

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION



Address

by

Prof. P. K. Ghosh
Vice-Chancellor

RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR
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Mr. Chancellor, Dr. Mitra, Respected Guests of Honour, Members of the University Council, Academic Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to welcome you all to this 15th Annual Convocation of the University of North Bengal. A little while back we have heard the learned and educative address of our Chief Guest, Prof. Ashok Mitra.*

* Dr. Ashok Mitra is well known as a distinguished scholar and administrator. As a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1940 to 1975, he served the Govt. of West Bengal and the Central Government in different capacities and enjoyed high reputation. He was Development Commissioner and Secretary (Commerce and Industry, Govt. of West Bengal (1953-58), Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1966-69) and Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Govt. of India (1969-70), and Secretary, Planning Commission (1969-73). As Superintendent of Census Operations (1950-52), Dr. Mitra authored the 1951 Census Reports, Gazetteers and Special Studies of West Bengal. He was Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India during 1958-68, and under his guidance and authorship were published the 1961 All India Census Reports as well as Levels of Regional Development, Housing and Establishment Reports of India. At different times, Dr. Mitra has been associated as Member with several International bodies like the UN Population Commission, Protein Calory Advisory group of the UN System, UN Preparatory Committee for the Third World Population Conference at Bucharest. Founder President of the Indian Association for the Study of Population, Dr. Mitra has been continuously involved since 1958 with statistical and population matters under the ECAFA, ESCAP, UN Population Division, UNFPA, FAO and WHO. Author of several scholarly publications, Dr. Mitra is widely known for his original thinking on the socio-economic problems of India. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) by the Academy of Sciences of USSR. Presently he is Professor at the Centre for Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

We are grateful to him for visiting this University to deliver the convocation address. We are also grateful to the honourable recipients of D. Litt. degree honoris causa for accepting the same.

Let me congratulate and wish our young graduates, awardees of degrees, distinctions and certificates all the best, the best of opportunity to rise in their own esteem and the esteem of all those with whom they will share the journey of life. May God bless you.

We have passed one more year in our strive to develop the University although financial constraints and the administrative handicaps permitted only limited progress. Our development proposals for the Sixth Plan period are still pending with the UGC. But we had also to bear with drastic cuts in the maintenance grants, while prices continued to shoot up for all essential requirements. Normal activities were severely strained on that account. With the rise in the costs of maintenance and repair along with the rates of constructional materials, all our structural works suffered from cost overruns. What is more disturbing for us is the sharp rise in the prices of chemicals, spare parts and other ingredients of laboratory work and the subscription rates of journals, both Indian and foreign, not to speak of the steep rise in the prices of books and scientific equipments.

The sense of hardship has been mitigated to a limited extent in recent months. The UGC and State Government authorities have released some basic grants for the purchase of books. The UGC has sanctioned the matching share

towards the first phase of construction of a hostel for Research Scholars. Besides, the State Government has sanctioned a special grant for improvement of water supply and electrical works and for marginal extension of the Boys' and Girls' Hostels. We have also received sanction of a token grant by the Central Government for preservation and publication of manuscripts. Except for these, however, we are not sure when and to what extent essential capital grants will be available for equipments and buildings. This University is hard pressed for residential accommodation for employees, class-room facilities and laboratory space.

Under the circumstances it was only necessary that we should make the best use of our resources. Within the limited funds at our disposal it has been possible to put the standby diesel generator into operation for which electrical connections have been recently completed. This will ensure to a limited extent the availability of power for essential purposes and research activities in the event of any temporary failure of general power supply. The operation of the University Press has been geared up which has led to some economy in our expenditure on printing.

Of the common facilities being developed, the Service and Instrumentation Centre and the Central Workshop have been functionally integrated with very good results as regards servicing, overhauling, designing and fabrication of a variety of instruments and equipments. The research Service Centre with its micro-computer and a Programmer in position is being increasingly used by researchers for data processing and statistical analysis.

The Centre has conducted a training course on 'Computer Programming, Numerical Analysis and Statistical Applications' for teachers and research scholars of the University. A similar course is proposed to be organised for teachers of affiliated Colleges. The Centre has started publishing a monthly bulletin 'Interface' to acquaint researchers with the type of assistance and facilities offered by the Centre. New laboratories are being developed in the Department of Physics inspite of the problem of space. With assistance from the UGC, a special laboratory is being set up under a major research project for the development of a magneto-hydrodynamic generator using liquid fuel and seeded plasma. A laser laboratory is also being developed with two lasers received as gifts from the United States. Among the new equipments installed are one high vacuum coating unit and a micro densitometer which will help advancement of research in Solid State Physics. The Magnetic Spectrograph Laboratory has been set up in a separate building with assistance from the Department of Atomic Energy and the Govt. of West Bengal. Prof. M. S. Sinha, FNA, at present Visiting Professor in the department of Physics has been a source of great strength in the development of this laboratory.

