over the 3rd meeting of the advisory council of the PM's education assistance trust fund.

PM's press secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Sheikh Hasina said her government has attached the highest importance to the education sector since it was the dream of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to free the country from poverty as well as ensure education for all.

The prime minister said the Awami League government increased the literacy rate by 20 per cent during the 1996-2001 period, but the BNP-Jamaat clique after returning to power in 2001, pushed the country backwards in all fields as the literacy rate again came down to its previous level.

She alleged whenever BNP-Jamaat assumed office, they stopped the development activities, especially in

the education sector.

Listing various development activities of her government in the education sector, Hasina said her government has been providing stipends for the students at higher education level alongside primary and secondary-level since the guardians of many poor students do not have the capacity to bear their educational expenses.

Mentioning that the PM's education assistance trust fund was formed with Tk 1000 crore seed money to help the poor and meritorious students continue their studies, she said stipends and support to students from the trust would continue during the days to come.

Hasina mentioned that various steps have been taken to promote technical, vocational, science and technology-based education in the country.

Finance minister AMA Muhith, education minister Nurul Islam Nahid, primary and mass education minister Mostafizur Rahman Fizar, planning minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, PM's principal secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad, concerned senior secretaries and secretaries were present at the meeting.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of activities of the trust over the last year.