



**Address**  
**by the**  
**Vice-Chancellor**



*Honourable Chancellor Sri Viren J. Shah, Respected Chief Guest Dr. Prithwish Nag, Surveyor General of India, Members of the Court, Members of the Executive Council and other Authorities of the University, the Recipients of Honours and Degrees, Members of the Faculties, Students, Research Scholars, and esteemed Guests :*

On behalf of the University of North Bengal I have this privilege to welcome you all at the 36th Annual Convocation. For the last four decades our University had been playing the catalytic role for development of higher education in six districts of North Bengal and the neighbouring state of Sikkim. The University pledges to fulfil the aspirations of the people of North Bengal and Sikkim in emancipating better future through human resource development in the region. The region has many constraints relating to economic and social development. Constraints had been many, and still exist today. In spite of all limitations the University resolved a path of struggle to overcome the obstacles and hazards on its way. Our endeavour for the excellence in various branches of higher learning still continues surging over many hurdles.

#### *Award of Degrees and Diplomas*

As suggested by our Honourable Chancellor the University has decided to confer degrees for two consecutive years in updating the award of degrees. In this 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation the Court will confer degrees to 714 & 771 postgraduate and 13,968 & 15,356 undergraduate students for the examinations held in 2001 & 2002 and 2002 & 2003 respectively. P.G. Diplomas will be conferred to 90 students for their success in various professional examinations. The University Medals and Endowment Medals / Prizes will be awarded to 58 & 60 P.G. and 74 & 78 U.G. students as a recognition for their academic excellence for the P.G. examinations held in 2001 & 2002 and U.G. examinations in 2002 & 2003. This year the Court has proposed to award Ph. D. degree in various subjects to 48 successful candidates. M. Phil degree will be presented to 6 candidates. I congratulate the recipients of medals / prizes and all successful candidates and hope, they will prove their worthiness of such attainments.

Honourable Chancellor Sir, the Court of the University of North Bengal proposes to confer the Doctor of Literature ( *Honoris Causa* ) degree upon Dr. Indra Bahadur Rai for his outstanding contribution in Nepali literature and Sm. Kanak Mukherjee for her relentless struggle for empowerment of women in the country.



## A General Review of Activities During the Session 2003-04

### ***Normalisation of Academic Schedules :***

At the beginning of 2000 the academic session had been lagging behind by almost a year in P.G. courses due to inordinate delay in the publication of U.G. results. The University had been successful in reversing the trend of delayed results and published the results of B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. (Honours & General) examinations within the stipulated period of 45 to 90 days. The results of B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. (Honours) Part II examinations, 2003 were published on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2003, within 45 days from the last date of examinations. The results of B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. (Honours / General) Part I examinations, 2003 were published on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2003 within 87 days from the last date of examinations. The achievement has been appreciated by all concerned and benefited a large number of students who seek admission for higher education at the national level. The students had also been favoured in appearing at the S.S.C. and other competitive examinations for services. The sessions for M.A./M.Sc./M.Com. courses have become normal at par with other universities. The P.G. courses for the session, 2003 at the University started on 17th September, 2003.

### ***Introduction of New Courses, Upgradation of Courses and Revision of Curricula :***

- 1. In consideration of growing need for management education for the students of North Bengal region the University established the Department of Business Administration under Prof. Nurul Hasan Centre for Management Studies in 2003. The department is run under self-finance programme.*
- 2. The University felt the need of students for higher studies and decided to introduce P.G. Courses in lead colleges under this University. Botany and Zoology were taught for many years at Darjeeling Government College. In 2002 Nepali was introduced at P.G. level at Darjeeling Government College. From this session 2003-04 many subjects have been introduced at P.G. level – Bengali in Raiganj College, English and History in Malda College, Bengali and Commerce in Balurghat College and Bengali in A.C. College, Jalpaiguri.*
- 3. The University has introduced one year Diploma Course in 'Environmental Laws' under the Department of Law from this academic session of 2003.*
- 4. The University has introduced a six months Certificate Course in 'Museum Studies' at the A.K.M. Museum, North Bengal University from the month of August, 2003.*
- 5. The University has also introduced one year P.G. Diploma Course in 'Disaster Management' from this academic session, 2003.*
- 6. The University has conducted 7 Refresher Courses during the session 2003-04 for the university and college teachers in different subjects (namely, English, Commerce, Economics, Philosophy, Physics and Geography) supported by the University Grants Commission.*
- 7. The curricula for various subjects in M.A./M.Sc./M.Com. courses had been revised in tune with the model curricula from U.G.C. in 2002 – 2003.*



