

VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY



Eighth Annual Convocation

Address by

Professor Ananda Deb Mukhopadhyay

Vice-Chancellor

21 February 2003

**SAHEED PRADYUT SMRITI BHAVAN,
PASCHIM MEDINIPUR ZILLA PARISHAD
MIDNAPORE 721 101
WEST BENGAL**

His Excellency Honourable Chancellor Sri Viren J. Shah, respected Chief Guest Professor V. N. Rajasekharan Pillai, respected Sri Sushil Dhara, Professor Arun Kumar Sharma, Sri Habib Tanvir, Professor Archana Sharma, Predecessor Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculties, my colleagues, members of the Court, Executive Council, Finance Committee, Faculty Councils for Postgraduate studies and Councils for Undergraduate studies, Principals of Colleges, Guests, members of the Press and Media, my esteemed teaching, non-teaching and administrative colleagues, the recipient of degrees, research scholars, my students, friends, ladies and gentlemen.

I am extending a hearty welcome to you all on this auspicious occasion of the Eighth Convocation of Vidyasagar University. We are going to honour in today's Convocation three outstanding personalities in the fields of Science and Culture and a legendary freedom fighter of the district of Midnapore by conferring degrees of Honoris Causa.

Today is a memorable day because on this day many people have sacrificed their lives in a language movement launched in the erstwhile East Pakistan, now in Bangladesh. I remember those martyrs with deep respect.

The University has been making steady progress in different fields of its activities since the last Convocation. The extension works of the Humanities Buildings and Science Buildings are nearing completion with funds from UGC, State Government and donors like Sri Probodh Panda, Member of Parliament. The INFLIBNET facilities of the Central Library has been strengthened. The Central Library is being gradually modernised. The State Government has given Rs 20 lakhs in the last session for purchasing Books and Journals. The University has initiated its admission information for different courses through its website.

The University is going to establish its ERNET facilities with 90% of its cost funded by the UGC.

The University has opened two more new courses – M.Sc. in Computer Science and Postgraduate Diploma in Laboratory Technology. We will soon start M.Sc. Courses in Aquaculture Technology and Coastal Ecology and Postgraduate Diploma Courses in Conservation and Utilisation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, and Archival Studies. Our University has given affiliation to Honours Courses in different subjects to some of its affiliated colleges, and also to a Law College at Haldia. The University has also given affiliation to Vidyasagar Institute of Health for running Paramedical courses like B.Sc. in Physiotherapy and Medical Laboratory Technology and

Certificate and Diploma courses in ECG, X-Ray Technician, Dental Assistantship. A B.Sc. degree course on Physiotherapy was given affiliation to be conducted under Midnapore Rehabilitation Centre for Children. The process of opening M.A. / M.Sc. Courses in a few disciplines in some selected affiliated colleges has already been initiated having considered local and societal needs.

The contribution of Faculty members in R & D activities is worth mentioning. More than Rs 3 crores have been granted in favour of our Faculty members from CSIR, DST, DBT, NCERT, WBDST, DOE, AICTE, UGC and other fund giving agencies for R & D Projects. A large number of faculties have won recognition by contributing in National and International journals and publishing Text and Reference books. The University has been recognised by UGC as a Refresher Course Centre. The Centre has so far organised five Refresher Courses in various subjects, namely, Environment Management, Rural Administration and Rural Development, English, Applied Mathematics, Botany & Forestry sponsored by UGC. One more Refresher Course in Anthropology will be held in March 2003. An Administrative Staff College is awaiting UGC clearance. Our Faculty Members have acted as Resource Persons in a number of Refresher Courses in other Universities of our country. Most of the members are actively engaged in guiding research. Almost all the

departments of the University are publishing its own journals, which have been nationally acclaimed. The Journal of the Department of Geography & Environment Management has recently been accredited by ISSN.

