



President Hussain Muhammad Ershad addressing a grand conference of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association at Paksey on Monday.

Ershad announces welfare steps at BPTA confce

Bangladesh be made nation of literates

PAKSHI, Nov. 28: President Hussain Muhammad Ershad here today called upon the teachers to take a fresh vow for making all-out efforts to establish Bangladesh as a nation of literate people in the world, reports BSS.

Addressing the grand conference of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association (BPTA), the President said with a view to educating the nation, the welfare and rights of the teachers should have to be ensured.

In the course of his speech, President Ershad announced a number of measures for the

welfare of the primary teachers as well as to improve primary education which included acceptance in principle the plea for an integrated pay scale for primary teachers, creation of the post of assistant head master for primary schools, stoppage of deduction of the increased salary taken by the graduate primary teachers and assurance for allotment of land for the hospital and recreation centre at Cox's Bazar for the primary teachers.

He also announced that the government would take steps for raising the contribution of the pri-

mary teachers from Taka 2 to Taka 10 towards their Welfare Trust Fund as it had been desired unanimously by the primary teachers themselves.

The grand conference held on the bank of the river Padma and at the foothills of the giant Haringe Bridge was attended by about one and a half lakh primary teachers from all over the country who listened to the President with rapt attention amidst heavy showers.

The huge gathering applauded the President with clappings and

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welcome slogans who flew in here defying inclement weather and disregarding personal safety to attend the conference which had demonstrated his love and respect for the teachers.

Thousands of primary teachers who started pouring into this small township since last two days from far and near by various means of communication turned into a human sea this morning who burst into thunderous applause as President Ershad appeared on the dais.

The conference was also addressed by Deputy Prime Minister and Political Adviser to the President Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Education Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud, President of BPTA Prof Abul Kalam Azad and General Secretary of the BPTA Kazi A. K. Fazlul Huq.

The President said to achieve the objective of educating the people to make the nation literate, we must look after the welfare of the teachers and thus establish peace in their minds. "If we can achieve this objective, these dedicated teachers would very soon establish Bangladesh as a nation of literate people in the world", he said.

He said despite efforts made by the Government the literacy rate was still between 20 and 30 per cent. He sought advice from the teachers for raising the literacy rate so that the nation would become proud and said we wanted to prove to the world that we are a poor nation but not illiterate.

INDISCIPLINE

Referring to the indiscipline in the educational arena, President Ershad said for this primary schools were not responsible. But, he said, being the friend philosopher and guide of the rural people primary teachers could play an important role in preparing them against indiscipline in educational arena.

He said the people of the country neither wanted indiscipline in educational institutions nor they wanted copying. They did not want to see their children engaged in politics he said adding they want to educate their children, build them as worthy citizens and establish them in the society.

RECURRING FLOODS

The President mentioned about the recurrence of floods in the country and said, "We do not want floods any more and we want to live." He said at the same time Bangladesh wanted its just share of water of the river Ganges and called upon the countries of the region to give us the share of our water as well as make efforts for the solution of the problem of floods.

He called upon the people of the country to remain united and said if the 10 crore people could make efforts unitedly success was sure to come.

President Ershad referred to his visits abroad and said the conscience of the world had been moved to see our sincerity and relentless hard work in facing the situation created by the calamitous flood. As a result, he said, all the countries of the world had come out with either assistance or moral support to solve our problem.

He said the people of Bangladesh want any policy

from anybody other than the Almighty Allah. They wanted to stand on their own feet through hard work, he said.

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

The President said decision had been taken to increase the allocation of primary education out of the budget for education sector from the existing 40 per cent to more than 50 per cent. This step had been taken to provide education to grass root level to achieve the objective of education for all by 2000, he said.

He said education for all by 2000 was not a political slogan rather, it was a firm belief. He expressed his firm conviction that the primary teachers would play an important role to materialise this objective.

President Ershad said the number of Ph.Ds, M.As and B.As did not determine a nation's literacy rate. A literate nation means that the general people could read and write, he said adding we must make efforts to make the general people literate.

In this context, he said it was again the primary teachers who could contribute considerably to achieve this objective. He said since his Government was sincere to the purpose it had given priority to education sector.

Pointing to a banner for setting up Islamic University in Kushtia President Ershad said all-out efforts would be made by his government to fulfil the aspirations of the people in this regard.

TEACHER'S PROBLEMS

The President said he was aware of the problems of the teachers and that was why he had been making all-out efforts to establish them in their rightful place in the society. Solution to the problem of education lay with the solution to the problem of teachers, he said.

He said he had accepted in principle the proposal for an integrated pay scale for the primary teachers and gave the responsibility to Deputy Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, who is the chairman of the Council Committee for removing the anomalies in pay scales, to take up the matter.

He said the deduction of the increased salary given to the graduate primary teachers would be stopped. He, however, asked all concerned not to commit such mistake in future which might increase their hardship.

The President announced a grant of Taka two lakh for the family of Ahsanullah Chowdhury, a primary teacher of Gualaundo, who died in an accident yesterday while on his way to Pakshi to attend the conference.

KAZI ZAFAR AHMED

Addressing the conference, Deputy Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed said the objective of education was to hasten development and increase production. Similarly, he said the negative politics pursued by the government

in the development efforts of the country had brought dignity and honour for the nation.

ANISUL ISLAM MAHMUD

Education Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud said the policy of the Government of President Ershad was to ensure education for all by the year 2000 and hence, it had given priority to this sector. Our objective is to make the country stronger by providing our children proper education, he said.