8. *The curricula for various subjects in B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. courses (Honours & General) have been revised in tune with the model curricula from U.G.C. and W.B. State Council of Higher Education and implemented from this academic session of 2003.*
9. *P.G. Diploma in Computer Application (PGDCA – one year), P.G. Diploma in Information Technology (PGDIT – one year) and Diploma in Multimedia Technology (DMT – one year) have been introduced under off-campus distance education mode in collaboration with Zee Interactive Learning Systems in November, 2003.*
10. *Post M.Sc. Certificate Course in 'Comprehensive Techniques in Experimental High Energy & Astrophysics' has been introduced in the High Energy & Cosmic Ray Centre from this session.*
11. *MOU was signed between the University and IBM, India on 20.6.2003 in presence of the Honourable Chief Minister of West Bengal. The MOU envisages curricula development at UG / PG level in Computer Science / I.T. courses, manpower training in emerging areas leading to global certification and placement of students. A meeting with the officials of IBM including Ms. Linda Couch, Head of Asia Pacific Region of IBM was held on 31.7.2003.*

### **Research Activities and Attainments of Recognition**

1. *There has been proliferation of research activities in recent years, particularly in the departments of Botany and Chemistry. The University Grants Commission recognized the departments of Botany, Chemistry and Philosophy for Departmental Research Support (DRS) under the Special Assistance Programme (SAP) in 2002-03. This is an achievement of worth in forty years of the University.*
2. *The University also received support from D.S.T., Govt. of India under the Faculty Improvement for Science & Technology (FIST) programme in 2003 for the departments of Chemistry and Physics. The departments of Chemistry and Physics received the grant of Rs.85 lac and Rs.37 lac respectively under this programme. The Department of Botany has also received a grant of Rs. 13 lac from D.S.T., Govt. of India under the Faculty Improvement for Science & Technology (FIST) programme in 2003-04.*
3. *The University acknowledges the distinctions received by the following teachers for their contributions in the subjects :*
  - a) *Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, Department of Philosophy received the 'Best Book in Philosophy Award' on his book 'Relation as Real : A Critique of Dharmakirti' from the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi for the year 2003-04.*
  - b) *Prof. K.K.Nandi, Department of Mathematics has been nominated as a TWAS-UNESCO Associate for the year 2003-04 and now visiting the Institute of Theoretical Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China.*
  - c) *Dr. B.C.Pal, Department of Physics has been nominated as a Visiting Associate of IUCAA, Pune for the period 2003-06.*



### **Major Research Projects :**

The research activities in the university indicate the pathways in achieving the goal of excellence. Our teachers in the university are working hard to promote research in various branches of knowledge, supported by various sponsors. It will be relevant to mention the number of major research projects in various departments.

Department	No. of Projects	Grant in Rupees (000)
Comp. Sc. & Appl.	02	900
Physics	01	337.4
Geography	03	4370
Botany	15	2750
Zoology	06	4568.48
Sociology	01	300
C.H.S.	01	500
History	01	50
C.D.S.	02	1813
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15588.880</b>

### **Seminar / Symposium / Special Lecture :**

1. State Level Workshop on 'Financial Management in the Universities', organised by the North Bengal University Officers' Association on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2003.
2. National Workshop on 'Sustainable Aquaculture Development in North Bengal', organised by the Department of Zoology on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.
3. National Seminar on 'Science & Technology Education Through Distance Education Mode', organised by the University of North Bengal in collaboration with the Association of Universities in West Bengal on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.
4. Sensitisation Programme for 'LSG officials and DGAHC representatives', organised by the Department of Law under the Environmental Law Management Capacity Project on 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.

5. *National Seminar on 'Assessment and Management of Bio-researches', organised by the Department of Zoology in collaboration with the Zoological Society, Kolkata on 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.*
6. *National Seminar on 'Compact Stars and Quark Gluons', organised by the Department of Physics on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2003.*
7. *Orientation Programme for 'Preparation of a Database in Local Languages of North Bengal', organised by the Centre for Studies in Local Languages & Culture, N. B. U. in collaboration with the Central Institute of Languages, Bhuwaneswar on 18-22nd August, 2003.*
8. *UGC Golden Jubilee Seminar on 'Policy Planning for Higher Education in India under the WTO & GATS Regime', organised by the University of North Bengal on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2003.*
9. *National Seminar on 'River Linking Project of the Government of India', organised by the University of North Bengal in association with the Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management and Centre for Environment & Development on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2003.*
10. *National Seminar on 'Decentralised Planning, Eco-development and Self-reliance Strategy as a Challenge to Poverty Alleviation', organised by the Department of Commerce in collaboration with the Regional Science Association on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2003.*
11. *National Seminar on 'Intellectual Property Rights and Patent Act', organised by the University of North Bengal in collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2003.*
12. *National Symposium on 'Intellectual Property Rights', organised by the Department of Law on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2003.*
13. *Silver Jubilee Seminar on 'Himalayan Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', organised by the Centre of Himalayan Studies on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2003.*
14. *Fifth Golden Jubilee Lecture of the Royal Society of Chemistry (Eastern India Section) on 'Growth and Development of Biotechnology During the Last Five Decades and Its Future Prospects', delivered by Dr. P.K. Ghosh, Former Adviser to D.B.T., Government of India and organised by the Department of Botany on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003.*
15. *National Seminar on 'Language and Representation', organised by the Department of Philosophy under SAP in Philosophy on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2004.*
16. *National Seminar on 'Panchayat Experience in West Bengal', organised by the North Bengal University Officers' Association on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2004.*
17. *National Seminar on 'People of North Bengal and Adjoining Region', organised by the Department of Anthropology in association with the Ambedkar Chair of Calcutta University on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.*
18. *National Symposium on 'Current Perspectives in Stress Biology', organised by the Department of Botany on 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.*