The Department of Bengali has started a new programme of research on "Collection of Old Manuscript on Literature" and its faculties have already collected a large number of old manuscripts on Medicinal Plants. Its faculties have initiated studies on local dialects of tribal communities of the districts of East and West Midnapore.

The Department of Commerce with Farm Management has started a programme of Study and Research on E-Commerce and E-Governance.

The Department of Philosophy and the Life-World has undertaken teaching and research on "Value Education and Human Resource Development" and "Yoga Theory of Liberation". It has organised a seminar on "Equality and Discrimination" on 19 February 2003.

The Department of English has introduced a Training Course in Communicative Studies for the students of the University. Professor Sankar Prasad Singha of this department is representing the University in a Commonwealth Fellowship

Programme in U.K. The department will be organising soon an International Seminar on “New Literatures in English” where Professor G. Stitz of Germany will deliver the Keynote Address.

The Department of History is actively engaged in its thrust area activities on Archival Studies and History of Evolution of Science and Technology. Professor Balai Chandra Barui, Head of this department, has been nominated as a National Network Member of NCSTC under DST of Government of India.

The Department of Library & Information Science is making a steady progress in R & D activities in the field of Library Informatics. Professor Juran Krishna Sarkhel of this department, who is also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Commerce was invited as a Visiting Scientist at the Documentation and Training Centre of Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore.

The Department of Economics with Rural Development besides its DRS Programme on “Decentralised Planning” is making progress in its teaching and research frontiers in the field of rural development and environmental economics.

The Department of Political Science with Rural Administration has put a mark in teaching and R & D activities in the areas of Rural Administration, Contemporary Political Developments and Sociology. Dr Anil Kumar Jana and Dr Syed Abdul Hafiz Moinuddin, two Readers of this department, presented their papers at the Indian Sociological Congress at IIT, Kanpur.

The Gandhian Studies Centre has organised a number of seminars and published a series of Occasional Papers by learned scholars on Gandhian Studies. A commendable performance of this Centre is the introduction of a Six Months' Certificate Course in Gandhian Studies which has received wide appreciation.

The Department of Anthropology in collaboration with CWDS, Delhi organised a Workshop on "Empowerment of Women involving Peasant Women Organisations." Professor A. K. Danda, Former Director General of Anthropological Survey of India and Professor Alan Rew, Director, CDS, University of Wales, Swansea, UK, gave special lectures at this department. Dr Avijit Guha was entrusted to supervise the South Bengal chapter of a Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in a Project on "Development Induced Displacement and Rehabilitation in West Bengal" and also participated in an International Conference on "Combining

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Development and Research” at University of Wales, Swansea, U.K. The department has started Collaborative Research with Orissa based institutes on “Social Exclusion of Tribes and Castes” in a Project funded by DFID, U.K. Dr Falguni Chakraborty was invited to deliver Keynote Address in a national seminar on “NGOs and Rural Development” at Allahabad University.

The Department of Botany & Forestry with assistance from DST under FIST Programme has established its Computer Laboratory and initiated R & D on “Bioinformatics”. Dr Aloke Bhattacharjee, a Reader of this department, attended International Botanical Conference on “Plant Resources in the Changing Environment” held in Dhaka, Bangladesh during January 12 – 14, 2003 and presented three research papers. One of our non-teaching colleagues, Sri Dilip Chakraborty, will be awarded Ph.D. degree for his R & D attainments.

The Department of Zoology is mainly contributing to its teaching and R & D activities on Fisheries, Biofertilisers, Coastal Ecology, Biodiversity and Environmental Ecology. Professor Tanmay Bhattacharya of this department was invited as a Visiting Professor to Tripura University. Dr Susanta Kumar Chakraborty, a Reader of this department, received “Scientist of the Year Award – 2002” and Dr Bidhan

Chandra Patra, a Reader of this department, received "Environment Scientist of the Year Award – 2002" from the National Environmental Science Academy, New Delhi.

