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President Hussain Muhammad Ershad speaking at the opening ceremony of the central office of Bangladesh Shikhhak Samity Federation in Dhaka on Monday.

## Mass literacy constitutional commitment: Ershad Education key to human resources development

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad on Monday inaugurated the Education Week saying that the fundamental provisions of the country's Constitution was commitment to mass literacy and universalisation of education, reports BSS.

He said there was no substitute for education in building a society and it was the key to the development of human resources. Education removes the curse of ignorance and illiteracy while it is looked upon as an indispensable part of the development process, he said.

President Ershad said keeping this in view education was given

top priority all over the world. In Islam, he pointed out, education has been ordained farz or mandatory for both men and women.

The inaugural function held at the auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy was also addressed by Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam and Education Secretary Hedayet Ahmed.

Vice President Justice A K M Nurul Islam, Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Prime Minister Moudud Ahmed, Ministers diplomats and high civil and military officials were among those who attended the function.

The President said as a result of its positive role in international affairs Bangladesh had been able to gain a special place of honour in recent times. "We have faced the devastation of one of the worst floods of this century and withstood the ravages of the cyclonic storm with considerable courage and fortitude" he said.

He said the nation had to uphold this spirit in all spheres of the national life and added: "If we can develop ourselves into an educated nation, only then, I think, we shall attain our goal."

Referring to the new awareness that had been generated in

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## Mass literacy

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all walks of the national life President Ershad said as a result of untiring efforts of last seven years "We have been able to instill a sense of self-confidence in the heart of the people."

He said with a view to fulfilling the pledge made by his government for national development the country needed a well-developed system of education. In this context he said a few significant decisions had been taken in order to attaining this broad objective, he said.

### DECISIONS

Elaborating the decisions, he said, these are:

- Enhancement of the subsidised pay and allowances for teachers and other employees of non government educational institutions and formulation of policies relating to these matters.
- Reformation of the examination system by introducing objective questions at the Secondary School Certificate level.
- Introduction of approved text books for English medium schools and thereby bringing about a modification in keeping with our national heritage, culture and religion.
- Improvement of the standard of education by framing rules and regulations for recognition and affiliation of educational institutions.
- Taking necessary alternative measures for development of education instead of nationalisation of educational institutions.
- Establishment of an Inter-Education Board Co-ordination Council.
- Adoption of definite measures for selection of examination centres and conduct of examinations.
- Prescribing more than one textbook at the secondary level.
- Making religious studies/education compulsory at the Secondary School Certificate Examination.
- Introduction of English as a compulsory subject from Class-I to Class-XII.
- Discouraging private coaching with a view to improving class room teaching.

President Ershad said the Government had attached due emphasis to education along with other development activities for improvement of our national life. With this end in view allocation of funds for education sector was enhanced he said adding that annual revenue and development expenditure on education had gone upto 400 per cent in last seven years. Taka 285.91 crore was allocated for the education sector in 1982-83 fiscal year and it had increased to Taka 1156.86 crore during current (1988-89) year, he said.

Explaining the Government

programme for implementation of its commitment "Education for all by the Year 2000", the President said 51 development and reformation projects were taken up in the field of education. For implementation of these projects by 1990 the Government had allocated Taka 1170 crore under the third five year plan.

The President said the gap in the standard of education prevailing in the urban and rural areas was narrowed down. He said initiatives were taken to raise the number of female teachers to 50 per cent in the primary schools and efforts were being made to increase the enrolment of female students at the same level.

### HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY

President Ershad said the Government had carried out a historic responsibility by making the highest allocation for education sector in the current budget. As a result he said opportunity in the education sector had increased manifold. The respected members of the teaching community were now enjoying increased facilities and a new horizon of possibilities was opened before our students who are future leaders of the country he said.

Stressing the need for utilising education for the welfare of society the President said poverty and backwardness could be removed through a life oriented education system. In this connection, he quoted an advice of Shaikh Saadi to his pupils saying, "If you fail to implement in your practical life what you have learnt you are not truly educated". With this objective he said the campus should be made free from terrorism which itself is destructive. To ensure a welfare oriented education system benefiting an independent nation, teachers, students, guardians, educational administrators and all politicians irrespective of their political affiliations must be conscious of their collective responsibilities he added.

The President hoped that the teachers, educational administrators and all other concerned people would review the problems prevailing in the education system during the education week and make recommendations for improvement. Referring to a seminar on "Education Environment and Examination System" the President said reforms in our examination system have become imperative because of widespread unfair means at the examination centres. "If we cannot stop this we are bound to face a bleak future" he said.

Later the President inaugurated an "educational exhibition", where 20 stalls by different educational organisations, were opened.