

All set to restore CU peace

By Mahfuz Ullah

Attempts are underway to restore normality on the Chittagong University campus following the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor.

On December 30 last, Prof RI Chowdhury was appointed Vice Chancellor removing the incumbent Prof Alamgir Mohammad Strajuddin.

A state of uncertainty has been prevailing on the campus since December 22, 1990. The university was closed since then on that day following violent incidents that left one student killed and many others injured.

The university was opened at a later stage but normality could not be restored as students, teachers and the former Vice Chancellor all got involved in contending and blaming each other.

The interim government formed a one-man inquiry commission which, in its report, blamed a section of the students and teachers and the former Vice Chancellor Prof Alamgir Strajuddin.

Talking to this correspondent in Chittagong about how he is planning to restore normality Prof Chowdhury said he was trying to strike a balance among different forces working on the campus. Universities are open places of competition of ideas and there should be working relationship among different groups, he added.

Referring to complaints by different groups the VC said, "If we strictly follow the rules and go for qualitative selection without distributing undue favour there should not be any problem." University is nobody's personal property and the process of decision making should be made institutionalized without making the VC all-powerful, he added.

The VC said, "I have asked the teachers, provosts, and the administrative staff to be objective in their decisions", and added "under my authority they all will be part of institutional decision making process."

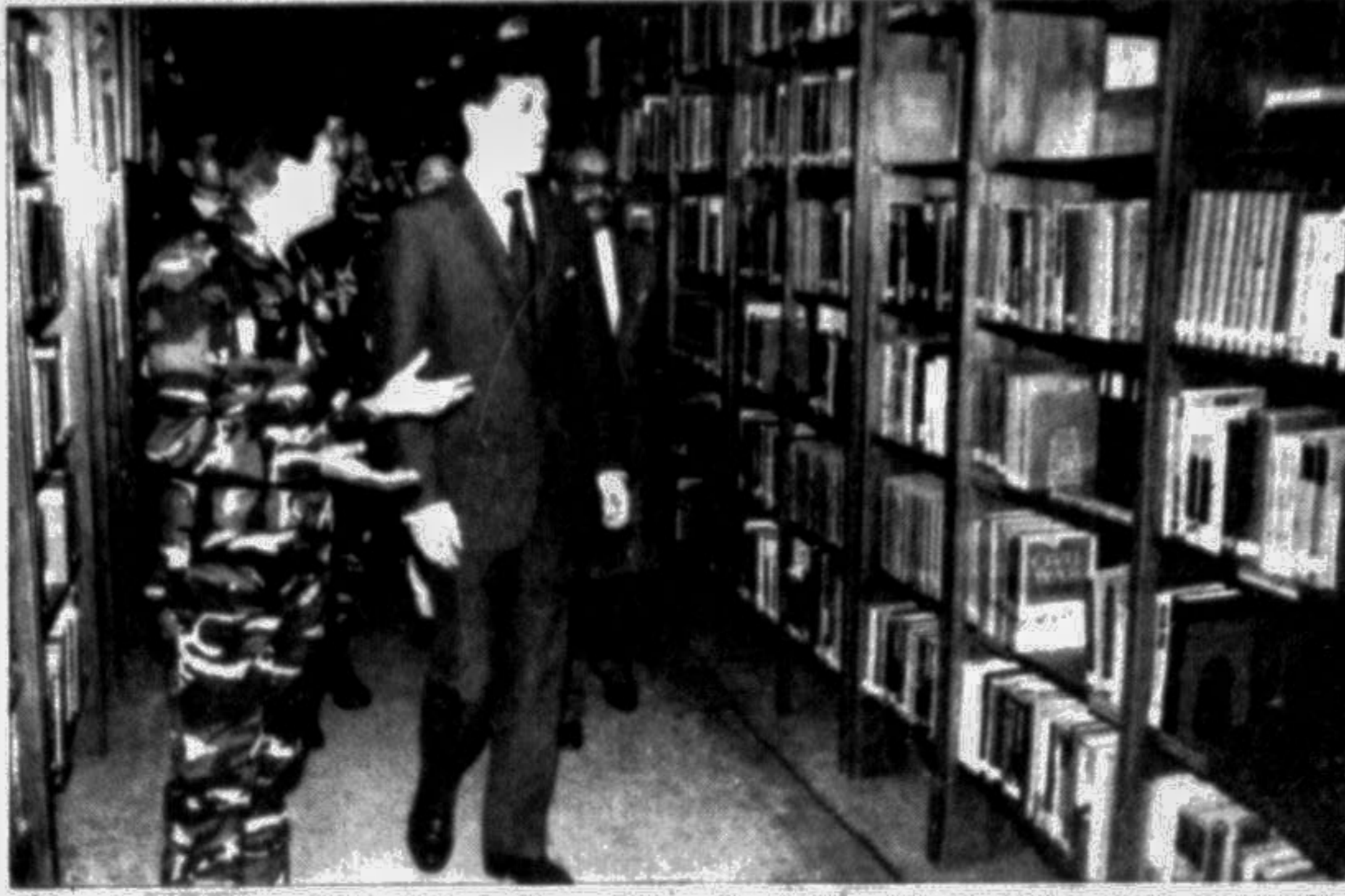
The VC said since assuming office he has had dialogues with people concerned in a bid to solve the problems.

