

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

30th ANNUAL CONVOCATION



Address by

R. G. Mukerjee

Vice-Chancellor

RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR

March 24, 1998.

Honourable Chancellor, respected Chief Guest, members of the Court, the Executive Council and other authorities of the University, my colleagues—teaching, non-teaching and administrative, graduates, convoked and assembled for conferment of degrees, guests, students and research scholars :

In this Golden Jubilee year of the country's independence, the University of North Bengal is holding its thirtieth Annual Convocation. May I accord you a hearty welcome to this solemn function.

It is my proud privilege to extend a special welcome to Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer, Dr. Saroj Ghosh, Sri Somnath Hore and Sri Samsur Rahaman who have taken the trouble to attend this Convocation on our invitation as esteemed guests. The University is honoured by honouring these great personalities by conferring doctoral degrees (Honoris Causa).

In this Convocation, Ph. D. degree will be awarded to 29 successful researchers, 5 students will receive M. Phil degrees, Post-Graduate and Graduate diplomas will go to 725 and 11,363 students respectively while prizes and medals will be handed over to 114 students for their creditable performance in different examinations. I wish them success in life.

I am glad to report that during the last one year academic Departments and Centres have in addition to maintaining the usual standard of teaching, carried on meaningful research works and related programmes—both individually and collectively. Here is a brief outline of their activities.

Department of Physics

A number of reputed scholars have visited the Department for seminar talks. Prof. S. D Maharaj, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, delivered a lecture on "Conformal Symmetry and Integrability". Dr. N. L. Karmakar, University of Western Sydney, Australia, currently Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada, talked on "IT-re-engineered organisations with special reference to global universities". Dr, Subir Sarkar, Tata Institute

of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, discussed "High-energy Lepton Experiments". Dr. Prabasaj Paul, Physics Department, University of Buca, Cameroon, shared his views on "Physics Through Random Walk".

The Faculty members and research staff of the Department have visited various Academic Institutions in connection with research and other academic activities.

Prof. R. Paul attended, presented papers and chaired session at European Liquid Crystals Conference at Zakopane, Poland, gave an invited talk at "Condensed Matter Days '97" at Physics Department, Visva-Bharati University; and delivered a talk and chaired a session at Indian Liquid Crystals Conference at Jammu.

Dr. (Mrs) S. Paul presented a paper at European Liquid Crystals Conference at Zokopane, Poland; and presented a paper at Liquid Crystals Conference at Jammu.

Dr. S. K. Ghosal gave the key-note address on "Teaching in Absentia : Some Evolving Paradigms"—at the International conference on "Crossing Cultural Frontiers : The Communication Industries in the Asia-Pacific Region", jointly organised by University of Canberra and Thammasat University, Thailand held at Canberra Australia. He also delivered a talk on "Teaching paradigms using information technology" at the University of western Sydney Sydney, Australia.

Prof. S. Mukherjee gave an invited talk in the convention of Indian Physics Teachers' Association, held in Midnapore College. He also participated in the International Workshop held at Romar Research Institute, Bangalore, and the GR-15 International Conference held at IUCAA, and presented papers.

Dr. M. K. Das presented a paper entitled "Neutron Scattering Studies on Liquid Crystals" at the Solid State Physics Symposium 1997, held at Cochin University of Science & Technology, Kerala.

Dr. B. C. Pal participated in IG-15 International Conference on Gravitation and Cosmology held at IUCCA and presented a paper.

Dr. P. K. Mondal joined the Department of Material Engineering University of Sheffield, as a Research Associate for six months.

Department of Chemistry

About twenty research articles have been published by the teachers of this Department in various National and International journals.

Dr. U. K. Saha (ex-student and recipient of Alexander Humboldt Fellowship, Germany) and Professor J. Chattopadhyay (Bio-organic Chemistry, Uppsala University, Sweden) visited the Department and delivered lectures.

Dr. B. Das (Sr. Lecturer) of this Department received a Post-doctoral fellowship and joined the University of California, Berkley, USA.

Teachers of this Department have attended a good number of seminars and delivered invited talks at various reputed centres of the country.

Dr. B. Basu gave a lecture on invitation from the Royal Society of Chemistry (Eastern India Section). He participated in the 'Workshop on Patent Research', organised by WBDST and DST (Gol) and gave a lecture on 'Winter School on Organometallic Chemistry', organised by DST (Gol).