The University Museum has been further enriched during the year with the acquisition of several sculptures, objects of folk art and culture and manuscripts for which we are grateful to the donors. Recently we had the benefit of advice from Shri Panchanon Mandal of Visva Bharati in connection with the maintenance and cataloguing of manuscripts. It is expected that the usefulness of all manuscripts will be enhanced through proper maintenance and preser-

vation of these in the University Museum.

The Centre for Himalayan Studies organised a three-day Seminar on 'Modernisation and adaptation in the Eastern Himalayas' which is expected to help in determining the scope of research projects in specific fields. Towards the same end, special lectures were delivered at the Centre by a number of distinguished scholars and experts. Prof. B. K. Roy Burman and Dr. Suniti Kumar Pathak from Visva-Bharati, Dr. A. C. Sinha from North Eastern Hill University, Shri B. Shastri, Director, Adi Folk Literature Society, Prof. Partha Nath Mukherjee from the Indian Statistical Institute and Shri Nripendranath Bandopadhyay from the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences. The topics on which they spoke were : Problems of Nation Building in Northeast India; Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh today; Himalaya as a Frontier Region; Aristocracy in the Himalayan Kingdoms—the case of Ranas, Kazis and Dashos; Process of Nation building in Bhutan; Leadership in Arunachal Pradesh—a case-study of Adis, Agrarian Structure, Rural Proletarianization and Social Mobilisation; Problem of Labour and Enterprise in North Bengal's agriculture.

With financial assistance from UGC, the Department of Bengali organised a five-day Refresher Course on Linguistics. Lectures and discussion sessions were devoted to subjects like : History of Linguistics; Areas of Linguistic Research; Sociolinguistics; Implications of the Chomsky revolution; Stylistics and Dialectology; Field Study and Methodology. Guest Speakers were Prof. Suhas Chatterjee from Visva Bharati, Dr. Pabitra Sarkar from Jadavpur University and Dr. Nirmal Kumar Das from Rabindra

The Department of Philosophy organised two conferences on Indian Philosophy with special reference to the philosophy of Gandhi, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Rash Behari Das and K. C. Bhattacharyya. In the special lectures programme of the department, Dr. T. K. Sarkar from Jadavpur University spoke on 'Symbolic logic', and Dr. D. C. Guha from Varanasi on 'Sankhya and Vedanta'. Swami Satya Prakash Saraswati delivered a talk on the Vedas and Practical life. A 3-week programme was also arranged for College teachers to review the new Syllabi in Philosophy for under-graduate classes.

In the Department of Economics, Prof. Biplab Dasgupta, Executive Vice-Chairman, Comprehensive Area Development Corporation, West Bengal, addressed a Seminar on 'Rural Development', Mr. Priyatosh Moitra initiated another Seminar on 'Economic Development and Increase of Population'. Prof. Mohit Bhattacharyya, Centenary Professor of Public Administration, Calcutta University, addressed the Deptt. of Political Science on "Theories of Public Administration" and "Bureacracy and the Public". Prof. Radharaman Chakraborty from Burdwan University, delivered special lectures on "Politics of Scarcity" and "Oil Politics of our times". Prof. Randhir Singh from Delhi University, spoke on "Political Theory".

In the Department of Nepali, Sri Janak Lal Sharma, Chief Research Officer, Department of Archaeology, Kathmandu, initiated a Seminar on "Special Contribution of Joshmani Santa-Sampradaya towards Nepali literature". Prof. Chudamani Bandhu from Tribhuvan University,

Nepal, delivered a special lecture on "Nepali Bhasa ra Vyakarana". The Department also celebrated Bhanu Jayanti on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Poet Bhanu Bhakta. I am glad to mention that the State Government sanctioned a special grant last year towards the programme of activities of the North Bengal University Nepali Academy. It is proposed to publish a biannual journal of the Academy. Attempt is also being made to sponsor publication of some text-books in Nepali for undergraduate students.

The Department of Geography conducted field studies in Central Himalayas (Kathmandu, Pokhra and adjoining areas) as a part of the post-graduate students' training. Dr. C. R. Pathak from I.I.T., Kharagpur, delivered an extension lecture in the department on "Regional Planning".