Campus sources said the All Party Students Unity had agreed in principle to help restore normality. Besides, the Shibir activists have also indicated their willingness to reverse their stand of antagonism to the university administration.

District level leaders of different political parties who have 'cooling effect' have also expressed the willingness to break the impasses, the sources said. Concerned quarters claimed emissaries of different groups had already had different rounds of talks in resolving the crisis.

Meanwhile, the group of teachers reportedly loyal to the former VC has also scaled down their voice of protest against the appointment of the present VC. They, however, have protested Prof Chowdhury's appointment for four years which they claim is a violation of the university ordinance. A section of the teachers welcoming the change said it was not a violation of the ordinance as the appointment had been made from the panel elected earlier against a permanent vacancy.

University sources expressed the optimism that normality would be restored very soon.



Thai Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn visiting the Defence Services Command and Staff College library at Mirpur yesterday. —PID photo

Handloom bank

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Board said repeated enhancement of prices of the yarns was hampering the total production of the handloom industries.

It termed the imposition of 10 per cent tax on raw cotton import as one of the main causes behind the enhancement of the price of yarn. The report also held the imposition of tax on its import responsible for the smuggling of the yarn from neighbouring India.

The report said that production cost of handloom clothes was increasing by 10 to 15 per cent in every six months whereas the market prices of handloom products were due to frequent smuggling of clothes.

The report noted that out of the total 5,01,834 handloom units, 1,84,808 handlooms are now closed.

According to the report of the Handloom Board the total production of cloth from this sector is around 60 crore metre which is worth more than taka 23 crore. About 12 lakh people are directly and indirectly involved with the industry.

It suggested introduction of 'handloom cards' to identify the actual weavers and distribution of handloom materials to the weavers directly by the handloom board.

The report of the board was submitted to the Ministry of Textiles last Tuesday.

Average price of the yarns of various types produced by the cotton mills of the BTMC ranged from Taka 10.28 per cent to 14.17 per cent from December 24, 1990 to May 12, 1991.

The report of the Handloom

Cop hurt in clash with students

By DU Correspondent

At least three crude bombs were exploded and a police constable was injured during a clash between students and police at the Balaka cinema hall premises Saturday afternoon.

Chases and counter-chases took place between the police and the students as police prevented the students from entering the cinema hall without any payment.

A police source said that the students pelted stones injuring Shaiful Islam, a police constable of the riot division.

Riyadh

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with the visiting Bangladesh Minister for Labour and Manpower, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

The Saudi Minister assured of all assistance and cooperation from his part regarding the manpower recruitment.

Matters of various welfare aspects for Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia and further employment opportunities of skilled and unskilled people and professionals from Bangladesh came up for discussion.

The Saudi Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, Ahmed Hamed Al-Yahya, and Assistant Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, Yousof Kantab were present on the occasion.

The Bangladesh Minister accompanied by Labour and Manpower Secretary Dr A K M Moshir Rahman, arrived here last night from Jeddah. He was received at the King Khaled International Airport by Mohammad Ali Al-Fayez.

