



Staff Reporter

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday urged the rich to spend a part of their wealth for the welfare of the physically-challenged people.

"People with disabilities can turn into golden citizens provided they get help and support from the society," she said congratulating the country's physically-challenge cricket players who recently won the T-20 series in In-dia.

Officials and players of Bangladesh Cricket Association for the Physically-Challenged met the prime minister at her office to hand the trophy to her.

Sheikh Hasina termed its victory on the Indian soil as a big achievement and a matter of pride for the country's people.

She handed over cheque for Tk one lakh for each player and official of the team.

The Prime Minister announced a financial assistance of Taka one crore for Bangladesh Cricket Association for the Physically-Challenged.

She assured the physically-challenged that the government would arrange a practice ground for them.

Sheikh Hasina said the government would provide all-out support for participation of Bangladesh Cricket Association for the Physically-Challenged in the Asian Physically-Challenged Cricket Tournament to be held in India.

Bangladesh Cricket Association for the Physically-Challenged won the three match T-20 series against India by 2-1. The series was held in Gwalior, Ferozabad and Agra on June 22-27.

Hasina criticized the media for not highlighting the achievements of the retarded boys and girls who bring lau-rels for the nation.

"It is unfortunate for us that the newspapers don't make headlines of these successes, rather they remain busy with criticism of others," she said.

She thanked all concerned of the association for formation of the association, describing it as a unique thinking for the welfare of the people with disability.

"We would also provide assistance in hosting the tri-nation cricket series for the people with disability," she said.

Assuring state-patronization for the people with disability, the Prime Minister said they always perform in the fields of sports and culture when they get support.

"It is very important for the state to provide encouragement to them," she said, calling upon the

public and private banks to continue the CSR programs for the people with disability. Highlighting her government's various steps for the welfare of the physically-challenged people, the Prime Minister said her government during its 1996-2001 tenure constituted the Jatiya Protibandhi Kallyan Foundation providing seed money.

She said the ministries of health, social welfare, women and children affairs and youth and sports have been implementing different programs for the welfare.

Apart from constructing hostels for the people with disability in the capital, Sheikh Hasina said her government is also constructing such hostels outside the capital.

Hasina said the government is conducting a survey to prepare a list for the physically-challenged people. "We have also introduced the allowances for them," she said.

The Prime Minister said special quota has been preserved for the people with disability in government job and in different educational institutions.

"Additional 20 minutes time has been introduced in the public examinations for the examinees with disability," she said.

She said a separate sports complex for the physically-challenged people is being built in the capital so they can practise all types of sports and games there. "Such complex would be constructed in district and upazila- levels in phases," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the government is going to establish an autism academy in the country and encouraging the people with disability in flourishing their latent talents.

She mentioned that she sends Eid and Pohela Boishakh greeting cards to the people every year with the paintings of the physically-challenged children.

Autism expert and PM's daughter Saima Hossain Putul, Chief Patron of the association and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, Patron and noted economist Professor Dr Abul Barakat, President of the association Prof Dr Shaikh Abdus Salam and General Secretary Engineer Maqsubur Rahman spoke on the occasion.

Ambassador-At-Large M Ziauddin, PM's Principal Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikdar and Press Secretary AKM Shamim Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

Congratulations the winning cricket team, Saima Hossain hoped that the obstacles in the development of the talents of the physically challenged people would be removed in the coming days.