The Department of Geography & Environment Management has developed a strong base of R & D activities in the areas of Remote Sensing Applications & GIS, Coastal Studies, Urban Development and Natural Resource Management. The department has conducted water-table survey around Midnapore township areas and has started a programme of rainwater harvesting in the East and West Midnapore districts.

The Department of Physics & Technophysics and Electronics has been engaged in teaching and R & D activities in the fields of Plasma Physics, Solid State Physics and Opto-electronics. Dr Sourangshu Mukhopadhyay, a Reader of this department, earned international recognition for his work on "Optical Parallel Computation". Professor Prasanta Kumar Mahapatra of this department has been carrying out a collaborative programme with the Howard University, U.S.A. in Solid State Physics.

The Department of Human Physiology with Community Health is making steady progress in R & D activities in the fields of Community Health, Sports Physiology and

Ergonomics. Dr Prakash Chandra Dhara, a Reader of this department, has obtained Registration of his Patent on Innovation of a Hacksaw, which would minimise occupational health hazards of the carpentars. I am glad to announce that this is the first Patent produced from this University. Dr Debidas Ghosh, a Reader of this department, is also awaiting Patent Registration from Government of India. This department is going to introduce soon a One-Year Postgraduate Diploma Course in "Family Welfare".

The Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology made a significant mark in teaching and R & D activities. Professor C. N. R. Rao who recently visited this University was deeply impressed with the activities of the University and the Department of Chemistry & Chemical Technology in particular. Dr Braja Gopal Bag, Head of this department, received SERC FAST TRACK Proposal for Young Scientists. Dr Bag presented a Paper at the 14th International Symposium on "Chirality" held at Hamburg, Germany and visited Ruhr University, Bochum on invitation from Professor von Kiedrowski, with a sponsorship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany. Dr Mintu Halder, a Lecturer of this department, has been pursuing his post-doctoral research at IOWA State University, USA. Dr Syed Sirajul Islam, a Reader of this department, whose outstanding work on "Polysaccharides Extraction from Mushrooms" has been

found to have anti-tumour and anti-cancer effect, has earned good response from the academic communities of the country.

The Department of Applied Mathematics with Oceanology and Computer Programming has made considerable contribution in the fields of Mathematical Modelling and Operations Research.

Professor S. S. Mastana of the Department of Human Sciences, Loughborough University, U. K., will visit our University in the month of March/April 2003 under Indian National Science Academy – Royal Society, London, Exchange of Scientists Programme.

The Distance Education Unit is progressing steadily. The construction of its new building and the guest house is complete. The administrative and other academic activities are being carried out from this new building. An M.Sc. Course in Dietetics and Community Nutrition Management has been initiated from this year. Another Postgraduate Diploma Course in Family Welfare would start very soon.

The University has modernised its PG Curricula keeping in view the Core-Curriculum of UGC.

The Academic Calendar of the University has been strictly maintained. The results of all the examinations were published in time. The University has observed more than 181 teaching days. I congratulate the teachers and other colleagues of the University for holding classes regularly and even on holidays to maintain the UGC stipulation.

The various departments of our University have also organized National and International Seminars/ Conferences/ Workshops. I am glad to announce that our University is going to organise the 10th State Science & Technology Congress to be held on and from 28th February to 2nd March 2003.

I am extremely happy to congratulate our students and their guides for their outstanding performance in extra-curricular activities including sports by winning many National and State Awards.

Our N.S.S. Unit is implementing successfully different Environmental, AIDS and Polio Awareness Programmes. The unit is also taking active interest in Literacy Campaign.

This year the number of recipients of different degrees are : Ph.D. – 18, Postgraduates – 2004, Undergraduate (Honours) – 5122 and General (Pass) – 3333.

Through Distance Mode : 86 degree holders will be awarded University medals and 40 students will be awarded Endowment medals.

The University has opened a "Career Guidance Cell" for students where counselling would be carried out for the

candidates of NET, SLET, GATE and other higher services examinations.

