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C'wealth help for policy likely

Priority given to basic edn : Zafar

BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), Oct 31 (BSS) : Basic education has been accorded a high priority in Bangladesh, Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed informed delegates to the 11th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers, now being held in Barbados.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister was the lead speaker at the session this morning. Delegates from 50 Commonwealth countries including 40 ministers are attending the conference.

In his speech Kazi Zafar Ahmed outlined the main components of Bangladesh's Education policy. His emphasis was on the strategy being pursued during the Fourth Five-Year Plan period. He referred, among others, to the programmes of compulsory primary schooling and the provision of free education for girls upto tertiary level commencing from January 1991.

The Prime Minister spoke of the dynamic leadership of President Hussain Mohammad Ershad who was giving priority to the development of human re-

sources in general and education in particular.

He narrated how public representatives are being involved in the process of policy implementation at all levels in the decentralised administration. He made a particular mention of Pathakali Trust, an organisation whose spirit is the First Lady Begum Raushan Ershad.

He observed that the shared values with other Commonwealth nations made them natural partners for the implementation of Bangladesh's Education Policy. Kazi Zafar Ahmed stated that in order to achieve the goal--education for all by the year 2000--systematic effort will be made to

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C'wealth help likely

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harness the energies of individuals, families and communities.

He informed that increased allocation was being made to this sector during the Fourth Plan period allocating 4.8 per cent of the total public sector outlay.

He said, "basic education in Bangladesh needs to be portrayed as a survival kit for the poor and the distressed, for the moneyless and the luckless."

The session was chaired by Cyril Walker the Education Minister of Barbados.

Commenting on the Education Minister's speech Mr Walker noted that the conference was keenly interested in Bangladesh's experience in that sector in particular and development in general.

He hoped that the Commonwealth would provide the necessary cooperation to

Bangladesh's education policy in order to make it a success.

The conference which began yesterday is scheduled to conclude on Friday.

EMEKA CALLS ON ZAFAR

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Mr. Emeka Anyaoku, called on Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed in the Prime Minister's suite at Hilton Hotel here this morning.

Mr Anyaoku congratulated the Prime Minister on his elaboration of Bangladesh's education policy in the course of his statement in the plenary earlier today. He lauded the leadership role of President Ershad in this and other development sectors. Mr. Anyaoku praised Bangladesh as a source of vast intellectual resources.

The Prime Minister extended the Secretary General a cordial invitation to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time. Mr. Anyaoku accepted it with gratitude.

The dates are to be worked out in due course.