19. *A course of Lectures on 'Meaning and Truth' by the Visiting Fellow Prof. A. Kanthamani, Professor of Philosophy, Calicut University, Kerala under Special Assistance Programme (U.G.C.) in the Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University on 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.*

## **Infrastructural Development**

### **Computer Applications**

With support from the University Grants Commission and State Government the University had taken initiatives for the application of ICT for modernisation and development. The following actions had been taken :

1. *LAN was laid in the University campus connecting all the departments with support from U.G.C. and the state government. The University is connected with a lease line for the access of internet. The internet connections have also been extended for use by the students in all the teaching departments including the library.*
2. *The programme for installation of a VSAT (512 kbp) has already been undertaken with support from U.G.C. This NETWORK will connect all the leading university libraries of the country as a part of the programme of UGC-INFONET. The teachers, research scholars and students of the university will be benefited for access of electronic library on-line. For this programme a grant of Rs.27 lac has been received from U.G.C.*

### **Development of Library**

1. *The Central Library building has been extended to house the journal section. During the last four years a large number of books and journals had been added to the collections. Internet connections were also provided during this period.*
2. *The University has now decided to develop the seminar libraries in all teaching departments so that the students can access the text books more conveniently.*
3. *Reprographic facilities will also be strengthened in the library and teaching departments.*
4. *8571 books amounting to Rs.46.50 lac have been purchased during the year 2003-04 utilising the 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of the Xth Plan U.G.C. Grant (till December, 2003). The Library now subscribes to 600 periodicals including 160 foreign journals.*
5. *The Library has started a computer section for the exclusive use of the students providing internet facilities with ten PCs.*
6. *The Library will be connecting other university libraries in India and retrieving all academic journals in electronic format very soon under the UGC InfoNet Programme.*

### **Development of Laboratories**

1. *The laboratories in all science departments, particularly in the departments of*

*Chemistry, Botany, Physics and Biotechnology have been equipped with modern and sophisticated instruments with support from UGC, DST, DBT and other sponsors. FTNMR has been installed in the department of Chemistry in 2003.*

- 2. The University has utilised the '1st instalment of the Xth Plan U.G.C. Grant' of Rs. 31.50 lac for the purchase of laboratory equipment by December, 2003.*
- 3. The University has also been providing a fund of Rs. 27.70 lac during the period 2003-04 for improvement of the departmental infrastructure including laboratories.*

## **Challenges Ahead**

The universities in India are confronting a challenge – the challenge from globalisation. The threat of globalisation is a real challenge to the universities in India. A global debate has been initiated whether the education will be controlled by the market forces? Many academicians in the developed countries opposed the WTO prescription on globalisation of education. In a developing country like India we will deviate from the goal for social and economic transformation, as perceived by our national leaders. The globalisation is a real threat to us. “There is a substantial risk that Indian universities and their students could end up as serious losers in the global higher education game” (Arnold, 2001).

The enormous growth of higher education in India for the last fifty years had been possible with total financial support from the governments - mostly from the states. In most of the universities more than 90 percent of the expenditure is met from public fund. Since independence the public financing of higher education was linked to promotion of higher education for masses. The National Policy on Education, 1986 emphasised education to be :

- i) A process of empowerment, which is to be promoted through the development of knowledge, skills and values (Education for Development), and
- ii) An instrument of social change that provides means for upward economic and social mobility (Education for Equality).

To maintain this scenario in higher education, i.e. provision of access and promotion of equity, public funding is increasingly demanded. At present the central government funding has been trickling and in the coming years financial stringency is likely to be deepened. In a discussion paper in 1997 by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, the expenditure on higher education was indicated as a ‘non-merit’ subsidy implying that its benefits were restricted to the individual. This goes against the national policy on higher education in India and has been contested in analytical papers by Desai (1998), Powar (1998) and others. It is true that the cost of higher education borne by the students appears to be very low, compared to many countries in the world. Both the union and state governments are confronted with deep crisis in funding higher education due to rising expenditure. Let us aim at judicious solution.



The universities in India can strive for expanding horizon of knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if supported by optimum infrastructure through public funding and corporate spending for research and development in the universities. Many of the universities in the west receive large scale funding from the corporate sector and other endowments in research programmes for mutual benefits. Industry-University partnership in India is miserably lacking. The corporate sector in India must come forward assisting the universities, particularly in research promotion, for mutual benefits.

## **Epilogue**

On behalf of the Court of University of North Bengal I express my deep gratitude and thanks to our Honourable Chancellor Sri Viren J. Shah for his keen interest and active support for all sphere of activities in the University. I convey my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Prithwish Nag, Surveyor General of India and look forward for his generous help to our University. We have been privileged by his presence in delivering the illuminating address as Chief Guest at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation.

On behalf of the Court of North Bengal University I propose vote of thanks to all present at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation and also seek their support in future.

**Thank you.**