Raushan 'terribly sick'

Former 'First Lady' Raushan Ershad is 'terribly sick' and undergoing treatment at her sister's Uttara residence, reports UNB.

Family sources said Begum Ershad, released on bail Wednesday, is suffering from multiple complications including high blood pressure, her legs and left arm were swollen.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visiting the stalls after inaugurating textile show at Bijoy Sarani in the city yesterday. —PID photo

Textiles our thrust

From Page 1 Col 7

She expressed her firm belief that the success lay in linking these artistic feelings of weavers with the modern.

She urged the people to get rid of the weakness for foreign fabrics and said "It is not true that any foreign fabric is superior to local fabric. Now, a large variety of high quality fabrics are produced locally, which have a high demand abroad."

Referring to the slogan of "be honoured, buy local commodities", the Prime Minister said we want it not to remain as a slogan only. She said the ideology and philosophy of the government is nationalistic and the motto is "be Bangladeshi, buy Bangladeshi".

Continuing, she said "we have started anti-smuggling campaign being inspired by this motto. To rescue our economy we have no other alternatives but to protect our local industry."

Begum Khaleda Zia stressed the need for concentrating on export trade, saying the over-riding tendency of the world economy is not ad but trade. "We must find export market for our textile products," she said, adding over 1.5 million Bangladeshi weavers have the cultural heritage of Muslim-Jamant of thousands of years in their blood."

'Purba Paschim' to be filmed under joint venture

From Page 1 Col 7

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Vajiralongkorn visits Staff College, museum

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand visited Defence Services Command and Staff College, at Mirpur in Dhaka Saturday morning.

The Prince is now on a week-long state visit to Bangladesh. He arrived in the capital Thursday.

The Prince accompanied by Planning Minister Jahiruddin Khan was received by General Mahboob, Commandant of DSCSC, said PID handout.

The royal guest inspected the facilities and installations of DSCSC and attended a launch party hosted in honour of him.

Later General Mahboob and Prince Vajiralongkorn exchanged gift of army crest of their respective countries.

Vajiralongkorn also visited the National Museum in the afternoon.

Elaborate BNP programme to mark Zia's birthday today

The 50th birth anniversary of President Ziaur Rahman will be observed today, reports BSS.

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder has requested all the party units to observe the day through holding discussions and rallies all over the country.

The party has taken elaborate programmes centrally in observance of the day. Wreaths will be placed and feteha will be offered at 9.30 am at the masjid of the late president.

Teachers

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during the Union Parishad polls beginning January 22 had been exempted from the per-view of the strike.

The BFTA's 15-point charter of demands include, inclusion of non-government teachers in the new national pay scale, restarting of its welfare trust, promotion of teachers higher pay scale for experienced teachers and the filling up of vacant posts.

The BFTA announced a two-day programme including a teachers-employees rally at all the upazilas and processions at the district headquarters on January 26 and January 27 respectively.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Auhavabak Samitee (JAS) President Dr A M A Zaman and General Secretary Advocate A K Md Emdadul Haque in a statement to the press Saturday urged the government to discuss with the teachers their real grievances and find out a solution immediately. "Don't do politics with the lives of our children", the JAS leaders said.

It also mentioned, "All the political parties sincerely believe in having a violence-free educational atmosphere, it is very possible."

Our Khulna office adds: Teachers of all non-government institutions here observed strike today. They also brought out processions. No untoward incident was reported.

Our Sirajganj correspondent also filed a similar report.

Myanmar

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Khumis are also being subjected to SLORC repression."

When asked if a border clash between Bangladesh and Myanmar was imminent, Mrat Kyaw said "I don't think Burma will go to war with Bangladesh."

The SLORC regime is increasing its forces mainly to combat the threat of the growing resistance to military rule," he said.

"Furthermore, Burma is having so much trouble coping with all the insurgents going on at present that it is in no position to wage war with any country," he added.

Meanwhile, thousands of Rohingya refugees are living a sub-human life in the squalid makeshift camps at different remote hamlets in the district.

NGO

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politics, the power games of world powers, the Minamata conference observed.

The Minamata conference vowed to combat the repression persisting throughout the world; because 'all people, especially the oppressed people, have a natural and universal right to criticize, oppose, or prevent the implementation of decisions affecting their lives, no matter where those decisions were made'. The right, the conference observed, was more fundamental than any artificial law or institution established by the state.

