

Zia opens Ichhamati re-excavation project

Join masses to implement revolutionary programme

From Our Special Correspondent

JHITKA (Moulvibazar), Jan. 26. President Ziaur Rahman inaugurated the Ichhamati river re-excavation project here today with a call to all political parties to join the masses for the implementation of the revolutionary programme instead of confining themselves in Dacca and holding meetings and processions only.

The President said that all the workers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party had identified themselves with the cause work and thoughts of the eight and a half crore people of the country. The BNP workers, he said, had already spread out in every village for the implementation of the revolutionary programmes which aimed at welfare of the masses.

The 40-mile Ichhamati river re-excavation project is stretched over six police stations — Ghior, Daulatpur, Narayanpur, Sibalaya, Hariampur

and Nawabganj—of Dacca and Tangail districts. Besides the project includes excavation of 11 feeder canals totalling 60 miles. It is expected to be completed by April 30, this year.

When completed, about Taka 30 crore would be earned on fishery sector annually from the re-excavated river. At present only Taka six thousand goes to Govt. exchequer from the Ichhamati river. It would also help irrigate 2.5 lakh acres of land which would double the food production of the area. It would be implemented on self-help basis.

President Ziaur Rahman participated in digging of the 11,000 feet long Jhitka-Mollabari part of the Ichhamati river re-excavation project. Over 15,000 people including members of the Council of Ministers, Members of the Parliament, BNP leaders and workers from all over the country, local people, youth organisations, freedom fighters, family planning workers, members of mahila samity, school teachers

and students participated in the digging programme.

HISTORIC EVENT

Addressing the participants, President Ziaur Rahman said that the re-excavation of Ichhamati river was a historic event. He said that the Ministers, MPs, BNP leaders and workers were assembled at Jhitka to participate in this significant project.

President Zia said that the rivers and canals in the country should be re-excavated to preserve water so that three crops could be harvested annually. "We have already started working to increase food production," he said. Success in doubling food production would save Bangladesh from begging for food, he said.

The President said that the people wanted to work. "What is needed", he said, "is correct leadership and decision".

NEXT PHASE

President Zia said that the next phase of revolution for eradicating the menace of illiteracy would be started.

Contd. on page 13 Col. 3



President Ziaur Rahman addressing the participants of the Ichhamati river re-excavation project at Jhitka (Moulvibazar) on Saturday. — Times



A section of the participants belonging to all classes of people of the Ichhamati river re-excavation project at Jhitka (Moulvibazar) on Saturday. — Times

Contd. from page 1

throughout the country from February 21. He called upon the people to eliminate the curse of illiteracy with the same enthusiasm which they put in increasing food production.

President Ziaur Rahman advised the leaders and workers of the BNP who came to participate in the digging of Ichhamati re-excavation project from other areas, to engage themselves in the work of increasing food production and removing illiteracy from their respective areas. "When you return from here, you should engage yourselves in your respective areas for the implementation of revolutionary programmes", he told them.

BADRUDDOZA

The Secretary General of BNP Dr Badruddoza Choudhury said that there was no effort in the past to improve the fate of the masses. "We have given the call of revolution for the welfare of the common people", he said.

Dr Choudhury said that digging programmes were continuing in 150 rivers and canals all over the country with the aim to increase food production. He called upon all to participate in these programmes.

Earlier Capt (Retd) Abdul Halim Choudhury, Minister for Cooperative and Local Government gave an outline of the project.

The President, Members of the Cabinet, MPs and BNP leaders and workers who went to Jhitka to participate in the day-long digging programme, stayed back for a night halt.