Prof. B. P. Pradhan participated in the 17th National Symposium on Natural Products at Calcutta University. Dr. P. Bandyopadhyay presented a paper in the conference on "Modern Trends in Inorganic Chemistry" at IIT, Kanpur and Dr. S. N. Bose presented a paper at the Indian Science Congress at Hyderabad.

Among other activities the Department is exploring possibilities of launching, in collaboration with West Bengal Pollution Control Board, programmes for checking pollution in this region. In order to ascertain fitness of our laboratories for pollution control activities in North Bengal region, an expert team from SBPCB, headed by Prof. R. K. Podder, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, visited the Department in November, 1997.

The defunct Kerosine Gas Plant of this Department has been successfully recommissioned and laboratories are running with the gas mainly from this plant. This is a commendable achievement, indeed congratulations for the initiative.

Department of Mathematics

The Department of Mathematics, in collaboration with the Deptt. of Applied Mathematics, Calcutta University organised the "Instructional Workshop in Applied Mathematics".

Dr. B. Das of this Department presented a paper in the National Seminar on "Continuum Mechanics", held at the Department of Mathematics, Jadavpur University.

Prof. S. Karanjai attended the national symposium on "Recent Trends in Mathematics and Applications" held at Kalyani University in November, 1997, chaired a session, and he also participated in the "International Symposium on Mathematical Physics in memory of S. Chandrasekhar", in the special session on Abdus Salam, held at Calcutta, from 28th December, 1997 to January 1, 1998.

Dr. S. K. Bishnu, Prof. S. P. Pal and Dr. B. Bhattacharya participated in the Instructional Workshop (UGC-SAP) Deptt. of Mathematics, North Bengal University, in Feb. 24-4th March, 1997. Dr. Bishnu, Prof. S. B. Karanjai and Dr. Bhattacharya delivered a good number of lectures. Dr. M. K. Sen presented a paper at a seminar on "Discrete Mathematics" held at Karnataka University in September, 1997. B. Bhattacharya visited Germany for 3 months under Indo-German lateral collaboration and exchange programme and also delivered a lecture on "Wavebreaking and not pasticle generations in a laser produced plasma".

Department of Botany

Among various achievements of this Department the most noteworthy are : (a) that it has received a grant of Rs. 3.5 lakhs from the Ministry of Environment and Forestes, Govt. of India, for the improvement of the existing NBU Botanic Garden (b) that Dr. A. P. Das has been elected a Council Member of the Indian Association of Angiosperm Taxonomy and (c) that Dr. B. N. Chakraborty and Dr. Usha Chakraborty have developed methods for efficient screening of the germplasm for resistance against foliar fungal pathogens which were selected for presentation in Indo-British Trade Exhibition in London.

Teachers of the Department have either completed or are running several important research projects. Dr. A. P. Das has

conducted a research project on "Taxonomical and ecological survey of angiospermic climbers of Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas" (sponsored by UGC). Dr. P. K. Sarkar has been associated with a CSIR sponsored project on "Microbial decaffeination of Coffee and black tea", a project on "Studies of Kinema : microbiological and biochemical changes accompanying fermentation (phase—III)", sponsored by IFS, Stockholm, and a DBT-sponsored project on "An innovative phytoimmunological approach for early detection of foliar diseases of tea and its implication in screening disease-resistant clones for in vitro regeneration". Dr. Usha Chakraborty and Dr. Biswanath Chakraborty have been conducting two projects, one on "Biochemical and serological changes in soyabean resulting from interaction between Bradyrhizobium and Trichoderma affecting the development of root rot disease" (UGC sponsored) and the other, a CSIR project on "Abiotic and biotic stress responses of tea plants and their biochemical characterization".

In connection with research programmes Dr. M. J. R. Nout of Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands and Prof. N. K. Pal of Rajshahi University, Bangladesh, have visited the Deptt. While visiting this Department Dr. Nout gave two seminars on (a) 'The Department of Food Technology of the Wageningen Agricultural University and its research activities' and (b) "Microbiology and process of development for the manufacture of tempe, a fungal fermented food", and Dr. A. K. Paul of Calcutta University gave a lecture on "Poly-B-hydroxybutyrate—a biodegradable thermoplastic of microbial origin". Prof. K. B. Datta, Prof. P. K. Basu, Dr. A. P. Das, Dr. B. N. Chakraborty and Sri Ranadhir Chakraborty of this Department have attended a number of seminars, symposia and conferences and presented papers. Dr. A. P. Das, Dr. P. K. Sarkar, Sri Ranadhir Chakraborty and Dr. B. N. Chakraborty and Usha Chakraborty have published a good number of articles in books and in the leading journals of national and international repute.

