

Steps taken for edn to all by

DHAKA, Oct 7 (BSS): Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed today said Bangladesh was fully committed to the development of science and technology in the SAARC region.

Inaugurating the eighth meeting of SAARC Technical Committee of Science and Technology at the International Conference Centre (ICC) here the Prime Minister expressed the confidence that the regional cooperation in science and technology would prove highly beneficial to all the participating countries.

He said that the Technical

Committee had already identified fourteen priority areas of cooperation in science and technology and over the years, had quite a significant volume of interactions and exchange of ideas. He emphasised the need for framing action programmes in the coming years.

Kazi Zafar said realising the importance of science education among the general masses, the government had taken up crash programmes to ensure Education for All by the year 2000 through determined steps such as free and compulsory primary edu-

cation and making education free for girls upto Class VIII in rural areas.

Organised by Science and Technology Division, the inaugural session was also addressed by Adviser to the President on Compulsory Primary Education M. Mansur Ali Sarker, Science Secretary Anisur Rahman, and Joint Secretary M. A. Mujib Chowdhury.

SAARC Director N.P.D. Wijesekera read out a message of the SAARC Secretary General Ambassador K.K. Bhargava on the occasion.

More than 30 participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives and the SAARC Secretariat are taking part in the three-day meeting.

Referring to the development of agriculture sector and its contribution to national development the Prime Minister said Bangladesh is now on the brink of achieving self-sufficiency in food for the first time in the history. He said at the personal initiative of President Ershad and through a number of timely and pragmatic steps, the country would be self-

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reliant in food production by 1992.

He said the food production has been augmented by five times since the independence of the country. The present annual production of food grains is 195 lakh tons which was 40 lakh tons in 1971.

IIESDM

Giving a brief background of the establishment of the International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management (IIESDM) in Dhaka in 1989 at the inspiration, patronisation and

guidance of President Ershad the Prime Minister said the Institute was engaged in meaningful research in the field of environment and disaster management through international collaboration.

He said he would be happy to see that IIESDM collaborating with SAARC countries in SAARC-sponsored research related to environment and disaster management of the region.

He said that SAARC had come into being to cement the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the seven countries of

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