

# Working children

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## Opens Shishu Kalyan Primary School

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad formally inaugurated the programme for providing education to the working children by declaring open the Shishu Kalyan Primary School at Jatrabari in Dhaka on Saturday to achieve the objective, reports BSS.

After unveiling the plaque, the President joined in a special munajat offered for the success of the programme and also for the well-being of the working children.

The President then talked to the working children who would be attending their classes on working days in the evening after finishing their job. Normal classes in the morning and afternoon shifts will, however, continue as usual.

The service of the school has been commissioned in fulfilment.

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ment of the commitment made by President Ershad during one of his visits to the Dolaikhal area. Seeing the plight of the working children and dominance of illiteracy among them the President directed the Education Ministry to build schools for them around places where concentrations of working children are bigger.

The President during his earlier visits to the Dolaikhal area talked to the owners of the workshops where these distressed children have been working regarding some welfare programmes for them. These children are working to support their families. The employers readily agreed to the proposal of the President and accordingly the responsibility regarding these welfare programmes was given to the Adhikar Trust while the responsibility of providing education to them was given to the Ministry of Education.

Later, addressing a huge gathering of the local people on Saturday at Jatrabari, the President called upon the affluent section of the society to come forward with helping hand to provide education to these distressed children who had been selling their labour to earn their livelihood. He said the government would make all-out efforts for the wellbeing of these children as well as to provide education to them, but, he reminded that the society had a responsibility to these children. He hoped that the people of all strata, specially the affluent section would provide assistance to the Adhikar Trust so that it can undertake welfare programmes for these children.

The President referred to his discussions with the employers of these children who agreed to enhance their meagre salary by 40 to 50 per cent per month and said this increased amount would be deposited in a bank and when these children would finish their education, the saved amount would be handed over to them so that they could do something for their livelihood.

In this context, he said the Adhikar Trust had been entrusted with the responsibility of ascertaining the number of such working children in the city and to prepare a list so that the Trust could pursue the employer, and implement the welfare programme properly. He said this programme would not be confined to the capital only, but would be spread to other places in phases.

Mentioning his recent visit to Munshi Khola while returning to the city from Narayanganj by road President Ershad said he had found a good number of children making chips of bricks there. He said owners of the brick fields had agreed to provide

vide money to build a school for these children while the CARE, a non-government organisation, had agreed to provide some food to them daily.

The President said the owners of the brick fields also agreed to enhance the salary of the working children. Given will and sincerity, we can reach our cherished objective of mitigating the sufferings of these working children to a great extent, he said. He said since the present government had taken over the responsibility of running the affairs of the country six years ago, it had implemented many programmes for increasing facilities for the city dwellers. He assured that more facilities for them would be provided in the coming days.

In this connection, President Ershad said a new three-storied primary school would be built soon for the students who had been presently studying in the morning and afternoon shifts in the Jatrabari Shishu Kalyan Primary School. After completion of the construction of this new building the old one would be utilised for the working children only, he said.

He said the nation had achieved independence at the cost of lakhs of lives and it was now the responsibility of all of us to translate the dreams of the martyrs into reality by improving the quality of life of the common people. Let us take a vow to reduce poverty as far as possible, he said.

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN

Speaking on the occasion, Education Minister Mahbubur Rahman said independence could be consolidated further by increasing the literacy rate in the country. In this context, he referred to the personal initiative taken by President Ershad for providing education to the working children and said he had already implemented a large number of programmes for improving the condition of the neglected people.

The Education Minister explained various aspects of the education and welfare programmes undertaken by the government under the personal guidance of President Ershad for the working children and said a good number of primary schools would be built for these children in areas where their concentrations were high.

Syed Abu Hossain, MP also addressed the gathering. Administrator of Dhaka Municipal Corporation Abdul Malek, MP, and Education Secretary were present.

Earlier on his arrival at Jatrabari, President Ershad got a standing ovation from the people of the locality, people raised welcome slogans and garlanded him profusely.