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Govt determined to eradicate illiteracy by 2000: Sircar

Education Minister Zamiruddin Sircar on Tuesday said the government was determined to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2000, reports BSS.

He said it was possible with the joint efforts of the people and concerted assistance of UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank as smallpox could be eradicated from the world with the assistance of World Health Organisation (WHO). The Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of a discussion on "education for all," organised by the Ministry of Education and the Primary and Mass Education Division in observance of World Literacy Day on Tuesday.

State Minister for Education Principal Eunus Khan and education Secretary Shafiul Alam were the special guests at the function held at the National Museum auditorium.

Presided over by the Secretary in-charge of Primary and mass Education Division, Kazi Raqibuddin Ahmed, the function was also addressed by Executive Director of Integrated Non-formal Education Programme Prof S M Saifuddin and Secretary of UNESCO National Commission Begum Tauhida Farooqi.

The Education Minister recalled the determination of late President Ziaur Rahman to eradicate illiteracy from the country for which he initiated the country-wide mass education programme, which was suspended overnight with the arrival of the autocratic government in 1982.

Principal Eunus Khan suggested undertaking literacy programme as a social movement and said to achieve that goal the programme should be launched throughout the country at a time. He said failure to increase literacy rate in the country was due to lack of nationalist consciousness and sentiment of the masses as well as lack of proper planning by the governments.

Education Secretary Shafiul Alam said during the last 20 years the literacy rate of the country raised by four per cent only from 21 to 25 per cent. He told the gathering that a draft plan was being prepared for mass education programme and improving sustained enrolment in primary schools to achieve literacy for all by the year 2000. Prof. Saifuddin said the government had started integrated nonformal education programme in 43 thanas in May this year, while the NGOs had started the programme in another 100 thanas.