The proposed joint committee of the NGO personalities and left leaning political leaders plans to uphold these ideals of Minamata Declaration in Bangladesh, the sources say.

The Midnight File

Six killed in Uzbekistan as police open fire

MOSCOW, Jan 18: Six people were killed, in the Uzbekistan capital Tashkent when police fire at student demonstrators protesting against price rises. Interfax news agency quoted students as saying today, reports AFP.

Great great-grandson of Indian Sultan held

BANGALORE (India), Jan 18: Police here have arrested the great great-grandson of an Indian Sultan hoisted here for taking on the British army 200 years ago, in an attempt to stop him staking a claim to the Sultan's palace. Bangalore police said today they had taken 34-year-old Asif Ali Shah into protective custody Friday because he and supporters planned to occupy the summer palace of Tippu Sultan Shahid, who died fighting the British, reports AFP.

Unipolar world impossible, says Chinese FM

BEIJING, Jan 18: Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen has declared that in his country's view, "a unipolar world was impossible, because the major Western countries would contend for their own interests after the collapse of the Soviet Union. More than 100 developing countries would also seek their own road of development. Qian told Chananan President Jerry Rawlings according to a report by Xinhua from Accra.

'Gamsakhurdia will be defeated in a week'

MOSCOW, Jan 18: Georgia's provisional Prime Minister Predicted today that an attempted comeback by ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia would be defeated in a week. Acting Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua told local journalists his government now controlled about 90 per cent to the Transcaucasian republic and was poised, if necessary, to take Gamsakhurdia's west Georgian stronghold of Zugdidi, reports Reuter.

Hamidul Huq Chowdhury

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Hamidul Huq Chowdhury left behind a son and seven daughters. His son Khaled Hamidul Huq is an advocate in the Supreme Court and also a Director of the Bangladesh Observer.

Among his sons-in-law are former ambassador Manzur Ahmed Chowdhury, Foreign Secretary Riaz Rahman, Architect Khadem Ali and lawyer A. Y. Moshazzaman.

Born in 1901 in Feni, Hamidul Huq Chowdhury had a varied career as a lawyer, politician and newspaper proprietor spanning a long stretch of contemporary history.

Chowdhury attended schools in Feni and Dhaka and passed his Matriculation examination from the Scottish Church Collegiate School in Calcutta in 1919. He obtained his bachelors degree in science from the Presidency College and on getting his law degree joined the Calcutta Bar in 1930.

Hamidul Huq Chowdhury became a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1937, held a cabinet post in the provincial cabinet and was also actively associated in the process that resulted in the birth of Pakistan in 1947.

After Partition he joined the Dhaka High Court Bar and in 1949 became the Finance Minister of the East Bengal cabinet and was also minister for land revenue for a short period. He resigned following an encounter with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan.

As leader of the Krishak Sramik Party he was actively involved in the formation of the Jukto Front which defeated Nurul Amin's Muslim League government in 1954.

Chowdhury became the Foreign Minister of Pakistan in 1956 and was also closely associated in the launching of the constitution the same year.

His final cabinet post was with the Feroz Khan Noon government, dissolved by the martial law government of General Ayub Khan in 1958.

He launched the erstwhile Pakistan Observer in March 1949. Press circles recalled his outstanding contribution and genuine commitment towards developing the newspaper industry, specially English language newspapers, in Bangladesh.

The controversial role of Hamidul Huq Chowdhury during the Liberation War in 1971 came under strong criticism from the people of the country for his support to the so-called united Pakistan.

He lived in exile till 1978 and the government returned the ownership of the Observer and the Chitral to him in 1984.

His body will be taken to the Supreme Court premises today (Sunday) at 10:30 am and to the Observer House at 11:30 am. The namaz-e-jumma will be held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Zohr prayers the same day.

Hamidul Huq Chowdhury's body will be taken to his village home in Ramnagar under Dagonbhuiyan upazila on Monday for burial at the family graveyard.

The qul khwan will be held at Nirala Bhaban after Asr prayers on Tuesday and milad mahfil and Quran khwan will also be arranged at the Observer House the same day after Zohr prayers.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Saturday expressed her deep shock at the death of Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, an eminent politician, lawyer and founder of the Bangladesh Observer.

