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**The Bangladesh Times**

# Concerted efforts needed to remove curse of illiteracy

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Tuesday called for concerted efforts by all sections of society to free the nation from the curse of illiteracy, reports BSS.

He said illiteracy was the root cause of economic backwardness and an impediment toward building a healthy democratic system in the country.

Addressing as chief guest the prize distribution ceremony on the concluding day of the National Education Week-1992 at Shilpakala Academy, President Biswas said the rate of literacy had not increased even after the independence. He pointed out that the present rate of literacy in

Bangladesh was only 24.8 per cent, lowest in the region.

Stressing the need for spreading education in all spheres of national life, the President said the state and the affluent sections should take the responsibility for imparting education to the unprivileged sections of the society.

The function was addressed by Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, State Minister for Education Principal Yunus Khan and Education Secretary Shafiul Alam.

The President said the present government had already taken up various effective measures to spread education. He said the

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# Students defy curfew

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night.

Suchinda, a former military chief who became Prime Minister despite having no seat in parliament, put Bangkok under virtual Martial Law on Monday. Gatherings of more than ten are banned.

"So far the demonstrations at Ramkhamheang have been peaceful but the soldiers are watching," said an announcement on state television.

Gunfire began to be heard on the largely deserted streets of Bangkok as darkness fell. It continued through the night.

Jeeps carrying heavily armed police raided through the city in pursuit of hit-and-run motorcyclists attacking police boxes and smashing traffic lights.

AFP reports: Thai authorities, faced with collapsing public order, declared today a de facto curfew in Bangkok as mobs began to raid the Thai capital.

Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon, speaking on national television, warned people to stay off the streets. The government in late afternoon broadcast announced more police, military and civilian volunteers had been called upon following two nights of violence that left more than 50 people dead.

But he fell short of declaring a formal curfew although a later television announcement said "The situation in the city is deteriorating" as renewed rioting was

likely, advised people to return home "as soon as possible after you've finished your business."

There were reports of separate shooting incidents in at least one department store and in front of a bank, but details were sketchy.

There were also reports of a run on food supplies and fuel. Banks closed early due to the lack of cash and staff in major hotels advised guests not to leave the premises.

The area near Bangkok's Democracy Monument, where tens of thousands had rallied since Saturday to demand Suchinda's resignation, was cleared early Tuesday morning by troops in a hail of gunfire, killing scores of people.

A volley of gunfire was heard nearby in mid-afternoon, after a mob reportedly attacked a police station to press demands that those arrested during the unrest be released.