Department of Zoology

The Department held a National Seminar on "Perspective of Biotechnology in Animal Research in India". Many delegates from outside and the teachers of the Department participated in the seminar.

Prof. A. K. Chakraborty of this Department participated in the Annual Conference of Indian Immunology Society at Calcutta, delivered a lecture and acted as Chairman in a session there.

Dr. A. Mukherjee attended the Golden Jubilee National Symposium of Zoological Society, Calcutta, and presented a paper entitled "Biology for Sustainable Development". He also attended, as a resource person, the Jaipur Convention on Biodiversity and the "National Workshop on Capacity Building in Taxonomy in India" organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India.

Besides, Prof. A. K. Chakraborty, Dr. Debesh Ch. Deb, Dr. A. Mukherjee, Dr. C S. Chakraborty, Dr. J. Pal have published a good number of research articles in leading Indian and foreign journals.

Magurmary Fishery Complex

Here I would like to make a special mention about the Magurmari Fishery Complex. Under the Jawhar Rojgar Yojana Programme this Complex has been built up on a marshy land of Magurmari River area within the Campus of the University. About 1.5 ha. of land has been reclaimed for the purpose. The work has been done by the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad as per the plan prepared by the Department of Zoology, NBU, with the advice of Dr. R N. Sengupta, Retd. Joint Director of Fisheries, Govt. of West Bengal. The Executive Council of North Bengal University has decided to name it as "Krishnanath Fishery Research and Training Centre" as a mark of respect to the memory of late Professor Krishnanath Chattopadhyay, who, as the then Vice-Chancellor of this University, took keen interest in implementing the project.

The objective of this complex is to produce fish seed, distribute the same to small and marginal fish farmers at low price, and train them on modern scientific fish farming, undertake research work befitting the agroclimatic condition of North Bengal for sustainable fish production and to motivate the students and interested persons of this area to adopt fish farming as an avenue of self-employment. I thank the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad for their kind assistance and congratulate my colleagues in this Department, particularly Dr. J. Pal and Dr. S. Barat, the Coordinators, for their initiative and commendable team work.

Department of Geography & Applied Geography

Prof. Majid Hassain of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, visited the Department and delivered a lecture on "Implication of Agricultural Development in India".

A Research Project on 'Socio-Economic status of the Fruit Cultivators in Darjeeling District of West Bengal' funded by ICSSR, New Delhi, is going on under the directorship of Dr. M. M. Jana. Dr. S. Sarkar is associated with an international Research Project on "Land-slides and Flood Problems of Darjeeling Himalaya" along with Prof. L. Starkel, Prof. W. Froehlich and Dr. R. Soja of Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow and Prof. S. R. Basu of Calcutta University.

Dr. M. M. Jana of the Department presented papers in an international seminar at Banaras Hindu University in December, 1997, the international seminar of Indian Cartographical Association in Punjab University, Chandigarh, in November, 1997, and the national seminar of Indian Institute of Geomorphology in January, 1998.

Dr. S. Sarkar visited Poland from July 31 to August 27, 1997, under International collaboration/exchange programme of Indian National Science Academy and Polish Academy of Sciences, and visited Bologna University, Italy, to attend the IV International Conference on Geomorphology from August 28th to Sept. 4th, 1997.

Department of Computer Science & Applications

Dr. R. K. Samanta published/presented 10 research articles in different national and international journals/conferences. One such article was published jointly with Dr. N. L. Karmakar, University of Western Sydney, Australia. Another article was published with Prof. P. Dutta Majumdar, I. S. I Calcutta, as a co-author. Dr. Samanta visited Victoria University of Technology, Australia, for presenting a paper in the 3rd International Conference on Modelling and Simulation at VUT, Melbourne, Australia.

Sri J. K. Mondal published/presented 3 research articles in different national and international journals/conferences. Sri S. Das published/presented 2 research articles in national and international journals/conferences. Sri Das has also attended a national conference on "Combinatorial Mathematics" at Karnataka University and an International Conference on VLSI at Chennai.

Dr. S. C. Pal, an officer in the Department, has published/presented 3 research articles in different national and international journals/conferences.