The Prime Minister prayed for the peace of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

CIS Navy to revive Tsarist pennant

MOSCOW, Jan 18: The commonwealth navy will revive the white-and-blue Tsarist naval pennant, in use before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Russian President Boris Yeltsin said on Friday.

"From now on the main flag of the navy becomes the historic Russian and Reysky (St Andrew) flag—white flag with two blue diagonal stripes," he said to the applause of 5000 armed forces officers in the Kremlin.

They were meeting to discuss the future of the largest military forces in the world. The most divisive issue among the former Soviet republics.

Yeltsin said the heads of the commonwealth states confirmed at their summit on Thursday the navy would remain within a united strategic force under single command.

Some vessels of the Black Sea and Caspian fleets would be transferred to Ukraine and Azerbaijan, which are forming their own armed forces through separate agreements, Yeltsin said.

A row between Russia and Ukraine over the Black Sea fleet has embittered relations between the two most powerful members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

'Islamic states must have own information system'

CAIRO, Jan 18: Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda emphasised the need for formulating a plan and programme of actions in field of information media aimed at strengthening the existing solidarity amongst more than a billion Muslims all over the world, reports BSS.

Addressing the two-day second Islamic Conference of Information Ministers here on Wednesday, he underscored the need for greater effort towards development of an information system among the Muslim countries. He said the Islamic International New Agency (IINA) and Islamic States Broadcasting Organisation (ISBO) have to be further strengthened and made functionally effective to meet the expanding need of the present day.

Referring to the need for development of an information system among the Muslim countries, the Information Minister said the reformulated information plan, the Islamic programme for development of

Information and communication and the proposal for the establishment of a union of journalists of Islamic countries are measures in the right direction.

Nazmul Huda said the OIC is committed to safeguard the basic rights of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim states. This is the fundamental obligation of our charter and the corner stone of our religion, he added.

He said Bangladesh fully supported the steps taken by the OIC to preserve the faith, dignity and Islamic identity of the Muslims in non-Muslim countries in accordance with the universal declaration of human rights and all other relevant international covenants.

The Information Minister said a large number of Muslims of Burma (Myanmar) have taken refuge in Bangladesh from persecutions in their home country. Bangladesh, he said, has been trying to persuade the Myanmar Government to take these unfortunate people back to their homes and let them live in peace and security.

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In memory of a publisher

By S.M. Ali

The death of Hamidul Huq Chowdhury at the age of 92 causes little surprise, but it brings grief to a cross-section of our people who would mourn the passing away of an outstanding lawyer, a pioneering newspaper publisher and a man with an astute mind.

It is hardly possible to predict how the posterity will judge a man of the calibre of Hamidul Huq Chowdhury. In all probability, he will be primarily remembered as the founder-publisher of The Bangladesh Observer. If one cannot think of the media scene in this country without the Observer, one can hardly think of this 42-year old publication without Chowdhury or, what's more, without the role he played in shaping the paper, its political position, news coverage and even editorials.

For nearly three decades, the paper's fairly objective reporting, backed by editorial commentaries, served its readership well and the paper stood up, despite some lapses, for the interest of people in the erstwhile East Pakistan and later of Bangladesh. Then, the paper ran out of steam and became a shadow of its former self. The decline of the Observer was, to a great extent, due to the failure of the paper's principal owner, Chowdhury himself, to understand the realities of post-liberation politics of Bangladesh, bickerings within members of the family and the erosion of editorial independence under the weight of Chowdhury's highly personalised administration. Yet, to the paper's many thousand readers, the Bangladesh Observer is still something of a national institution, tired and old, but still a force to reckon with.

As a newspaper publisher, Hamidul Huq Chowdhury has thus left behind a legacy members of the family can be justly proud of. However, among the newspaper reading public in the country, there will be concern about the future of this national media institution. The adverse relationship that exists today between the employees and the management cannot be set right in a matter of days or even in months. However, one still hopes that the publication will survive the ordeal and continue to be a reminder of Chowdhury's service to his motherland, notwithstanding his own negative position on its liberation twenty years ago. May his departed soul rest in peace.