

Ershad opens 2 pry schools for working children

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad on Tuesday inaugurated two primary schools for poor working children at Dholai Khal and Fatullah, reports BSS.

The school at Dholai Khal has been named Pathakali-1. Dholai Khal Shishu Kalyan Prathamik Biddalaya and the other at Fatullah as Pathakali-2. Fatullah Shishu Kalyan Prathamik Biddalaya.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said the schools had been set up to provide educational facilities for the working children who were destined to do physical labour for their livelihood due to poverty of their parents.

He said the children who work in different factories in Dholai Khal area and work for breaking stones and bricks at Fatullah will study for one hour in these schools before they go to their respective working places.

President Ershad said these budding children were the assets of the nation and it was the responsibility of the society and the nation to help them bloom.

He said these children used to work for the whole day to earn

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a meagre amount of money and had no time for study. He said the present government for the first time had taken the initiative to help grow these children as an asset and not burden of the society.

He said under the law of the country child labour was forbidden and punishable. But poverty compelled the children to work. He said these children were like flower bud and requested cartoonist Ranabi to name them "Pathakali" instead of "Tokal".

Pathakali-1 has been constructed at a cost of about Taka 12 lakh and Pathakali-2 at a cost of about Taka 14 lakh 50 thousand. Built by the Ministry of Education each of these schools has a capacity of 250 students.

President Ershad said at his request the employers of the children at Dholai Khal area

agreed to pay Taka 50 more to each children in addition to their normal wages. The excess money will be deposited with the bank account to be opened in the name of each student. When these children will go out after five years this lump sum amount will be given at a time so that they can do some thing with it or continue their further studies. He said the government would also assist the meritorious students of these schools to continue their studies further.

A few months back while visiting the Dholai Khal and Fatullah areas the President was moved to see that the children of poor parents were working dawn to dusk and had no opportunity for their studies. He immediately took the decision and directed the Education Ministry to set up the schools so that these children could get some education while earning.

President Ershad has directed the Adhikar Trust to take up the responsibility for opening bank accounts in the name of each student and look after their welfare. He said after success of Pathakali-1 and Pathakali-2 the government would set up more such schools in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

The President said every year out of one crore and 70 lakh primary students about 70 lakh become drop outs as they had to work in the fields and mills and factories to assist their parents. He appealed to the well-to-do people in the society to come forward in helping these dropouts to continue their studies.

Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam also spoke on the occasion.

On way back the President dropped at Pagla Bazar and talked to the children while they were breaking stones.

He then visited the Municipal Park at North Jangrabari which is being built on a filled land which was earlier a big ditch. He expressed satisfaction at the progress of work of the park.

Col (Retd) M. A. Malek, Administrator, Dhaka Municipal Corporation was present during the visit.