I want to make the convocation regular, not occasional

Professor Dr. M Badiul Alam

THE Grand Port City of Chittagong, once called the Porte Grande by the Portuguese sailor-merchants in Bangladesh did not have a public university for long to meet the higher educational needs of the students of Chittagong division. There was a growing demand for a public university among the people of this region in which various modern academic disciplines would be set up in order to develop skilled and erudite human resources. Thus on November 18, 1966, the University of Chittagong (CU) was inaugurated. Located at Fatehpur, Hathazari, it is 22 km. away from the Chittagong city and about one km. away to the west from Chittagong-Nazirhat highway. Since its inception, it has come a long way with so many ups and downs as well as glories and achievements. Recently, CU celebrated its 3rd convocation. On the occasion of the convocation, Star Campus (SC) spoke to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of this institution Professor Dr. M Badiul Alam about the different aspects of CU.

SC: This year's convocation took place after many years. What do you think are the reasons for the delay?

VC: Well, after more than eight years finally the long expected 3rd convocation of CU was held. I know that for a university which started its journey in the year 1966, holding only three convocations are far from enough and that too after huge gaps



in between. This time I wanted to take up the challenge, I wanted to hold the convocation, I wanted to rebuild the image of CU by organising the convocation just as other universities do. I am happy that I got all sorts of support and co-operation from every corner to make this grand event happen. Actually it's all about becoming aware about the desires of the students who always dream of taking their certificates in the colourful atmosphere of the convocation ceremonies.

SC: Do you have plans to organise the event every year from here on?

VC: Yes, of course I want to hold convocation every year. In fact, it's quite unusual in comparison to other parts of the world that most of the public universities in Bangladesh fail to hold the convocation on a regular basis. In my tenure I want to establish that example, I want to make the convocation a regular feature, not occasional.

SC: CU is known for prolonged session jams. What initiatives do you plan to take to stop this trend to smoothen the education timetable in this institution?

VC: The session jams were in an alarming state when I took up the charge of VC in 2006. It became my chief agenda to curtail session jams. I gave the utmost priority on it and identified the causes behind this problem. Among many others the main reasons I found responsible for session jams were that classes did not take places timely, courses were not completed in due time, exams were not held on time and results were not published on time. To solve this problem I've introduced academic calendar, academic ordinance as well as examination ordinance. Previously, students who did not complete their graduation within six years could sit for the exams on special considerations but by introducing the examination ordinance I totally abolished this bad practice. According to these ordinances, every student must complete their graduation within six years.

SC: Many think that the standard of education at CU is deteriorating and as a result they opt for other public and private universities. How would you evaluate this situation?

VC: I don't agree with this at all. Last year there were around 90,000