Department of Bengali

The Department organised a two-day seminar on "Modern Bengali Novel". Eminent writers like Sri Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Sri Shyamal Gangopadhyay, Sri Nabarun Bhattacharya and literary critics like Professor Ashrukumar Sikdar, Dr. Sumita Chakraborty and many others participated in the seminar.

Bangla Bhasa Divas was observed on 21st February, 1997. The reputed novelist Sri Amiyabhusan Majumdar was felicitated on this occasion.

Prof. Bimal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Professor in Bengali, Calcutta University, delivered a series of lectures as a Visiting Professor.

Department of History

Teachers of the Department attended some national and international seminars last year. Prof. J. Kar presented a paper in the national seminar on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Some nationally and internationally reputed scholars and academicians delivered lectures in the Department on various themes. Prof. Syed Anwar Hussian, Director General of Bangla Academy, delivered a lecture on "Aspects of Fundamentalism of South Asia".

Shri R. N. Bhattacharya, I. G., B. S. F., delivered a lecture on "Some Aspects of Indian Proto-History".

The Department organised a one day inter-disciplinary seminar on "Societality, Social Transformation and Prospective Society : The Indian Post-India". A number of teachers from various Departments of this University participated in the seminar.

Department of Philosophy

P. M. Stassen, Director, Indo-German Cultural Exchange, New Delhi, delivered two lectures on (i) Political Philosophy and (ii) Philosophy of Language. Prof. Suresh Chandra, Resident Fellow, ICPR, Lucknow, lectured on (i) Critique of Culture: Wittgenstein and Gandhi and (ii) Religion & History: Gandhi & Bankim on Bhagavad-Gita.

Dr. Pabitra Roy of this Department completed an ICPR sponsored research on "Philosophy of Rabindra Nath Tagore"; Dr. Manjulika Ghosh and Dr. Raghunath Ghosh pursued research works on "Ethics and Knowledge" and "Sambandha as a category of Real", respectively.

Besides, the teachers of this Department attended a number of national and international seminars and conferences. Dr. Pabitra Roy delivered the Buddha Jayanti lecture on "The Buddha came to Me" at the Indian Philosophical Congress, Jabalpur. He also presented a paper on "Myth & Symbolism in Subhas Chandra Bose" in a national seminar organised by the Subhas Chandra Bose Birth Centenary Committee, North Bengal University. Dr. Manjulika Ghosh presented a paper on "The Artist & Society" at the Indian Philosophical Congress, Jabalpur, and another on "Relativism, Revisited" at the UGC-sponsored National Seminar on Relativism at the Jadavpur University. Dr. Raghunath Ghosh visited the Hiroshima University, Japan, and presented a paper entitled "Is Relation Really Unreal? : A Critique of Dharmakirti" in the 3rd International Conference. His other paper was on 'Synthesis of Values in Bhagavad Gita' read in the Department of Philosophy, Utkal University. Dr. Chandidas Bhattacharya presented a paper on "The Logic of Commitment" in the seminar on 'Science, Philosophy and Society', arranged at Bangla Academy; and a paper on "How to Treat the First Line of Grey's Elegy" at a seminar arranged by Rabindra Bharati University. He presented yet another paper on "The Significance of Ideology" in a seminar arranged by Indian Academy of Social Sciences, Lucknow.

Department of Economics

The Department hosted a UGC National Seminar on 'Towards the New Century' which was attended, among others, by Professors Prabhat and Utsa Patnaik of J. N. U. as well as other eminent resource persons from Osmania University, the International Institute of Development Studies (IIDS-Calcutta), and other universities of the State as well as Economics teachers of the colleges. A total of 15 research papers were presented at this national seminar, all of which surveyed the nature and potential directions of Development Economics in the context of the post-reform, post-globalization world. Of the papers 6 were contributed by teachers of the Department.

The National Seminar was followed by a one-day University Level Workshop on Research Methodology, intended primarily at reporting

ongoing and recently-completed research work at the Department having special focus on the North Bengal region, as also at strengthening the expertise of research scholars. Nine research papers were presented at the Workshop, with 4 papers from the Departmental faculty, including 3 keynote papers.