In the Department of Mathematics, Dr. B. K. Dutta from S. N. Bose Institute of Physical Sciences, Calcutta, delivered two special lectures. The third annual Khastagir Memorial lectures were delivered in the Department of Chemistry, by Prof. R. P. Rastogi from Gorakhpur University. Dr. J. D. Padayatty from the Department of Bio-Chemistry of the Institute of Sciences, Bangalore, delivered two lectures at the Centre for Life Sciences, one on "Conserved Messenger RNA in Rice Embryos" and another on "Cloning and Sequencing Chicken Haemoglobin Gene."

An educative symposium was organised this year at the University B. T. & Evening College (Cooch Behar) on the "Impact of Teachers Training Institutions on Secondary Education". Prof. N. Dasgupta, District Inspector

of Schools, Cooch Behar, and senior teachers and Head Masters of Secondary schools, participated in the Symposium. Shri H. A. Halim, Minister-in-Charge, Judicial and Legislative Departments, Govt. of West Bengal, addressed the students and teachers of the University Law College on "Professional Ethics". During his visit Shri Halim also discussed the present problems of the Law College as regards inadequacy of full-time teaching and non-teaching posts and absence of other facilities. We have approached the State Government for immediate sanction of at least some full-time posts without which administration of the Law College is facing serious problems.

In the field of sports and games, the University Sports Board has been active as in the previous years. It organised the First Blue Distribution Ceremony this year and awarded this distinction to one athlete and 8 players who had excelled in different games. Shri P. K. Banerjee, the eminent footballer of one time was the Chief Guest on this occasion and his address was as inspiring as educative to the young sportsmen and women. The Cricket Association of Bengal entrusted the Sports Board for the second year in succession with the responsibility of conducting the Central Coaching Camp, in which 30 trainees from different districts of West Bengal received instruction from expert coaches from the CAB, The visit of Shri Pankaj Roy, the eminent ex-Cricketer, and Shri S.K. Chakrabarty, Chairman of the District Committee, CAB at the Coaching Camp was highly encouraging to the trainees. We are expecting that the CAB will decide to construct an Indoor Cricket Pitch in the Campus for the benefit of the young cricket players of North Bengal.

Inter-College Tournaments in Table-Tennis, Football and Cricket, were organised at the Campus. In Table-Tennis, Siliguri College of Commerce won the Championship both in the Team and individual men's events while in the Womens' individual event, Darjeeling Govt. College was the winner. In football, Alipurduar College and Siliguri College of Commerce were joint-Champions. In Cricket, the finalists were Siliguri College of Commerce and Siliguri College. The former won in an exciting finish.

In the Inter-College Athletic meet this year, there were students from 13 Colleges. Here again the Siliguri College of Commerce regained the Championship in the boys' section, while Alipurduar College won it in the girls' section. Malda Women's College got the individual championship in the girls' section. Three students, two from Siliguri College of Commerce and one from Tufanganj Mahavidyalaya shared the individual Championship in the boys' section. Our University team contested in the Inter-University Tournaments in Table-Tennis, Badminton, Football and Cricket. Their performance were in some respects encouraging but, I am afraid, there is lot more to be desired.

The North Bengal University Students' Association organised a symposium on "Role of mother tongue as a medium of education" and a cultural programme besides the inter-class sports tournament for post-graduate students. One of our students won the best speakers' prize at the all India debate organised by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture at Calcutta.

Gentlemen and ladies, having stated what have been achieved in the academic and sports fields, I cannot say that these are enough or upto our expectations. Progress in different spheres naturally depends upon the intensity of our effort and continuous application. For a permanent record and a comparative assessment, Annual Reports are very helpful. For the first time we have got our Annual Report prepared for the year 1978-79, which is in the Press. The first issue of the Biannual journal of the University has been published. The Second issue is being printed. In spite of all this, I must admit that we have not been able to do much for the improvement of academic standards in the Colleges. Notwithstanding resource constraints, I believe there is scope for meeting the challenge even within the existing resources. Timely publication of examination results is sometimes causing serious difficulties. In this respect also the teaching community has a positive role to play. Ultimately, adequate resources for maintenance and developmental purposes can be claimed if there is evidence that primary responsibilities are being shouldered by us with due sincerity and zeal. This must not only be expressed as a principle but manifested in our day to day work. I sincerely believe that every member of the teaching fraternity can rise to the occasion individually and as a team. There is need, if I may say so, for extolling the modest virtue of loyalty not only to one's profession, but also to one's immediate environment, to the faculty, to the college and to the University.

In the end, I would like to record and acknowledge with appreciation the helpful co-operation that I have received from all sections of the University community in discharging my responsibilities during the year.