

Literacy movement**Lalmonirhat model draws encouraging response****Riaz Hamidullah**

The Government, World Bank and a number of other multilateral donor agencies are seriously considering to turn the recent accomplishments of 'Lalmonirhat Sakshyarata Obhijan (literacy movement)' into an integrated model and spread its to other districts of Bangladesh.

In a little less than two year's time, through community participation and direct involvement of local administration, Lalmonirhat district has attained a remarkable literacy rate of 90 per cent.

In a bid to further consolidate the achievements at Lalmonirhat, a revolving fund to the tune of Taka 70 crore will be created. A small amount of seed capital will be distributed among the new literates. They will have to invest the money in various income generating activities.

In addition to the fund, there will also be a training component worth

Taka 20 crore in the entire scheme. Over a period of five years, this amount will be utilised, to impart training to the 2,68,000 literate people in the 11-to-45 age group.

When contacted, Kazi Farid Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of Lalmonirhat told The Bangladesh Observer that the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and some other agencies are now planning to launch a 'second phase' of the mass literacy movement.

He disclosed that they are contacting some national and international NGOs, private and nationalised commercial banks to extend allout support to the "newly liberated" people. Apart from that, resources will also be utilised from thana parishad and union parishad funds.

On another plane, village community centre styled Gram Sikkhya

Milon Kendras will be set up soon at every village. Each of these centres will have 150 male and 150 female members. The centres will be provided with books and periodicals. These will also be supported with regular feedback information on agriculture, education, health and any other matter as the situation might demand.

A librarian will monitor their progress. New community initiatives also might be undertaken through the centres.

It may be mentioned that this programme was initiated in the middle of 1993 with the active cooperation of the cross-section of people of the district absolutely on voluntary basis. At a later stage, the Government took it over. Since then, it has been receiving support from INFEP of the primary and mass education department of the government.