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President and CMLA Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad making his inaugural address at the BPTA convention in Dhaka on Thursday. -Times

Increase literacy rate to build new Bangladesh

By A Staff Reporter

President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad called upon the primary school teachers to organise a countrywide united movement for universal education to increase the literary rate in an effort to build a happy and prosperous new Bangladesh.

Inaugurating the two-day convention of primary teachers at railway ground opposite Bangladesh Secretariat on Thursday, he said that although education was one of the fundamental rights of the people and primary education was the basis. This right of the people was yet to be established, he said.

Organised by the Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association and presided over by its chief Shahjada Nurul Alam Ameer, the function was also addressed by Education Minister Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan, Md. Fazlur Rahman and Rahima Parveen, Secretary General and Women's Affairs Secretary of the Association respectively.

Stressing the need for education, President Ershad said that 74 per cent of the people of the country were still unable to read and write and as a result their lives remained in darkness. "We want to bring these people to light from unbearable darkness." So, today our slogan will be "we want education, enlightenment and happy life."

The objective of the programme, President Ershad said, was

to give education to 50 per cent of the children, attaining the age of six in 1983, by 1987.

President Ershad said that the main responsibility to make the programme a success lay mainly on the teachers.

President Ershad asked for conducting a survey in the respective areas of each primary school to find out the total number of school-going children and how many of them were attending schools for implementation of the programme of universal education. On the basis of the available data direct contact should be made with the parents and guardians of the children and school managing committees must co-operate with the teachers in this connection.

President Ershad said that primary education should be closely

involved with mainstream of life through new curriculum as followed by developed countries. "We went to associate education with religion, knowledge, culture and technology."

Referring to the demand to place primary school under the administrative responsibility of education officers instead of Upazila Nirbahi Officers, President Ershad said that after the Upazila polls on March 24, the newly elected chairmen would shoulder the overall responsibility and education officers would assist them.

President Ershad expressed his shock over the allegation of corruption over appointment of primary teachers by UNOs.

Referring to the demands of the primary teachers, President

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Ershad announced amidst thunderous applause that the primary school teachers were government employees and would remain government employees.

Amidst cheers, President Ershad announced that necessary steps were being taken to meet some more demands of the primary teachers. These were, he said, (1) To consider the educational qualifications of the teachers who have passed Fazel and Kamel equivalent to the HSC and degree respectively, (2) Priority to those candidates who have been trained with government scholarship or grant.

The President also announced the sanction of three additional advance increments instead of one to the trained higher secondary teachers and four such increments instead of two to the degree teachers during the interim period.

Speaking on the occasion, Education Minister Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan said that the recommendations of the Education Commission, based on the widely circulated questionnaire would be made public.

He said that the question of providing condensed course for HSC passed teachers would be given due consideration.