The Annual Inter-Collegiate Sports Meet was successfully held on 13th and 14th February 2003.

The State Government, UGC and other fund giving agencies have been extending constant support to the University for its all round development.

The University following the State Government and UGC guidelines has laid special emphasis on resource mobilisation through its own resources, Self-financing Courses and Distance Education Programmes.

The Xth Plan five member Committee of UGC visited the University to consider its case for Xth Plan proposals in the month of November 2002. The Committee was deeply impressed by the steady academic and administrative progress of the University. I crave your indulgence to quote from the letter of the Chairman of the UGC Team :

The Committee was deeply impressed by the clean environment of the University, dedication of the teachers and non-teaching employees to their works and discipline among the students. It was a pleasant surprise

to find that almost every department is bringing out its own journal, something very few departments in other Universities have been able to do so.

Our Committee has recommended well beyond the UGC guideline and I sincerely hope that UGC will accept our recommendation.

The UGC Team considering our thrust on teaching and research in Rural Development has agreed on our suggestion to initiate the following need-based courses in Engineering & Technology in the main campus of our University :

- Food & Agroprocessing Engineering
- Biotechnology
- Communication & Software Engineering

The University is aware of the fact that since the society is becoming knowledge-based, Higher Education and Research now act as essential components of culture, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations.

A tremendous change is taking place world over in Higher Education by becoming more flexible in terms of diversity of

programmes, in its structure, curricula and development system. Quality improvement and quality assurance are the two loud slogans being heard now in the field of Higher Education of 21st Century.

Growing interest in utility-oriented education and enhanced economic strength of a few have encouraged the growth of private institutions and entry of foreign Universities. Globalisation has thus created an impact on Higher Education. At this critical juncture we must have to take into account the following issues – How are other nations striving for the creation of human resources? What are their priorities? Do they also face resource constraints? How are they controlling knowledge revolution? We must accept the fact that Higher Education is a life long process. Whatever changes are taking place in Higher Education globally or locally, its core mission is to educate, to train and to provide services to the society, and it must be fulfilled.

It is worth mentioning that the following salient ground rules are put forward in the Xth Plan Perspective of UGC for achieving 21st Century's agenda on Higher Education :

- Create the possibility of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning experience through the use of the information highway.

- Create a more open and flexible education structure using “a Cafeteria Approach”.
- Revamp the Curricula to reflect the need for national development with international benchmark.
- Invest in Undergraduate education through enhancement of appropriate facilities.
- Support Sport and Personality Development activities.
- Inculcate appreciation for internal academic audit and external peer review.

I believe that today in Higher Education Quality Teaching is the need of the hour. It can be achieved not only through motivation, involvement and devotion of internal faculties but by sharing infrastructural facilities of developed sister institutions. Though UGC is insisting on infrastructure sharing, the same is yet to be achieved due to lack of mindset necessary for such collaboration.

My dear students, the world is running through a crisis of civilisation where terrorism, fundamentalists' onslaught and exploitation of the poor have become rampant. We shall have to rise above this crisis remembering our predecessors who have taught us to sustain with transparency, dignity and honesty. I would expect that you should have commitment to the ideals of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who never

compromised with untruth, injustice and religious superstitions. Vidyasagar was a "Humanist". His ideal for education was "Humanism". His dream was for building a bridge between Indian and Western philosophies of education. He was modern in thinking and never compromised his ideals with orthodox customs. He identified an educational institution as "Nursery of Humanism".

As teachers our main expectation will be that our students should be good human beings above all. A good human being can easily take up challenges in his/her life with competence and confidence. To him sustainability with dignity and honour is an easily achievable thing. I have great faith on our Graduates and Postgraduates who are awarded degrees today. I am sure you are all capable of making your own place in society in this era of globalisation. I wish you all a future that will bring prosperity and peace in your minds.

Namaskar!