

Educated to help remove illiteracy

By A Staff Correspondent

President Ziaur Rahman emphasised on Sunday the need for concerted efforts by the educated people for freeing the country from the curse of illiteracy. He observed that the eradication of illiteracy was the main responsibility of the educated people, particularly the members of the teaching profession. He identified illiteracy as the major national problem and felt that it was the root cause of our backwardness and underdevelopment and poverty.

The President was inaugurating a two-day national seminar on "Mass literacy drive and the teachers' community" at Dacca college auditorium organised by the Bangladesh Government College Teachers Association. The inaugural session, presided over by Mrs Jahanara Begum, President of the Association, was addressed by Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury Secretary General, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Mr. A.K.M. Ali Reza, General Secretary of the Bangladesh College Teachers Association. Among others, it was attended by Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman and Mr Shamsul Huda Chowdhury Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

In his inaugural speech, the President maintained that education is "the strength of a nation" which provides a sense of direction to its people. He noted that the Government had

launched the revolutionary mass literacy programme and pointed out that over twenty five lakh people throughout the country were covered under it. He said that during the current year, about one crore people would be imparted functional education under the mass literacy drive. He held the past colonial rule as being responsible for widespread illiteracy in the country through which the colonial powers wanted to perpetuate their rule.

President Zia pointed out that Bangladesh was the single country in the world where such an extensive mass literacy campaign had now been launched. He expressed his satisfaction that the drive was making a good headway under the leadership of local bodies like Swanirvar Gram Sarkar, Union Council and administration with active support of the conscious and educated people. He also lauded the role of teachers in this context and assured them of all Government support in carrying forward the mass literacy drive in a successful way. He noted that the emphasis on voluntary participation of educated people in the overall implementation of the programme had been placed because of the existing resource constraints within the country.

He recounted the progress achieved under the national canal digging programme on the basis of self-help and voluntary mass participation. The breakthrough in the agricultural sector is being made possible due to the steady progress in the field of national canal digging programme, he added.

The President said that the Swanirvar Gram Sarkar had been formed in the villages to unite, inspire and organise the rural masses for various voluntary uplift programmes.

The faces of the villages, he maintained, are now changing with the restoration of the rights of the common men who are very much eager to exercise their rights for their own benefit.

He called upon the members of the Bangladesh Government College Teachers Association to help restore proper academic atmosphere in the educational institutions of the country.

In his speech, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury reminded the teachers of their important role for successful implementation of the mass literacy drive.

Later, Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman announced on behalf of the President a grant of Taka two lakh for development and expansion of the Dacca College auditorium and another grant of Taka one lakh for conducting the mass literacy drive by the Teachers Association.