Prof. Sankar Dhar of the Faculty of Management, Calcutta University, presented a special invitation lecture on "The Environment in Farm Management: New Dimensions relating the Modelling of Environmental Externality in Agricultural Economics". Prof. Rabindranath Bhattacharya of the Department of Economics, Kalyani University, gave a special lecture on "To Collude or Not to Collude: Game & Market Strategy". Sri Pinaki Chakraborty, Reserve Bank of India—Fellow at the Centre for Development Studies at Ullloor, Trivandrum, delivered a special lecture on "Sustainability of Domestic Debt Accumulation in India". Dr. Nairanjana Dasgupta of the Department of Statistics, Washington State University, presented two special invitation lectures on "Modelling and Use of Non-Parametric Estimation Methods in Economics".

Sri Jeta Sankrityayana and Smt. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee were invited to present papers on "Land-Man Relations in Mountain Production System" and "Use of Biomass in Energy Planning", in the seminar on "Institution of Agro-Climatic Regional Planning in Darjeeling district", organised at Darjeeling by the Planning Commission in Association with ATI, Calcutta, and the District Administration. Sri Sankrityayana and Smt. Roy Mukherjee also served as Discussion Commissioners at the 32nd Public Hearing on Environment & Deptt. (PCED-New Delhi). Smt. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee visited the Maison des Sciences d'Home in Paris, France, under the programme Franco-Indien, for specialised research relating to 'Planning on the French National Railways (SNCF) & Its Relevance to the Indian Railways'. She also delivered a series of invitation lectures on "Gender, Women & Children in Developing Society" at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, and at Birkbeck College under the University of London, and on "Energy, Forestry & Integrated Mountain Development in the Himalayas" at the Faculty of Silviculture, University of Valladolid, Spain.

Nineteen research papers were either published or presented in seminars by faculties of the Department. Two teachers of the Deptt. who had been associated as Faculty Consultants with the one-year

Project on Village-Health Awareness, organised under joint auspices of the Centre for Adult & Continuing Education, North Bengal University, and the State Resource Centre, West Bengal, have compiled, computed and written the Final Project Report, which has since been published.

Department of Political Science

The Department conducted the sixth UGC Refresher Course in March and April, 1997. Professor Pradip Kumar Sengupta was the course Co-ordinator. There were five outstation resource persons besides the local ones.

Sri A. K. Datta of this Department has completed a research project on Bhutan. Two other projects are being carried out—one by Professor S. N. Roy on "A Comparative Study of Rural Development Programmes in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh" (UGC project) and the other by Sri A. K. Datta on "International Economics Co-operation in a post Bipolar World" (ICSSR project).

Several research papers have been published by the teachers of this Department in the leading journals of Political Science. Faculty members also delivered lectures at different seminars during this period. Sri D. Chakraborty participated in the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Darjeeling Govt. College.

Prof. D. J. Bhowmick was awarded Visiting Professorship under UGC scheme and he worked in that capacity during the month of June, 1997, in Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology

The Department, in collaboration with N. C. E. R. T. New Delhi, organised a workshop for revision of syllabus of Sociology of XI-XII standard.

Dr. D. K. Singha Roy, Head of Sociology Unit, Indira Gandhi Open University, New Delhi, delivered a special lecture on "Distant Education : Prospect and Retrospect".

Prof. R. K. Bhadra of the Department acted as President of the Sociology section of XXI Social Science Congress held at Thanjuvar. He also published two books.

Dr. Namita Chowdhury presented a paper on "Darjeeling—Sikkim Himalaya Region : A ethnographic overview" in the seminar on "Eastern Himalayan Culture", organised by Centre for Communication & Cultural Action and Nepali Sahitya Sammelan.

Prof. S. R. Mondal published two books and five articles in reputed journals. Prof. Mondal is carrying on an ICSSR-sponsored Research Project entitled "Embroidery works and Embroiders of Bengal". He delivered a lecture on "Ethnographic Museum" at the A. K. M. Museum, North Bengal University. Besides, Professor Mondal contributed a paper titled "Man and Environment Issues : Ecological consciousness and Role of Traditional Knowledge" in the seminar on Man and Environment, organised by the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, on 8th March '97 and presented a paper on "Muslim People at an Urban setting : Aspects of their Economy and Society", organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, Calcutta, on 9th March, 1997. He also attended a seminar on Social Transformation and contributed a paper on "Globalisation Challenges and opportunities : The Indian Scenario", organised by the Department of History, NBU, on 18th January, 1997.

Dr. Sanjay Roy published one article and presented a paper entitled "Globalisation and its effect on Indian Society" in the seminar organised by the Department of History, NBU on 18. 1. 98.

