

Dhaka proposes SAARC varsity

KATHMANDU, Aug. 11:—Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury today proposed setting up a "SAARC friendship university" comprising faculties that would help strengthen intellectual foundations to further enhance the on-going regional cooperation, reports BSS.

Mr. Chowdhury made the general statement on the opening day of the fifth session of the SAARC council of Ministers here.

King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal formally inaugurated the two-day meeting.

Mr. Chowdhury said the setting up of this 'university' would truly be symbolic of the friendship of the peoples of the South Asian region. "It is quite a different enterprise altogether to create a domain that is truly South Asian in tone and character" he added.

The Foreign Minister said "Such a domain generating a sublime atmosphere for a common pursuit of knowledge may perhaps in due course emerge as an inspiration in itself."

Pakistan Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Indian Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, Sri

Lankan Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed, Nepalese Foreign Minister Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Maldives Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel and Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering also made their general statements.

The Foreign Minister urged the member countries to "think of a suitable forum for women leaders in the SAARC region" which, he said would facilitate exchange of views and understanding of the status and role of women.

He said such a forum for women leaders could also act as a concerned group making a constructive impact on the various programmes on women's welfare under the auspices of SAARC.

Mr. Chowdhury said that seven countries constituted a special community of nations and acquired a distinct identity. "We are South Asian the motivation that impelled us together is self-emanating," he said adding, "we are indeed, nobody's puppet nor can we impose any view not acceptable to all or any one of us".

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A PTI report adds: The next SAARC summit originally scheduled for Colombo in November is likely to be held in Islamabad in the third week of December this year, officials sources said.

The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed today circulated a note among the SAARC Foreign Ministers here suggesting that either the summit be postponed or held elsewhere within the time frame, as Sri Lanka is pre-occupied with resolving the ethnic problem.

Before reaching here Mr. Hameed had met President Zia ul-Haq in Islamabad and handed over a personal message from President J.R. Jayewardene on the issue.

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