

Our respected Chancellor, His Excellency, Shri Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Honourable Chief Guest and the recipient of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) Degree, Professor Samir K. Brahmachari, who is now the Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, esteemed recipient of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) Degree, Shri Dhirendra Nath Baskey, the noted Santali writer, esteemed recipient of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) Degree, Professor Syed Zahoor Qasim, the noted environmental Scientist, my esteemed previous Vice-Chancellors, Honourable members of the Court and the Executive Council of the University, Faculty Members, Officers and other staff members of the University community, recipients of Degrees, Medals and Prizes, distinguished guests, representatives from the media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I deem it a great privilege to welcome you all to this Fourteenth Convocation of our beloved University on behalf of the Vidyasagar University and also on my own behalf.

I am particularly grateful to our Chancellor, Honourable Shri Gopalkrishna Gandhi, who bears the rich heritage of our glorious freedom struggle and who is imbued with a deep sensitivity, intellect and humanitarianism for having kindly accepted our invitation to preside over this Convocation. Sir, we are greatly honoured by your august presence in this University Convocation and on behalf of the entire University Community I assure you, Sir, that we are rededicating ourselves to the cause of expansion and inclusiveness in education and the cause of excellence in education – the goals which were so dear to the heart of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, a great social reformer and educationist belonging to this district, after whose name this University has been established.

I extend, on behalf of this University, a very special welcome to Professor Samir K. Brahmachari, the Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (Department of Science and Technology, Government of India) and the Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. Professor Brahmachari has made fundamental discoveries in demonstrating the structural flexibility of DNA. He has been engaged in understanding the etiology of several neurological disorders and in the development of suitable drugs to combat these disorders. Professor Brahmachari is currently leading the Indian Genome Variation Consortium Project and co-ordinating a National Network Project in In Silico Biology. The University feels honoured by honouring him with the Degree of D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) for which he is eminently suitable.

The University also expresses its gratitude that Professor Brahmachari has kindly agreed to become the Chief Guest for our Fourteenth Convocation and to deliver the Convocation Address.

The Executive Council and the Court of our University have, this year, also unanimously recommended, and the Honourable Chancellor has duly assented, to confer the Degree of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) on Shri Dharendra Nath Baskey, who is a noted Santali writer and who has dedicated his entire life to the cause of development of Santali literature and in promoting harmony and co-operation between the Santals and other communities. Shri Baskey has also acted for a long time as an Advisor to the Chairman of the Adivasi Unnayan and Samavay Nigam. The University also feels honoured by offering the Degree of D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) on Professor Syed Zahoor Qasim, a noted environmental Scientist, who obtained his Ph.D. and D.Sc. Degrees in Marine Science from the University of Wales, U.K., who was the leader of the first Indian Expedition to Antarctica and has built up two permanent Indian Stations there and who has acted, in the past, as the President of the National Academy of Sciences and the General President of the Indian Science Congress. Professor Qasim is presently the Chairman, Centre for Environmental Studies, New Delhi.

Before I submit an audit of the academic achievements of the University, I wish to inform this distinguished audience that, in appreciation of its overall achievements, our University has secured 2.81 in a 4-point CGPA Scale in the process of re-accreditation and has been awarded 'B' Grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council on the basis of recommendation submitted by the NAAC Peer Team, during their visit at the University from 29 to 31 December 2008. It is particularly gratifying for us to note that we have obtained highest score in the area of Research, Consultancy and Extension Activities, a true domain of University activity. This is inspite of the fact that we have obtained comparatively low score in the field of infrastructural facilities. This indicates that our Faculty members have been doing Research and Extension Activities inspite of inadequate infrastructural facilities. I take this opportunity to thank all the members of the University community, the Teachers, the Officers, the Research Scholars, the Non-teaching Staff and the Students of the University for their excellent performance before the NAAC Peer Team. The NAAC Score indicates that as a University, our position is just next to the Universities of Jadavpur and Calcutta.

