

## Some people trying to lower country's image Religious communities living in harmony : Ershad

PAGLA (Narayanganj), Aug 18: President Hussain Muhammad Ershad said here today that the main thrust of all the programmes of his government was to improve the condition of the people, reports BSS.

Speaking at a gathering of distinguished persons on education, the President said keeping this objective in view, the politics and administration of the country had been reformed and the people had already accepted these initiatives of his government.

Minister for Education Anisul Islam Mahmud, Chief Whip M. A. Sattar, Education Secretary Hedayet Ahmed, Lutfar Rahman, Chairman of Shayampur Union Parishad and Mohammad Ali, an industrialist of Narayanganj, also spoke on the occasion.

The function was attended by State Minister for Commerce H.M.A. Gaffar, Members of Parliament, educationists, social workers and high government officials.

Referring to the pledge he made

about imparting education to the child workers in the capital and its suburbs, the President said the primary school which was going to be set up at Pagla for the child workers of the area with donations from the affluent people of Dhaka and Narayanganj district was a step forward in this regard.

He said five primary schools were being set up in Dhaka and two in Narayanganj for the education of the underprivileged children who work in factories and workshops in the capital and around Narayanganj town.

The President said it was not an isolated initiative but the beginning of a programme which would spread all over the country with the passage of time. In this context, he hoped that the affluent sections of the society would come forward from all over the country to join those from Dhaka and Narayanganj who had already showed their generosity to set up schools for the distressed children so that

they could stand on their own feet.

Referring to the survey of child workers made by the Adhikar Trust, the President said this survey had greatly revealed their plight. He said after the school at Pagla was completed, it would be run by the Adhikar Trust. The trust was also given the charge of handling the accounts of the child workers whose employers had agreed with him to provide some extra wages to the child workers to be deposited in banks, he said adding: the money thus accumulated in their account would be given back to them after completion of their education so that they could do something with the sum to improve their lot.

President Ershad said we all love our country but regretted that a handful of persons had been trying to lower the image of the country by telling imaginary stories.

He said people of all religious

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communities had been living in harmony in Bangladesh for a long time and would continue to do so in future also. He said our biggest identity is that we all are Bangladeshis and that is what we believe in our heart.

The President urged the people to remain on guard against those who had been trying to spread the venom of communalism to disturb the existing communal harmony in the country.

President Ershad said his government had effected many reforms for the welfare of the people and said if peace and discipline could be maintained in the country, there would be greater development improving the condition of the common people.

He said side by side with the development of agriculture sector, the government had put emphasis on the setting up of more industries in all parts of the country to create greater opportunities of employment.

The President called upon all to come forward to extend their hands of cooperation to achieve

these noble objectives and said if peace and discipline could be maintained it would not be an impossible task to achieve greater development in the country.

President Ershad received an on the spot donation of Taka 12 lakh and 10 thousand from the donors of Dhaka and Narayanganj districts.

The donors are: Dhaka district — Mohammad Habibullah, Commissioner Ward 48 of Dhaka Municipal Corporation, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Baset, Akhtar Hossain and Lutfar Rahman, and Narayanganj District—Rokanuddin Mollah, Mohammad Ali, Afzal Hossain, Ranabir Shah, Abul Hossain, Afsarudin, Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Shahjahan, and M.A. Salam.

The President while passing through the Dhaka-Narayanganj road a few months ago had found the children making brick chips. He stopped there and was moved at their plight. He assured them that he would make efforts to improve their condition and provide education to them.

The building of the school at Pagla was in fulfilment of his commitment.

The President later visited the site of the school.