



President Hussain Muhammad Ershad offering munajat after laying the foundation stone of the Institute of Higher Islamic Learning at Savar on Thursday.

Islam must be understood in its pristine glory: Ershad

Mass literacy crying need of coming decade

SAVAR, Dec. 28 (BSS): President Hussain Muhammad Ershad inaugurated the Institute of Higher Islamic Learning of the Darul Ihsan here today expressing the hope that it would become a focal point for the understanding and comprehension of Islam as a moral and social force.

The President said, Let the Institute project the essence of the eternal message of life that Islam conveyed. "Referring to the importance attached by Islam to education, he said modern world regarded education as the basic necessity for human progress.

The function was addressed by Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam. Secretary General of the Makkah-based Muslim World League, Dr Abdullah Omar Nasseef, President of Islamic Academy at Cambridge Shaikh Ahmad Jamjoom, National Professor Syed Ali Ahsan, Dean of the Institute of Higher Islamic Learning Sheikh Muhammad Abdur Rahim and Baderuddin, Chairman of Darul Ihsan Trust Syed Ali Ashraf and Assistant Rector of the Institute Syed Ali Naqi.

Professor Anwar Dil presented an Islamic calligraphy to President Ershad and some others to different organisations while Shaikh Muhammad Abdur Rahim Jad Baderuddin led a Munajat seeking divine blessings for the success of the Institute.

The inaugural ceremony of the Institute was attended, among others, by ministers, high civil and military officials, diplomats and educationists.

The President said nearly one fifth of the present global population was illiterate and most

Contd. on page 2 col. 2

Mass literacy

Contd from page 1

of them were from the developing countries. The industrial nations even in this century had about 17 million people who could not read and write, he said adding mass literacy and basic education for all were the crying need of the coming decade.

He said there was a renewed sense of urgency in the world to ensure education for all and the international bodies, the UN system and nations of the world were moving in concert to achieve this objective. In a basic sense, he pointed out this realisation was a reassertion of the eternal wisdom of the first revelation enshrined in the Al-Quran which calls upon the believer to read.

President Ershad said the Institute would be able to fulfil its noble mission if it could help education-complete education as envisaged in Islam and spread it all over the world. He said Bangladesh welcomed this non-government initiative as a significant step furthering cooperation within the Islamic Ummah.

He said the brotherly nation of Saudi Arabia not only had custody of most sacred places of Islam but played a central role cementing the bonds of amity and unity among Muslim nations. It was heartening to see that alongside the government, the distinguished people of Saudi Arabia had come forward to help other countries in the fields of education and economic development, he said.

The President noted with happiness to find that this private venture was supported by eminent friends of Bangladesh and said with the advice, generous support and cooperation and guidance of scholars from home and abroad this Institute could be transformed into a centre of excellence. He assured that his government would watch the progress of this endeavour with keen interest and assist it in all possible manners.

He thanked Dr Nasseef for arranging to extend the facilities of Darul Ihsan Trust to Bangladesh and said his proposal to extend the facility of this Institute to students from the SAARC countries was welcome.

President Ershad referred to the complications being created in the environment due to the effect of modernisation in different fields and said man had seemingly overreached himself as the world was becoming increasingly less livable. He said the tide had to be turned by arresting the downward slide,

known to the entire humanity, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam hoped that the Institute would help contribute in higher Islamic learning in this part of the world. In this context, he said, Islam since its advent had promoted the cause of learning and rejected ignorance.

Secretary General of Muslim World League, Dr Abdullah Omar Nasseef said as the government of President Ershad was encouraging private endeavours in all fields of activity, he was sure that it would provide unstinted support—administrative, academic and financial to the Darul Ihsan Project.

National Professor Syed Ali Ahsan said education system in Bangladesh should be faith-based. He said setting up of the Institute was an attempt to provide the country and the rest of the world with a practical demonstration of the nature, character and overall benefits of such a faith-based system of education.

The Institute now being housed temporarily in Dhanmondi Residential Area in the capital would be shifted to its own campus in Savar as soon as the construction work was completed.

The teaching and research-based Institute would be constructed at an estimated cost of about Taka 85 crore which included one three-storied mosque, academic complex, training centre for teachers, residential hostels for students and residential quarters for the teaching staff.

The President unveiled the plaque and formally inaugurated the Institute. He also saw the model of the Institute complex to be built on 13 acres.

TIMELESS TEACHINGS

He said all men, all nations must unite in a resolve to redeem humanity from lack of education as well as mal-education. In this context, he asked: Could there be a more appropriate time than this to had recourse to the timeless teachings of Islam?

The President said Islam taught men to strike a happy balance between the spiritual and material dimensions. He said the Almighty Allah had ordained that man should strive to keep the world safe and make it eminently livable.

President Ershad said in these troubled times when modern man had seemingly lost his soul and sense of direction, the lessons of Islam must be understood in their pristine purity. The teachings of the eternal and universal code of life needed to be made