Coming to our achievements in the last session of 2008-2009, I would like to inform the House that our University has made considerable progress both in academic sphere and infrastructural sector, thanks to the co-operative effort of our University community. In the academic field, the success rate has been gradually getting higher and higher each year. In the last session, the University has awarded Ph.D. Degrees to 28 students of whom 21 candidates are in Science stream while the rest in Humanities and Social Sciences. 3251 students were awarded Master Degrees both in regular and distance modes. Undergraduate Degrees have been awarded to 12876 students. The number of successful

candidates in the B.Ed. Examination in the last year was 195, LL.B. (5-years Course) - 58, Paramedical Courses - 96, Vocational - 35 and BCA - 42.

In addition to strengthening the infrastructural set-up, all the academic Departments have introduced the Semester System. The Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management has applied for introduction of an M.Sc. integrated Ph.D. Programme. Two-year M.Phil. Course has been opened by the Department of Political Science with Rural Administration, the first of its kind in the University. A Language Laboratory has been set up in the Department of English where all the students would be given a Six-month Course on Soft Skill Development. This move has been highly appreciated in the Report of the NAAC Peer Team. At the Undergraduate level, the University has granted temporary affiliation to Gourav Guin Memorial College for introducing General Courses from the academic session of 2008-2009. Apart from this, four Colleges (Vivekananda College, Mechogram, Panskura; Bengal College of Teachers' Education, Chandrakona Road; Sevayatan Sikshan Mahavidyalaya, Jhargram; and VTIFE's Kadambini Women's College of Education, Bajkul), and two Colleges (Panskura Banamali College and Garhbeta College) have been recognized by the NCTE for conducting B.Ed. and B.P.Ed. Courses, respectively.

As in the previous year, Research Grants have been regularly pouring in different academic Departments of our University by several funding agencies like UGC, DST, DBT, CSIR, DRDO and others. The Departments which have received such Research Grants are Economics with Rural Development (Professor S. N. Sau, ICSSR, New Delhi - Rs. 3.63 Lakhs); History (Dr. Ujjayan Bhattacharya, MAKAIAS - Rs. 1 Lakh); Political Science with Rural Administration (Dr. Raj Kumar Kothari, UGC - Rs. 0.65 Lakhs); Sociology (Dr. S. A. H. Moinuddin, UGC - Rs. 5.06 Lakhs; Dr. Soumyajit Patra, UGC - Rs. 0.80 Lakh; Dr. S. A. H. Moinuddin and Dr. Damayanti Mukhopadhyay, DRD Cell, Zilla Parishad, Paschim Medinipur - Rs. 1.98 Lakhs); Anthropology (Dr. Sudip Datta Banik, ICSSR, New Delhi - Rs. 1.9 Lakhs); Applied Mathematics with Oceanology and Computer Programming (Dr. Shyamal Kumar Mondal, CSIR, New Delhi - Rs. 7.26 Lakhs); Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management (Dr. Debidas Ghosh, UGC - Rs. 9.25 Lakhs; DST - Rs. 20.41 Lakhs and Rs. 3.94 Lakhs; NCERT - Rs. 2.55 Lakhs; and ICMR - Rs. 8.5 Lakhs; and Dr. Sandip Chattopadhyay, UGC - Rs. 1 Lakh); Botany and Forestry (Dr. Amal Kumar Mondal, UGC - Rs. 7 Lakhs); Geography and Environment Management (Dr. Ramkrishna Maiti, ICSSR, New Delhi - Rs. 5.39 Lakhs; and Shri Utpal Roy, UGC - Rs. 1 Lakh); Human Physiology with Community Health (Prof. Somenath Roy, DBT, Government of India - Rs. 40.24 Lakhs); Microbiology (Prof. Bikas Ranjan Pati, UGC and DBT, Government of India - Rs. 8.43 Lakhs & Rs. 13.75 Lakhs, respectively and Dr. Debdulal Banerjee, UGC - Rs. 5.90 Lakhs); Aquaculture Management and Technology (Prof. Bidhan Chandra Patra, Department of Environment, Government of India - Rs. 5.90 Lakhs; Dr. Joydev Maity, UGC - Rs. 1 Lakh); Zoology (Prof. Susanta

Kumar Chakraborty, West Bengal Pollution Control Board - Rs. 4.17 Lakhs; and Prof. Bidhan Chandra Patra & Dr. Jayanta Kumar Kundu, Department of Environment and Forest, Government of West Bengal - Rs. 5.9 Lakhs; Dr. Subrata Kumar De, LPB Trust, West Bengal - Rs. 0.81 Lakh; and Shri Biplab Mandal, UGC - Rs. 0.70 Lakh); Chemistry and Chemical Technology (Dr. Braja Gopal Bag, DRDO, Ministry of Defence, Government of India - Rs. 5.86 Lakhs; and Dr. Sumita Roy, DST, Government of India - Rs. 18.81 Lakhs); and Commerce with Farm Management (Prof. Arindam Gupta, UGC - Rs. 2.45 Lakhs).

Apart from receiving individual Research Grants, many academic Departments of our University are initiating Collaborative Research Activities. Collaboration with the Bose Institute, Kolkata to carry out the Institute's Vermicomposting Programme under its general umbrella of the Rural Biotechnology Programme in 2009 is being designed by Prof. Susanta Kumar Chakraborty of Zoology and Dr. Syed Sirajul Islam of Chemistry and Chemical Technology. Dr. Braja Gopal Bag and Dr. Syed Sirajul Islam have, again, undertaken Collaborative Research Programmes with Georgetown University, USA; University of Bordeaux, France; IICB, Kolkata and IIT, Kharagpur, respectively. Similarly, Dr. Ajay Kumar Mishra (at IIT, Kharagpur) and Dr. Sudipta Dalai (at University of Trieste, Italy and Howard University, USA) of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology are engaged in such type of programmes. The Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management has undertaken a Collaborative Research Project with Southern Health Improvement Samity, Bhangar, South 24 Paraganas.

While being engaged in Researches, teachers of the University have generated Patent. Thus, Dr. Debidas Ghosh, Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management, has generated Patent on "Dimethyl 4,4' Oxybis Abbreviated as P<sub>1</sub>, and 4,4' Oxybis Abbreviated as P<sub>2</sub>, two novel diabetic therapeutic agents from the seeds of E-Tamberlana; and Dr. Braja Gopal Bag, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, on "A Renewable Template for Supramolecular Chemistry and Nano Science. Dr. Subhas Chandra Saha, Lecturer in Electronics, has obtained the Design Registration from the Patent Office, Government of India on his design, "A Multijunction A-Bi: H Solar Cell." Teachers have also extended consultancy services to various organizations: Dr. Debidas Ghosh (of the Department of Bio-Medical Laboratory Science and Management) has extended services on "Efficacy of Drug Testing and Toxicity Assessment"; Dr. Ashis Kumar Paul (Department of Geography and Environment Management), to EIA for Environmental Clearance, Sponge Iron Factory, Hira Concast, Salanpur; Professor Susanta Kumar Chakraborty (Department of Zoology), to EIA, Report of Times Ferro Alloy Ltd. at Octagon Consultancy Pvt. Ltd., Bankura; and to EIA Report of Salanpur Ferro Alloy Ltd. at S. H. Engineering Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata; Professor Nagendra Kumar Verma and Shri Ram Kumar Bhakat (Department of Botany and Forestry) to Forest Development

Agency (FDA), Midnapore. A MOU has been signed between Kalyani Foundation for Media Science and Community Research and our University, for continuing One-year P.G. Diploma Course in Mass Communication and Videography from the session of 2008-2009.

Recognition of the academic achievements by our teachers and students have come from the National and International academic institutions and organizations. Dr. Sujoy Kumar Jana, Cartographer, Department of Geography and Environment Management has been selected as a Teacher in the Department of Surveying and Land Studies at Papua New Guinea University of Technology. Dr. Madhumangal Pal, of the Department of Applied Mathematics with Oceanology and Computer Programming, has been nominated a member in the Editorial Board of 'Advanced Optimization and Modeling', a Romanian Journal.

Dr. Abhijit Guha, of the Department of Anthropology, was invited to deliver a Lecture on "Role of Researchers in Building Public Awareness on Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation in India", in the Section on Anthropology and Behavioural Sciences at the 96<sup>th</sup> Session of the Indian Science Congress held during 3 - 7 January, 2009 at NEHU, Shillong. He was also invited to act as an expert member on the proposed 'Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill 2007' by the Standing Committee on Rural Development at the Lok Sabha, New Delhi. Professor Tanmay Bhattacharya, of the Department of Zoology, was selected as the UGC Visiting Fellow at the North Bengal University. Dr. Subrata Kumar De, of the same Department, has been invited to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> Leipzig Workshop sponsored by the University of Leipzig, Germany. Shri Biplab Mandal, a Lecturer in the same Department, was awarded 'Best Oral Presentation Award' at the 16<sup>th</sup> West Bengal State Science and Technology Congress organized by the University of Burdwan and Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha. We are very happy to inform this august audience that Dr. Surajit Ghosh, of the Department of Physics & Technophysics and Dr. Debdulal Banerjee, of the Department of Microbiology, have been awarded BOYSCAST Fellowship for the year 2009-2010 by the DST, Government of India and have joined their positions in the USA.

In recognition of their academic qualities, our teachers have been invited to present Papers at various International Conferences and Symposia. Thus Dr. Raj Kumar Kothari, of the Department of Political Science with Rural Administration, attended the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual World History Association Conference, held at London during 25 - 29 June, 2008. Professor Susanta Kumar Chakraborty, of the Department of Zoology, attended the International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology, held at Houston, Texas, USA during 28 - 31 July, 2008. Dr. Ramkrishna Maiti, of the Department of Geography and Environment Management, too attended the International Conference at the 13<sup>th</sup> Belgium-France-Italy-Romania Geomorphological Meeting

on Landscape Evolution and Geoarchaeology, held at Porto-Heli, Greece during 18 - 21 June, 2008. Similarly, Shri Abhishek Chakraborty, of the Department of Remote Sensing and GIS, attended The Asian Conference on Remote Sensing - 2008, held at Colombo, Sri Lanka during 10 - 14 November, 2008. On the other hand, Dr. Braja Gopal Bag, of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, participated in an International Symposium on "Macro and Supramolecular Architecture and Materials" at MAM - 2008, held at Germany during 7 - 8 September, 2008.

Besides, the teachers of our University attended as many as 65 National and International (held within the country) Seminars / Conferences / Workshops / Symposia etc. in the last year.

On our part, the following Departments have also organized Seminars, Workshops and others for the benefit of the teaching and student community at different times of the year: Council for U. G. Studies, Library and Information Science, Commerce with Farm Management, Human Physiology with Community Health, Electronics, Philosophy and the Life-World, English, Sociology, Political Science with Rural Administration, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Computer Science, Economics with Rural Development, Bengali and Sanskrit. Vidyasagar University Research Scholars' Association also organized a Seminar on "Higher Education and Employability".

We are happy to mention here in the presence of the Director General, CSIR that the University has a MOU with NISTADS, a CSIR organization, for Joint Collaborative Initiative in the sphere of Technology Application. A Nationally organized Seminar on 'Women Empowerment through Science and Technology' was held in August, 2008. Self-help Groups applying and developing local craft and technology were invited. Based on the outcome of the Seminar, we expect NISTADS to take up some collaborative programmes with the University for technology upgradation and technology transfer.

Apart from Seminars etc. our academic Departments also arranged Special / Extension Lectures for the benefit of the students. Joining of Visiting Professors helped us a lot to solve some teaching problems.

Achievements of our students are no less significant. One student in Anthropology has been selected as a Project Personnel in the Biological Anthropology Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. Two more students of the Department have been awarded Junior Research Fellowship by the Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India. One student of the Department of Remote Sensing and GIS has been selected as Project Scientist at the Department of Geography, IIT, Kharagpur. Twelve students of this Department have been selected in different agencies like Annova Technology,

Hyderabad; Remote Sensing Cell, DST, Kolkata; PCI Geometrical Software Company and Jiya Infotech (Software Company). The students of the University in various Departments have also been successful in SSC, SET, NET and GATE Examinations in the last year.

The Central Library of the University has expanded itself a lot since the last year in terms of its users' size, resources and its services as well. In addition to house-keeping operations, digitization of library materials have been made for establishing archives of old question papers, articles published in different journals, other publications and the Ph.D. Theses of the Faculty members. For the benefit of the students, a Career Information Cell has also been established within the Library, from where various types of books, relevant for various competitive examinations, are available. It is gratifying to note that that under the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, several thousands e-resources have been subscribed and made accessible to the Library users.

The Directorate of Distance Education of our University has increased its outreach activities last year in a considerable way. In the period under review, the DDE have set up 15 Study Centres in different parts of West Bengal. A few Postgraduate Science subjects have been offered to be taught in some reputed Colleges of the State. Percentages of total enrolment in different Courses have shot up to 40% of the total intake in the last session of 2008-2009. A Development Grant of Rs. 40 Lakhs has been sanctioned to the DDE of our University by the Distance Education Council, New Delhi for the session, 2008-2009.

Our Computer Centre has rendered valuable services not only to the University community but also to the welfare of our society in general. The Centre's infrastructural development has also been considerable: for more quality Internet Services, two numbers of Internet connections with a total of 4 MBPS Bandwidth, Direct Optical Fibre Link with BSNL has been established. It has also developed new website / software for affiliated Colleges with the University (eight in number). The Centre has also conducted many Certificate / Diploma Courses and staff training / awareness programmes in the period.

So far as the NSS Cell under our University is concerned, the NAAC Team, during their visit to the University campus and different Colleges, appreciated the Unit for successfully implementing the overall programme of the NSS. In the last year, numbers of volunteers have been increased. 14 more Units have been activated. 63 Special Camp Programmes have been organized in the last year. Activities like construction of roadside shades, repairing of village roads, Health Check-up Camps and distribution of medicines, Blood Group Testing, Yoga Meditation Camps, Street Drama against Dowry System, Literacy Programme,

Health Awareness, First Aid Training, Swimming Competition, Pulse-Polio Immunization Campaign and other were also organized by some of the Units.

I am really glad to inform that we were entrusted by the Association of Indian Universities to hold XXIV National Youth Festival during 19 – 23 January, 2009. About 900 students of 57 Universities, all over India, participated in this festival. It was indeed a colourful event. It was for the first time in its history that the University had organized such a huge cultural meet. Needless to say, the festival was completely successful, thanks to the efforts of our University community.

Our Cultural Team was also invited by the Association of Indian Universities to participate in the South Asian Universities' Youth Festival (SAUFEST) held at Panjab University, Chandigarh during 12 – 16 February, 2009.

The Sports Committee of our University organized Inter-College Football Tournament (during 4 – 22 September, 2008), Inter-College Volleyball Tournament (on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2008) and Inter-College Kho Kho Tournament for both boys and girls (on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2008). Inter-College and Postgraduate Athletic Meet was also held in February this year. The students of our University participated in all these tournaments.

The Placement Cell of our University, under the Department of Students' Welfare, has been functioning since 2007-2008. Both Off-campusing and On-campusing have been organized for the students of various Departments. 12 (9 Off-campusing and 3 On-campusing) such campusing have been organized in the last year.

As regards the infrastructural development in the last year, the University has been able to complete construction / reconstruction works of the following: Black Top Road inside Vidyasagar University; extension of Science Building (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Block); Humanities Building (West Block: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor); Sports Ground including boundary fencing; Teachers' – Officers' Hostel (3-storied); Students' Amenity Centre (Ground and 1<sup>st</sup> Floor); Infrastructural Facilities for Women; Medical Unit; Boundary Wall (running length 2.52 kms); Postgraduate Girls' Hostel (1<sup>st</sup> Floor); Library Building (in part, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor); and Postgraduate Boys' Hostel (in part; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Southern and Western side). First phases of Silver Jubilee Building and Einstein Building have been completed and Social Science and Science Departments will be shifted soon in these buildings. A second Ladies' Hostel is being constructed. The Auditorium Construction Work will start soon as the formalities have been completed. But many other types of extension activities have to be undertaken considering the rapid expansion in the activities of the University over the past several years. Though we are in the third year of



the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, final allocation of the UGC 11<sup>th</sup> Plan Grant has not yet been made. This is standing in the way of our planning for the future.

Honourable Chancellor Sir, distinguished participants and dear students, the world we are living in today is full of paradoxes. On the one hand, science and technology advances are being made at an exponential rate but on the other hand more and more people are dying out of poverty, malnutrition and killer diseases. The issue of development divide permeates the whole world and we have to think seriously how to bridge this divide. As the data show, in more than 100 countries out of 174, the par capita income today is less than the par capita income 15 years ago. And in 19 of them, it is less than it was in 1960. Thus 1.6 billion people in the world today are worse off than they were 15 years ago. The number of billionaires and the total wealth at their command are also increasing along with increase in world poverty.

The development gaps between the rich and the poor nations are increasing tremendously. The richest 1% of the world's people receive as much income as the poorest 57%. In 1998, 29 OECD countries spent \$520 billion on R & D - more than the combined economic output of the world's 30 poorest countries. These countries had 91% of the share of the new patents issued at that time - meaning thereby that the remaining 81% of the people had only 9% of the share.

The world we live in is an unjust world. Based on a new international economic order, an alternative globalization is required which, at the moment, seems to be a far cry. But more and more people are joining on a global scale to put an end to this unjust and divided world.

Coming to the Indian scenario, one emphatic way we can reach the goal of a just and humane society is by revamping and reorienting our education system so that the benefits of education reach all sections of people, so that we can ensure the economic access of new technologies to the poor.

The National Knowledge Commission, while identifying the areas of reform and change in our higher education system, has mentioned three areas of crucial significance. These are the problems of expansion, the problem of excellence and the problem of inclusion.

While each of them is important in the Indian context, the problem of inclusion needs to be tackled on an urgent footing. If we analyze the history of higher education in different countries of the world, it becomes clear that opening the door of education to more and more people leads to a rise rather than to a fall in academic standards. If opportunities are provided, what Indian

students can do is amply demonstrated by their overwhelming presence in the Graduate Schools of US Universities.

If we analyze the NSS data regarding the gross enrolment rate in higher education for various groups between male-female, between rural-urban, between SC, ST, OBC and others, between income groups, between religious groups and between the poor-non-poor, the abysmal situation regarding differential access to higher education will become very evident. What is more important, these deprivations are cumulative in nature instead of being dispersive. Thus the GER for rural ST women is as low as 1.1 p.c. whereas, for SC women it is as low as 0.6 p.c. In Maharashtra, for example, the GER for urban male non-scheduled population, it is as high as 24.7 p.c.

Unless these disparities are addressed by macro level planning initiatives and unless there is substantial expansion in public funded educational institutions ensuring access and equity and unless determined measures are taken for ensuring quality, we cannot reach the goal of a knowledge society, to which we have committed ourselves.

In the Indian scenario, the disparities in the educational system are reflected not only in differential access to higher education for different social groups, it is also reflected in wide differences in infrastructural situation of different Universities. Of the more than 430 Universities today, 230 are State funded affiliating Universities and they contribute 89% of the total enrolment. Most of these affiliating Universities are situated in rural areas and there is a widening gap between the metropolitan and rural Universities as regards the infrastructural resources and as regards the quality of the output. The UGC, in its XI Plan document, had promised to give special emphasis on Universities situated in remote, rural and backward areas. Special assistance packages have been declared for them. For giving special attention to the cause of the Scheduled Communities, 'Equal Opportunities Cell' is to be opened for them. Remedial Coaching and Coaching for Entry into Services have been introduced. For Science Departments, Infrastructural Assistance and Research Fellowship Schemes have been introduced. Substantial pay hike has been declared for teachers to attract talented persons into this profession. If the education system is reoriented, our journey for a better future will be smooth. The problem is that of creating a better tomorrow, for everyone - not just the privileged few. This is the only way how 21<sup>st</sup> Century can be a Century of hope.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, and one of those rare classes of visionary statesmen, had this to say on the role of the University in the nation-building process. *'A University stands for humanism. For tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the*

*Universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the Nation and the People.'*

Before I conclude, I extend my warm welcome to all the recipients of Degrees and distinctions at today's Convocation. You are at the threshold of entering into a New World, a World full of challenges and opportunities. Achievements in life are always driven by visions and goals. You have to work hard and with determination to realize your full potentials. The University, your alma mater, will always be by your side. All my best wishes to you all.

Once again, I convey my deepest regards and thanks to all those who have assembled here to make the Fourteenth Convocation a success.

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