Dr. Mita Bhadra presented a paper on "Lost childhood of the Lesser child—Girl child Labour in India", in the National Seminar on "A New Strategy for Equity and Development for the 21st Century", organised by Indian Society for Community Education, Ahmedabad, in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Federal Republic of Germany and Gujarat Vidyapith. She is conducting a major research project entitled "Status of Scheduled Caste Women : A case study of Rajbansis of West Bengal", sponsored by ICSSR and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

Centre for Adult & Continuing Education

In collaboration with the Population Education Resource Centre (PERC), University of Burdwan' an Orientation Programme on "the New Thrust Areas of Population Education for the teachers of affiliated colleges" was organised. The lecture papers of the programme were later brought out in the form of a book.

A 5-day Training Workshop on "Medicinal Plants, Fruits & Vegetables and Flower Cultivation" was organised jointly by the Centre for Adult & Continuing Education and the School of Fundamental Research, Calcutta, for the NGO representatives and progressive farmers of the six districts of North Bengal and the district of Murshidabad.

As a part of National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) 1996-97 a survey was conducted on the theme "Medicinal plants" in six villages of Siliguri Sub-Division, and lectures were organised on medicinal plants at Kalipada Ghosh Terai Mahavidyalaya and at Adhikary Krishna Kanta High School. Herbarium sheets of the specimen of plants collected during the course of survey were prepared and the report of the activities was brought out in the form of a book. The Centre was commended for its very distinguished performance and was awarded a trophy in a function held by the School of Fundamental Research, Calcutta.

The Centre organised a "Health Awareness Campaign" in collaboration with the State Resource Centre, West Bengal, at Gossainpur Gram Panchayat of Naxalbari Block, during the period July 1996 to June 1997. The report of the activities will be brought out in the form of a book shortly.

Centre for Himalayan Studies

In November, 1997 the Centre organised its first ever International Seminar on "Foreign Relations of Bhutan". Two special lectures were delivered at the Centre by Prof. Hussain of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and Col. Gulia of Sikkim. Prof. B. P. Mishra attended a seminar at the Deptt. of International Relations, Jadavpur University, and contributed a paper titled 'Security Problems in N. E. India'. Dr. R. Sahu published one research paper and contributed papers in three seminars at Itanagar, Darjeeling and Punjab. Dr. (Mrs) M. Chowdhury attended one seminar at Darjeeling and presented a paper. Sri J. M. Majumdar (Documentation Officer) published a paper on the "Language & Literature Studies in the Eastern Himalaya—A select Bibliography".

Akshaya Kumar Maitreya Museum

The Museum Committee has adopted some short term and long term programmes and has taken up their implementation in right

earnest. The Museum arranged two popular lectures, one by Prof. Pronoy Kundu on "Dancing in India", and the other by Prof. S. R. Mondal on "Ethnological Profile of India". An exploration team under Dr. M. Bhattacharya, Secretary, Museum Committee, went off to Raiganj on 23.1.98. In the four day trip, the explorers did valuable field-work in about ten different places and studied antiquities store in four police stations. The antiquities in all these sites were recorded in detail, photographed and some put into video cassettes.

University Library

During the year the University Library accessioned 4546 books and bound periodicals. The total collection of the library has gone up to 1,20,261. The library subscribed to 561 periodicals, 256 of which are foreign publication while 305 are Indian publication. A computer system for INFLIBNET, INTERNET & E-Mail will be commissioned shortly in order to modernise the library information user system.

Cultural Tourism and Management

The students of Cultural Tourism visited Aurangbad, Ajanta, Elora, Mumbai and Goa for their field-work and studies of tourism management by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and Goa Tourism Development Corporation. They were trained in the Mahananda wild-life Sanctuary in wild-life management and wild-life tourism. The students of this self-financing diploma course organised a seminar entitled "Tour, Tourism and Target" in which, along with other dignitaries, the Hon'ble Forest Minister, the Hon'ble Minister of Municipal Affairs and a representative of DGHC addressed the students. The students presented seven papers on the basis of local field-work to promote tourism in North Bengal.

