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The Bangladesh Times

Welfare of Pathakalis Ershad's dream: PM

DHAKA, Aug 26 (BSS): Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed today said the Pathakali Trust was set up to help establish the down-trodden and working children to a respectable position in society.

He said it was a dream of our poet and humanist President Ershad to provide the facilities of education and health care to the working children who were neglected in the past.

The Prime Minister was speaking as the chief guest at a fund-raising function for the Pathakali Trust at Mirpur Upashahar Government Primary School here.

Children of 13 government primary schools of the area donated the savings from their tiffin allowance to the Trust Fund.

Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam also addressed the function. Secretary of the Trust Lt. Col (Retd) Mohammad Hossain, Secretary General of Jatiya Tarun Sangha Rezaur Rahman, local MP Abdul Khaleque and Secretary General of Primary Teachers Association Prof. Abul Kalam Azad also attended the function.

The Prime Minister said the theme of the Trust is that man is the best of the creation of Almighty Allah. He said children have contributed their share for their fellow working and distressed brethren.

Terming the children as budding flower, the Prime Minister said President Ershad had embraced them with love and affection and taken the initiative to establish them in the society.

President Ershad, he said, had made a fervent call to contribute generously to the Pathakali Trust Fund. People from all walks of life including the school-going children have been responding to the call, he said.

The Prime Minister said the purpose of education is to love people and help the distressed. He said the contribution of the children to Pathakali Fund could not be measured in terms of material value.

Kazi Zafar expressed his gratitude to President Ershad for forming the Trust. He said President Ershad not only formed the Trust but also arranged health care facility for Pathakalis by establishing hospital for them. This has created a new spirit among the people for serving the distressed Pathakalis which had never been done in the past.

Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam said the Trust was not formed for political ends. It was an initiative for establishing the working and distressed children of the society, he said, adding that all people irrespective of political affiliation should come forward to help in this initiative.

He said President Ershad got the idea when he visited Narayanganj and saw the children working by the road-side. Since then, he said, President Ershad had set up schools and hospitals for their education and health care.

Sheikh Shahid said First Lady Begum Raushan Ershad had also taken initiative in this regard.

The Pathakali idea had been appreciated at home and abroad. He said a SAARC team which recently visited the Pathakalis appreciated the idea.

Later, the Prime Minister inaugurated the donation by the little children to the Pathakali Trust Fund. About Taka 9,385 was collected on the spot from the children.