

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE KUMUDINI WELFARE TRUST OF
BANGLADESH**

Dhaka, Bangladesh: 05-03-2013

**Shri Rajiv Prasad Shaha, Managing Director, Kumudini Welfare Trust
Shrimati Shaha,
Miss Pratibha Mutsuddy, Director of Bharateshwari Home
Trustees and Staff Members of Kumudini Welfare Trust,
My dear students,**

I am delighted to be here with you at Kumudini and the Bharateshwari Home for Girls. You have put up an extraordinary performance which combines beauty with elegance, discipline and physical fitness. I am truly impressed and overwhelmed by your talent and hard work.

Looking at all of you I can see that Bangladesh has a very bright future. Each of you will one day go forth into the outside world. The training and education that you are receiving here will equip you to become proud and productive citizens of your motherland. You will be the makers of a new Bangladesh. To everybody you are the representatives of the youth who aspire to see a beautiful future. Our greetings to you, the youth of Bangladesh. In the last speech of my visit to this wonderful country, I am quoting a few verses from a poem by Gurudev Rabindranath:

Where the world is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up
By narrow domestic walls.....

Bangladesh has taken rapid strides in the field of education and women's empowerment. A growing number of girls are now attending school. I congratulate the Government of Bangladesh for taking far reaching

initiatives in the field of education such as compulsory primary education, free education for girls up to class ten, stipends for female students and distribution of free text books.

Women's education is an essential pre-requisite for building a healthy and safe society. This however cannot be done by governments alone, and I am therefore glad that the Kumudini Trust has joined the national effort to impart quality education to girls in Bangladesh.

I take this opportunity to remember, with profound respect, Shri Ranada Prasad Shaha , one of the greatest philanthropists of this country. He and his family had dedicated themselves to the service of the suffering and the needy. One of Shri Ranada Prasad's priorities was to establish a hospital for the poor so that they, especially women, could receive free treatment. To spread female education, he established schools that were dedicated to girls, giving them a well - rounded education and moulding them into socially responsible women. It is sad that not only Shri Ranada Prasad Shaha but also his family suffered considerably in the days before the creation of Bangladesh. We respect them for their bravery and pay homage to their memory. It is a tribute to him that the Kumudini Trust and its affiliated bodies have grown from strength to strength, and have served the nation so well. The Kumudini hospital and medical college have been carrying out charitable work for the most needy and destitute. You are fortunate to be studying in an institution which symbolizes the highest values of selfless service.

As a small token of support of the Government of India for your efforts, I am happy to announce that we will fund the upgradation of the sewerage system of your Complex which, I understand, has been a long pending need. In addition, we will also fund the construction of an advanced waste water treatment plant system. I am happy to be informed that the project will significantly change the landscape of the Complex and that the land saved from the installation of the waste water treatment system will be gainfully used for agriculture and other productive purposes.

I recall that some of you had met me as part of a Youth Delegation that visited Delhi last year. Today, I am happy to be here to meet you and to see, for myself, this remarkable institution.

I am deeply impressed by what I have seen and have no doubt that you will be outstanding citizens of Bangladesh.

I wish each one of you the best of success and a bright future.
