

HARDLY two miles north of the industrial hub of Bangladesh lies a magnificent, ageless mysterious-looking red buildings fronted by five high rise gates in succession. Flanking them are pools of water that only add to the serene beauty to the area.



This is the Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR) rather long name of dream synthesised into an idea and later turned into a programme at the 9th Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at Dakar, Senegal in 1978. The programme was to set up a centre of excellence for the development of technical manpower that the Islamic Ummah so lack to thrust it right into the 21st century.

Bangladesh was lucky to be selected to host the first truly successful programme of OIC. Its implementation commenced with holding the first meeting of the Board of Directors in 1979 and the foundation stone was laid in March 1981 by Late President Ziaur Rahman in presence of PLO Chief Yasser Arafat and OIC Secretary General Mr. Habib Chatty. The construction of the physical facilities as designed by Turkish architect, Mahmet Duruk Pamirbegan in May next. The task of translating the programme fell on Dr Rafiquddin Ahmad, a builder par excellence and its first director.

By the time the centre went into operation in December 1986, it had traversed a long way often fraught with difficulties and frustrations.

Set up as an organ of the 46-nation OIC, the centre was entrusted with six basic objectives: (1) training instructors, technicians and tradesmen and upgrade lower-level and mid-level manpower to international standard, (2) conduct research on technical and vocational education in the Islamic countries (3) help exchange technical know-how among the member-states, (4) promote industrial research, (5) ensure coordination between the centre and those of such national institutions and (6) any other objectives fixed for it by OIC.

The ICTVTR has to offer technical and vocational training in the fields of mechanical chemical electrical and electronic technologies and trades and offer regular long courses in the first phase. In the second phase it will conduct allied research, initiate, promote and guide technological and industrial research, building technology and hydraulic technology will be offered.

The scope is enough to cause its first consultative meeting of national experts of the 46-member states on curriculum design and staff development to recommend that the name of the centre should be changed to "Islamic Institute of Technology".

Guided by representatives of OIC members which is supported eight other bodies including the 12-nation Board of Directors to run the day-to-day activities of the centre it is truly the first International Training Organisation of the Islamic World in Bangladesh. No state can impose its decision unilaterally on it nor the 30-acre are that Bangladesh donated now belongs to this country. And no decision is taken here without intense consultations at various levels of academicians, experts and decision makers of member states.

But the experts and others involved are aware of the mandate that (a) the level of the course should be of international standard but at the same time meeting the national demands, (b) the level should be high than that existing

ICTVTR: A Dream Fulfilled

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national standards, (c) a neutral and competent accreditation committee will vet the diplomas and certificates to be awarded by the centre.

How careful consideration was given to every step that the centre took is manifested in the method of decision making. Nothing is decided

another higher academic committee with members drawn from OIC states. It sent its recommendations to the 12-nation Board of Directors which in their meeting discussed the curricula threadbare and sent them to member states for further studies. The courses and the recommenda-



Foreign students studying at ICTVTR library.

arbitrarily. For example there were two consultative meetings in 1980 and 1983, in which the member states were involved in deciding subjects of specifications, duration of trade technology, instructor training courses, entry qualification, design and captioning of the courses including that of Higher Diploma in Engineering.

The ICFM, the highest OIC body which guides and checks the progress of centre had directed to hold the first consultative meeting for course design and staff development, preparation of the course. A group of experts then firmed up the curricula. This was studied by

tions had then been considered by a conference of technical teachers and senior administrators of the states and were incorporated in the final recommendations which were approved by the Board of Directors and sent to ICFM. The stated that it was not setting up yet another polytechnic institute.

The curricula kept in view the needs of the member-states, obviously varied. It was recommended that the entry qualifications should be secondary school certificate for 2-year vocational courses and for 3-year higher diploma in engineering higher secondary certificate.