Sports Board

The Board sent the NBU team to take part in Ajoy Ghosh Memorial Cricket Tournament. In the table-tennis tournament the NBU Men's team won three consecutive matches and reached the pool final where they lost narrowly to Manipur. The women's team qualified for the Inter-Zone tournament but lost in the all India final phase. The football team also gave satisfactory performance. For the first time the NBU Khokho team (men's) took part in the Inter-University

tournament. As a debutant, they put up a good show. The NBU team consisting of 6 athletes took part in the All India Inter University Athletic Meet. Inter-College Badminton, Table-Tennis and Football tournaments were organised by the Board. Apart from the normal activities run by the Sports Board, a few National and International events were also organised in the University.

North Bengal University Women's Association

North Bengal University Women's Association organised competitions for children and a seminar on "Women in pre-and post-Independence India : Achievements and Failures". It held its annual fete for all the campus-dwellers and the students. The Association donated Rs. 500/- to the school for orphans run by Ramkrishna Vivekanda Ashram, Sahudangi. Its children's library and music school are doing a good work.

Cultural Committee

This Committee was set up with the aim of promoting cultural activities and building up a healthy environment on the campus. The Committee organised a function on the Bengali New Year Day. It observed birth days of Rabindra Nath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in befitting manner.

As part of the programme to celebrate the birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a three-day national seminar on "Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, India and the World" was organised. Eminent scholars and researchers participated and presented valuable papers which triggered off lively discussion and debate. The concluding item of the celebration was installation of Netaji's statue on the campus which was unveiled by our Hon'ble Chancellor this very morning.

Normalisation of post-graduate session is continuing to be one of our major concerns although considerable progress has been made. Examinations were advanced from November to August last year for which the summer vacation was suspended. This year, the examinations are scheduled for June. I put on record my appreciation for the spontaneous co-operation received in this matter from all quarters. In the under-graduate level also examinations are being held on normal schedule. But I must admit that in the matter of publication of results problems still persist. Although in most of the cases

results were published within the desired period, there are some examinations, mainly in Arts and Social Sciences, where we lagged behind the schedule mainly because of failure of a handful of examiners. While congratulating the large majority of teachers who have given their best for timely publication of results, I once again extend my appeal to those few who have not come up to the mark and whose lack of response has caused much suffering to the concerned students to shake off their hesitation and help us solve this problem.

The UGC team of experts visited this University in March, 1997, in connection with the 9th Five-Year Plan support. We prepared our proposals for development with cautious optimism. We had a belief that in terms of the guidelines adopted by the Central authorities, our University would get preferential treatment. Without being very ambitious our requirements were fixed around Rs. 20.00 crores for the five years. The proposals included the setting up of few new wings. The UGC's sanction—that too tentative—was communicated in October last limiting the grant to Rs. 2.60 crore only, of which 1/3 was conditional subject to evaluation of our performance. Speaking frankly, we were totally disappointed because no worthwhile development would be possible with this meagre amount. We still hope that the UGC would be in a position to reconsider the supplementary proposals that we have taken liberty to place with them. We, however, thank the Commission for issuing some new procedural guidelines which may be helpful in utilising the fund to be released. The colleges affiliated to our University have submitted their proposals following the Commission's guidelines, and are expected to receive a total grant of Rs. 3.62 crores.

The prospect of financial help in the coming years has become even more bleak in view of the discussion paper on "Government subsidies in India" issued by the Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India. In this paper, funds spent on higher education have been classified as non-merit subsidy on the highly debatable plea that there is no significant 'externality' of this system. The Vice-Chancellors assembled at the Conference of Association of Indian Universities have expressed deep concern at this categorisation of higher education. They felt that the paper did not recognize the role of higher education in national development. We fully share this concern and feel perturbed to think of the fate of higher education in the years to come if this philosophy prevails.

Looking within the Campus, I can claim with all modesty, that the environment and work-culture in our University are highly satisfactory. The academic and administrative departments face acute shortage of man-power and occasional scarcity of funds. Yet they always overcome these hurdles by their dedication and innovative application. The University is steadily progressing with its plan to utilise the unused land in collaboration with Government Departments, NGOs, and commercial firms for promoting research, vocational training and also for augmenting its fund. A small tea garden and a plot of sericulture have already been developed. Negotiations with the Rubber Board of India have reached the final stage and plantation programme will be launched shortly. Obviously these programmes have added to the burden of our administrative structure whose modernisation is a priority item on our agenda.

As problems multiply we strengthen our determination. Let me conclude with the hope that with our team spirit that has flourished we shall meet the challenges ahead and reach our goals.

I thank you all.

(R. G. Mukerjee)
Vice-Chancellor