

Ershad seeks teachers help to meet national needs

162

# Education system will undergo basic changes

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad said in Dhaka on Sunday that the Government was determined to bring about basic changes in the education system to suit the requirements of the country, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the "Prathamik Shikkhak Bhaban" at Mirpur the President said this objective would be fulfilled by the government in cooperation with the teachers.

He said "We want to build an educated nation and for that I myself will extend all possible cooperation and I hope the teachers would also offer their dedicated service."

President Ershad sought the cooperation of the teachers to raise the present literacy rate of 20 per cent to 40 per cent within two to three years time. The government would improve the infrastructure facilities to achieve this objective, he said.

The President said the government has put emphasis on primary education since literacy rate of a nation is determined by the effectiveness of primary education and not by the number of doctors and engineers it produces.

He described the teachers as the conscious section of the society and said that was why they had been making all out efforts to provide education to the future generations. "Let us put in our united efforts to remove the

curse of illiteracy from the society to build a happy country", he said.

President Ershad said the politics being pursued by his government was not only to improve the quality of life of the people but also to make the nation literate.

He lauded the role being played by the teachers in educating the future generations despite constraints and hoped that they would continue their endeavours in this regard and at the same

Contd. on page 8 col. 1

# Education system

Contd. from page 1  
time consolidate further their respectable position in the society.

## BUDGET CRITICISM

Referring to the unnecessary criticism of the budget for the coming financial year the President said the government had allocated Taka 1,160 crore for education alone which is the highest so far in this sector.

He said side by side the criticism of the budget some elements had questioned the acceptance of foreign aid. At the same time they have opposed imposition of taxes, he said.

The President said even many developed countries of the world like Japan West Germany and Korea had accepted foreign aid to develop their countries. In this context, he mentioned the formation of Group of 77 and said this group of the developing countries had come together to put pressure on the developed nations to provide aid to them for development.

He said this was the manifestation of the fact that the developing nations require foreign assistance for their development. Otherwise he said they would not have made such a group to seek aid from the developed countries.

He said our 100 million dollars worth of foreign assistance for development we ourselves are to provide 20 million dollars worth of counterpart fund and said we are to procure it from our own resources. He pointed out that 80 to 90 per cent of revenue earnings come from Custom duty and hence question of more taxation in other fields does not arise.

The President said those who criticised the acceptance of foreign aid, were also opposing taxations. Then how the development of the country would be financed, he asked. These people are suffering from contradictions, he said, adding they are making criticisms sitting in the cities as they have no connection with the realities of life in the villages.

He referred to the nominal increase of charge on domestic gas consumption in the budget for 1988-89 financial year from Taka 80 in 1987-88 to Taka 92

for a single burner and from Taka 130 to Taka 150 for a double burner.

President Ershad pointed out that facilities of domestic use of natural gas was being enjoyed only by 50 lakh people out of 11 crore population of the country.

He said a family of four persons, which uses wood as fuel is to spend about Taka 250 per month while those using kerosene have been spending over Taka 300 per month.

President Ershad said while 10 crore people had to spend Taka 250 to 300 for fuel per month, 50 lakh people who were living in the cities were enjoying facilities of gas, paying much less than their fellow countrymen living in the rural areas.

## SOCIALISM

He said those who propagate socialism and claim themselves to be patriotic and enjoying facilities like gas at minimum cost had become vocal when its price was increased only by 10 per cent.

The President said the attitude of these elements proved that they did not believe what they say and they never cared for vast majority of their brethren living in the villages.

He referred to the increase of price of sugar from Taka 22 to Taka 24 per kilogram in the budget for the coming year and

said only a small percentage of the country's population consume sugar. In this context he said, "Whom we should help—city dwellers or the farmers. If we are to help the producers of sugarcane we are to increase the price of sugar."

President Ershad urged the teachers to build an intellectual society in rural areas and create public opinion through political, economic and social motivation.

Earlier welcoming the President Professor Abul Kalam Azad, President of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association, recalled the contribution and personal initiative of President Ershad in constructing the Prathamik Shikkhak Bhaban and enhancing the honour and dignity of teachers.