

Congenial atmosphere in educational institutions urged

# Make CPE social movement: Khaleda



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Tuesday addressing the nation over Radio and Television on the eve of CPE programme launching.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Tuesday gave a clarion call to all irrespective of party affiliations to turn the compulsory primary education programme of the government into a social movement, reports BSS.

In a nation-wide broadcast over Radio and Television on the eve of launching the programme throughout the country, Begum Zia reiterated her appeal to all to help create a congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions by keeping those free from terrorism.

The Prime Minister, in her five-minute speech said "let us participate with renewed zeal from the first day of the new year for implementation of the compulsory primary education programme to emerge as an educated nation."

She said that 64 upazilas of the 64 districts had been brought under the first phase of the pro-

gramme in the 1992 academic year. She said all the upazilas of the country would be brought under this programme within two to three years.

The Prime Minister said, it is a universal truth that there is no alternative to education for achieving progress in the socio-economic and political fields. In this connection, she regretted that our place in this field was very frustrating saying "our literacy rate is only 25 per cent which is very low compared to other developing nations."

She said the number of children admissible to primary schools was only a little more than one and a half crore but one third of them do not get the opportunity for admission to schools. She said, 65 per cent of the students who get admitted, leave schools before

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being promoted to Class Five. Describing the condition as very embarrassing, the Prime Minister said "we cannot allow this situation to prevail any more."

Begum Zia referred to the formation of a National Education Advisory Committee during the tenure of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman for reorganising the education system and said some specific recommendations were accepted regarding primary education. "On the basis of those recommendations the universal primary education project was adopted for the first time, she added.

Continuing, the Prime Minister said at the same time Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had initiated the much acclaimed mass literacy programme. She said, unfortunately after the changeover in 1982, the programmes were stopped by the autocratic regime.

She said that the government had attached the highest priority to education. The mass literacy programme is being activated while primary education has been made compulsory, she said.

Begum Zia said, implementation of the compulsory primary education programme was a hard task and she sought cooperation of everybody in this task. She said separate committees at the ward, upazila and district levels had been formed to implement the programme.

The Prime Minister announced that an open university was going to be set up soon in the country at a minimum cost for the spread of higher education. She said that those who were deprived of admission in the formal educational

institutions would also get opportunity of higher education. Besides, she said, an affiliating university is being opened for increasing the standard and efficiency of the existing colleges under the universities.

The Prime Minister said that it was the constitutional obligation of the government to ensure education to the people which was their fundamental right. She regretted that the autocratic government which clung to power during the last nine years was quite apathetic towards this responsibility.

On the contrary, the bold steps taken during the period of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to fulfil this constitutional responsibilities were sought to be blocked in a planned way, she added.

Begum Zia said for this reason education did not spread and there had been no progress in increasing

the percentage of literacy "we want a change of the situation. That is why we have given the top most priority to education. We have taken a comprehensive programme to rid the country of the curse of illiteracy", she stressed.

She further said that our programme was not confined to the elimination of illiteracy alone. Spread of education at different levels and improvement of its standard was one of our basic objectives.

Highest allocation has been made in the education sector for this purpose. Allocation in this sector has been substantially raised in the Fourth Five-Year Plan and at the same time a comprehensive programme has been taken up for the spread of secondary, higher secondary, technical and higher education, she said.