

অসম 29 MAY 1990
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Ershad pledges

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tic task ahead, to make the nation literate could not be done in traditional way. He said it was not possible to build thousands of school buildings and appoint thousands of teachers overnight by spending thousands of crores of Taka. We should take a practical approach in this regard, he said.

EXTRA SHIFT

President Ershad said there were 73 thousand buildings belonging to the educational institutions in the country. We should explore the possibility of introducing an extra shift in each of these educational institutions for primary education, he said adding: We can also explore the possibility of utilising the mosques for the purpose.

He said with a view to successfully implementing this huge programme, the teachers of colleges, schools and madrashas would have to make sacrifice by giving extra time for the purpose. For this, he pointed out it was not possible to provide them full salary, but they might be given an honorarium.

Besides, the President said the possibility of employing lo-

cally educated unemployed youths for the purpose by paying them allowances could be explored. He said the Government was going to set up Palli Parishads and expressed the hope that the parishads could play an important role in ensuring participation of people in this huge task.

He said the nation had overcome the unprecedented floods in 1987 and 1988 through united efforts and expressed the confidence that it would be possible to achieve the objective of removing the curse of illiteracy from the society by imbuing the nation with similar spirit.

Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed said the Government of President Ershad made primary education compulsory which was not possible in 170 years. This, he said, could not be implemented by making pilot projects.

Kazi Zafar Ahmed said implementation of the programme needed participation of all at every level and hence the whole nation would have to be involved in the process. In this context, he said the leaders of the teaching profession had informed him that the teachers

were ready to work extra time for the purpose.

Prof Mohammad Yunus, Managing Director of Gramin Bank, S M Al-Hussainy, Chairman of Public Service Commission, Dr Jafarullah Chowdhury of Gano Shastha Kendro, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, President of Primary Teachers Association, Prof M Muniruzzaman Miah, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, National Professor Nurul Islam, former Cabinet Secretary M Mujibul Huq, Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Member Planning Commission, A N M Eusuf, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Maulana Aminul Islam, Khatib of Lalbagh Shahi Mosque and Professor Mofizuddin Ahmed, who are the members of the council, took part in the discussions.

Their discussions reflected unanimity with the viewpoints expressed by President Ershad. Maulana Aminul Islam said there was no objection in the Shariah for utilisation of mosque for the purpose of imparting education since Islam gave highest priority to education and mosques were the centre for all activities during the life time of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM).