



# Independent University, Bangladesh Third Convocation, 29 May, 1999

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## Third Convocation

It is a day of satisfaction for the teachers whose students are passing out with colour. I am happy that IUB has set a trend for itself by holding convocations annually. For the graduating students, the day has not come without sacrifice. Candles burnt late in the night. Computers worked overtime and anxieties consumed hours and days of sleep.

IUB has crossed its 7th year through tremendous trials and tribulation. It is now on its own feet and can look forward with satisfaction. It has carved out a place for itself in society as a centre of excellence, an educational institution where parents feel proud to send their wards and wait for their graduation. Society has a lot of expectations from IUB and I am sure, IUB is striving hard to fulfill those. The founder of IUB, esteemed members of ESTCDT started IUB with the vision to give world class education to our children within Bangladesh with a view to improving our economic and cultural levels. Knowledge is a subject which is endless, and more we nurture it, more we learn. I am sure, IUB management and its faculty are thoughtfully aiming at achieving this goal. On behalf of the Board of Trustees ESTCDT, I convey goodwill and warm wishes to the Governing Council of the IUB, and the faculty for completion of yet another successful academic session Long live IUB.

**A K M Rafiqul Islam**  
Chairman, ESTCDT

## A UNIVERSITY JUST FOR THE NEED...

Established in 1991 as a University College in cooperation with two British universities, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) was authorized to operate as a fully fledged university under the private University Act of 1992. It started enrolling students in the spring of 1993. The mission of the University is to produce world class graduates within the local environment, with knowledge and skills to provide leadership in enterprises, public service and welfare. The goal-oriented innovative curricula taught by a dedicated international faculty is the best reason for one to choose IUB for his undergraduate and post-graduate studies or learn more about IUB if one talks to the 63 honours graduates in 1997 and 1998 who received their degrees at the two successive convocations of the University and the first batch of MBAs. Learning takes place in small classrooms with personalized attention aided by electronic global exposure through computers, internet and e-mail, well-stocked libraries and laboratories as well as through live-in-field experience. On campus, there are wide opportunities to foster friendship with fellow students and teachers of many nationalities and engage in a variety of extracurricular activities including sports and cultural functions.

**Educational Strategy:** IUB academic programme is designed to respond to the need of the country's economy for qualified new leaders and skilled entrepreneurs. Through innovative teaching in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, IUB students develop aptitude for creative thinking, spirit of teamwork, power of decision making, flexibility in attitude and capability for crisis management. The men and women who graduate from IUB will have put theories to practice by way of internship at leading enterprises of the country or by project development under the guidance of instructors at actual work sites or by study abroad under IUB's collaborative arrangements with reputed universities.

**Key Facts:** IUB now teaches honours degree programmes in 11 disciplines under three schools Business, Communication and Environmental Science and Management. The fourth school, School of Liberal Arts and Science, teaches courses to provide humanistic and liberal background to the students specializing in any of the disciplines. A fifth school the Graduate School, offers an Euro-Asian MBA in collaboration with the Netherlands' Maastricht School of Management (MSM). Masters programmes in other disciplines will be offered soon. There is a wide range of continuing education options including proficiency courses in English under ECEC. A Language Centre has been established mainly to teach English, French and Chinese.

Another year and another passing out! It is not quite so. No doubt that we are back in the pews and on the pulpit to consecrate the future of a highly selected group of young men and women but this time there are several differences. The University, for the first time, offers post graduate certification to a batch of young men and women who have qualified for the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) under an international curriculum jointly with Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands. The other difference is the number that will receive the four-year honours degree this year is 75 as compared to 34 last year. The venue, arrangement and the show are also bigger this time. To accentuate the other fact, this is Independent University's 3rd successive convocation and I believe we are now closer to setting a tradition where this ceremony may be regarded as the last calendar event of an academic year. But I recognise that the experience can not be left to repeat by itself. Dear families, friends and community, we have gathered here to recognise and honour our graduates and, at the same time, pay tribute to the members of the faculty who together have worked earnestly to realize the mission of the University to produce useful graduates who are both educated and at the same time practiced in application of their knowledge. The faculty members who are both mostly full time and young have earned a national recognition for their integrity and application. I congratulate the community in their respective roles of students, parents, faculty, staff and benefactors for their efforts of nation building through higher education.

## Centre for Social Science and Public Policy Research (CPR)

Centre for Social Science and Public Policy Research works on the frontiers of research and study selected national issues and questions of regional and international cooperation and understanding. The centre adapts both basic and applied policy oriented methodologies for its study. The main objectives of the centre are: 1. To conduct and promote independent research and dissemination of objective information and knowledge on selected issues of public policy governance and the dynamics of social change. 2. To contribute through independent study to the process of regional and sub-regional cooperation in South Asia and other regions. 3. To function as a forum for public information, understanding and debate on Bangladesh's socio-economic problems and related matters. 4. To develop an information and documentation centre on selected national issues and foreign policy questions with networking facilities with similar institutions within and outside Bangladesh. The centre organises and host study tour of international students interested in the politics, economy and development of the country. ... **Abul Ahsan**

## Why Study our National Culture and Heritage?

We often hear how irrelevant our education system is to the economic development and overall progress of society. These critique simply fail to understand that the backwardness of the Third World countries like Bangladesh is not owing to their stress on liberal education and neglect of "technical education" (applied science and applied economics) but several other factors, including their lack of knowledge. As we know, no Third World country offers world class science and liberal arts education to its citizens. And we believe that there lies the problem. The Third World is underdeveloped because of its cultural backwardness, otherwise there is no suitable explanation of the fact that why Bangladesh with better (arable) land-man ratio than those of Japan and South Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world. IUB firmly believes that without the promotion of culture or the collective manifestation of human intellectual achievement by mental and physical training, there is no short cut to development. Hence the emphasis on liberal arts and science and the inculcation of the "two cultures", literature and science, at IUB. Among other foundation courses at the School of Liberal Arts and Science, IUB offers two compulsory courses on our National Culture and Heritage. As Disraeli has pointed out: "A university should be a place of light, of liberty and of learning", we think that the ensoulment of these lofty ideas is impossible without the study of humanities and pure science. As we learn from history, the advent of science and technology, byproducts of human aspirations for a better living in this world, never preceded that of literature and philosophy. Technocrats devoid of enlightenment and culture are neither creative nor safe to associate with. Fortunately, IUB did not emerge as an "institute of technology" in the literal sense of the expression but as an "institute of culture". We know that "cabbages", to paraphrase Mark Twain, can be turned into "cauliflowers", only "with a college education". The courses on National Culture and Heritage are unique in their composition, content, foci and utilities and they introduce the intricacies of history, literature, anthropology and politics to every undergraduate of the University. An IUB graduate knows that we do not inherit culture as we do instincts and that one needs constant refinement, mental and physical training for intellectual development or civilization. History does not give us any "civilization package" as a gift only because our ancestors were civilized once upon a time. IUB graduates know that Bangladeshi culture is not a monolith but composite by nature and that like other civilizations in the past and present, we have been profusely borrowing and indigenizing alien cultural traits, food habit, dress, etc. This knowledge about the inter-dependence and mutual borrowing among different people belonging to diverse races and religions will only broaden the mental horizon of IUB students, turning them into cosmopolitan, global citizens free from all forms of bigotry, prejudice and intolerance. We are also aware of pseudo-history and the concoction of history by ruling elite and their clients. The IUB courses on our culture and heritage do not teach students to manufacture a mythical, colourful heritage for Bangladesh rather the students learn that civilization is not rural but urban and there is no point in glorifying our feudal and colonial culture and heritage, music and traditions which only glorify death and the hereafter by undermining life in this world. However, IUB students learn that university systems at Mainamati and Paharpur predate Oxford and Cambridge and that the relics of Paharpur indicate the presence of a much bigger urban centre at the site than that of Mohenjo Daro in the past. The study of our lost heritage in the light of history could be very enthralling and inspiring and could signal the beginning of a new dawn or renaissance for Bangladesh. The IUB has accepted the challenge by undertaking a project to write a comprehensive socio-cultural history of Bangladesh, believing in what Oscar Wilde had to say in this regard: "The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it." IUB firmly believes that with the cooperation of society, we will overcome the problem of doing something new for the betterment of our posterity. We, however, know as Samuel Johnson has told us: "Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better." Last but not least, as IUB aims at creating a world class university and turning its alumni into world class leaders in every walk of life, and above all, into civilized human beings, the courses on our National Culture and Heritage, I predict, will one day be appreciated as the harbinger of a new dawn for Bangladesh. When there is despair around every corner and corruption and the system of not having any system have been accepted and anarchy and rustic peasant behaviour are endemic, we at IUB are almost marching alone in pursuit of light, following the tracks of Tagore, who sang "Ekla Chalore". One may cite Oscar Wilde in this regard as well: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." ... **Taj J. Hashmi**

## Search for knowledge and know-how for service

The School of Environmental Science and Management the first of its kind in the field of higher education bases a good part of its teaching on direct learning from field situation. In addition, the school conducts different applied research in the field of population, epidemiology, poverty and environment. Findings of these studies provide materials for classroom learning; as well as basis for policy recommendations and human resources development programmes. Studies that have been recently concluded are on (1) interrelationship of population, poverty and environment, (2) environmental determinants of reproductive health, (3) influence of customs and tradition on child health practices, etc. The School has collaboration with several universities abroad, IUCN and the United Nations.



## Highlights

IUB President has been awarded the Doctor of Humane Letters by the Hamline University, Minnesota, USA on May 23 1998. Apart from that the President has also been selected as the International Man of the Year for 1996-1997 by the International Biographical Centre of Cambridge, UK, in recognition of his lifelong dedication to leadership in educational development. IUB got Inter-University Link Programmes with four American, six European and one Asian Universities. Recently IUB President visited Johns Hopkins University, USA, in Jan'99 to discuss inter-university link programme with JHU.

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure that IUB is going to hold its third convocation in a row. Another batch of successful, educated, and most importantly, employable, graduates are passing out of our threshold. It has been possible owing to the concerted efforts of our faculty and students, who all strive for world class education. I congratulate them all and wish our graduates a very bright future.



**B M Chowdhury/ Rector...**

## LFE- The Unique experience

The IUB curriculum has certain unique features, which makes it the best centre of learning of applied technology in the background of Liberal Arts and Science. To broaden the minds and expand the experience of the students, three courses have been made compulsory. Live in Field Experience (LFE) a six week course which is intensive in content and in supervision, is one of them. The name itself explains the nature of the course, which requires that the student experiences at first hand the life of the ordinary people, the masses in poverty who form the majority of our nation.

As Dr. A Majeed Khan believes: "The IUB curriculum has been designed to provide education in subjects relevant to the country's total development needs and future job or higher educational opportunity". In order to make their educational experience relevant to their country's need, the students must get to know how the poor live, in villages and city slums, and how they are trying to improve their living standards. To provide future leadership the students must know the dynamics of our national life. However, the majority of the students have been brought up in urban areas and have little or no idea about "Gram Bangla". This is precisely why IUB students have to broaden their vision through LFE. Since the winter of 1994-95, there have been five LFE courses. They have so far been based mainly in BARD, Kotbari, with smaller groups going to Gonoshasto Kendro, Savar and BRAC's Training Centre in Srimongal. In future LFE courses may also be carried out in TARC, Mymensingh, and RM, Bogra. The LFE course is not just an extended visit to villages or slums. The students are required to write case studies and a group Report, and then make individual presentations. To impart rigour to their questionnaire surveys they have to present the results in statistical format. The areas of interest which they are encouraged to enquire into concern gender issues, levels of poverty, access to education, environmental degradation and population dynamics. It is obvious that the social science content is of paramount importance. Over the past five years more than three hundred students have taken this course. Before the course many expressed their fears and doubts about having to learn about unfamiliar places and persons, but after finishing the course, students almost without exception, have said that LFE had enriched their lives. Some expressed surprise at how relatively tranquil the villages are, others have expressed deep sorrow at the sufferings of the very poorest, yet others have appreciated how they work so hard to improve their lives. None have come away untouched after five LFE courses. Not only do we have a wealth of social data, but we have an even greater wealth in the raised social consciousness of a new generation. ... **Haroun-er-Rashid**

## Language Centre

Clearly, communication skills are essential to a student's success at a university. IUB curriculum sees effective communicative competence in at least two international languages as a pre-requisite for higher education and global success. To teach language communication skills, IUB has set up a language centre which is currently teaching university foundation, and elective courses in English and French. The foundation courses are: English Reading Skill & English Writing Skills. Besides, the Language Centre also takes care of the not-so-able students (who have less than necessary knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and mechanics) by giving them a Remedial English course before they are ready to receive input and practice in functional English. The above courses are modular and have done away with the traditional one-textbook approach to increase learner motivation, so teachers are always painstakingly producing their own materials, or adapting available materials to the needs of their learners. The Language Centre courses, unlike rule-focussed, non-communicative courses available elsewhere, are highly communicative and useful. Needless to say, the Language Centre is always drawing up new courses to meet the growing needs of the students. Besides teaching these regular university courses, the Language Centre, in association with the ECEC, French, as mentioned earlier, is another second international language taught at the Centre. In its effort to teach French, IUB has always received close co-operation from the Alliance Francaise of Dhaka in the development of French language courses. In addition to French, some other international languages will soon find their way into the curriculum. It may be mentioned that IUB is the only university in Bangladesh which offers Chinese and French as second languages. ... **S.Mazhar-ul-Islam**

## Lifelong Education

Education does not end with a high school diploma or a university degree. It is a lifelong exercise. Beyond the formal stages of learning, people learn from work as well as for work. In a complex technological society, changes are frequent; and often these are far reaching as well. The global changes are transpiring at a radical pace to adapt to these changes. There is the need for continuous education to support future adjustment.

The concept of continuing education or continuing professional training although new in Bangladesh has been pursued by most institutions of higher education in developed countries. Multinational organizations and business houses in particular, require their executives at all levels to update and enhance their professional knowledge by undertaking training programmes every year. The idea is to develop the professional capability of the executive of the institution. In 1992 IUB, in collaboration with Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, conducted a survey to assess the need for skilled professional manpower in the country. It revealed that the demand for general management personnel in different enterprises would be the highest during the next decade, followed by the demand for technical personnel. It also revealed that the critical problem in the way of social development and economic growth was the lack of professionally qualified executives. Bangladesh is rich in human resource. What is lacking is human capability and skill. One of the deterrents of foreign investment in Bangladesh is the dearth of skilled manpower. Bringing in senior and mid-level executive from abroad makes the operation unduly expensive. Recognising the urgent need for development of professional capabilities of executives and enterprises of our country, in 1993, IUB established an Extension and Continuing Education Centre (ECEC) in order to access education to all those who need it. One of the main objectives of this Centre is to service the changing needs of the national economy with the progressive use of management skills and technological innovations. ECEC functions as an interface between the University and economic community. It offers short courses, seminars and workshops drawing appropriate expertise not only from the university but globally. The experts offer wide range of courses of economic and management topics and language skill from the grassroots to chief executive levels, and on campus, at plant or at retreats. Indeed, it is a worthwhile programme of IUB towards national economic development. ... **Mahmood-ul-Haq**