

It was a cool and sunny day on December 18, 2014, a perfect weather for holding public ceremonies outdoors. On the day, I witnessed a very impressive and unusual Convocation ceremony of the Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) at their Boshundhora campus. It was impressive because the music, the beautiful amphitheatre, the gowned graduates getting the degree certificates, the well decorated stage with beautiful flowers, the huge colourful banners on the buildings around the venue, speeches by the distinguished people on the stage, the songs, the audience, literally everyone and everything was presented extremely professionally and with great care. It represented the good taste, discipline and sound management.

It was more impressive because the ceremony was observed in the IUB's own campus. There is every reason to be proud of that. The event was unusual because the Convocation was not held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC). Private universities are in operation for more than 20 years. Over the last many years we have been participating in the convocation ceremonies, almost all held in the BICC. People are tired of observing graduation ceremonies in the BICC. So this IUB Convocation was a pleasant departure. I would say that the designers of the IUB Campus thought ahead that they would require a large enough open space to hold such programs.

The speeches were well articulated, precise and short. We all know that most of the private universities are not-for-profit organisations. In his speech, the President of the IUB categorically mentioned with a very bold assertion that the members of the IUB Board of Trustees (BoT) do not take any monetary benefit from the University. This should be an example for other universities and not-for-profit



A Convocation with a Difference

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organisations to emulate. Most of the BoT members are not poor people, so they should not take any remuneration from the University. After all they, with their hard earned money, have created these institutions to impart good education to the present and future generations of our country and build future leaders.

All the respected speakers, including the Minister of Education, rightly highlighted two most important issues. Firstly they discussed about the cause for which such universities to exist, that is generating and disseminating knowledge and prepare our future leaders and managers. And this requires imparting of quality education. In that sense quality is more

important than quantity. The universities should focus on good leadership, good management, qualified teachers, quality syllabuses, good methodologies of teaching and learning and also good intakes. In a university, knowledge transfer is not enough; teachers should involve the students in constructing and reconstructing knowledge. Secondly the speakers cautioned about corruption in educational institutions such as universities. Once corruption creeps into a university, there will definitely be a reflection of that in our future leadership and management. Universities should be absolutely fair, disciplined and have zero tolerance on corruption. They should promote quality education with one strong fist and should resist corruption with the other strong fist.

I must also mention that this whole event was managed extremely well. Of course it was started a little late by half an hour. This says a lot about the leadership and management capabilities of the IUB. Speakers did not speak for long and each of them made valuable points. The graduates and guests were all seated on time. The management of cars and

parking in the basement and outside was done fairly efficiently. There was no chaos and shouting. In Bangladesh in such situations management by shouting gets the prominence. The whole venue was neatly organised in advance including the cleanliness of the campus. People who have worked behind the scene did a good job. The stage was very well decorated with flowers and the sound system worked well. I understand everything was done by the management, the faculty members and the students by themselves. This deserves congratulations.

The reason for writing this appreciative piece is that I was happy to see such a high level of organising by our own people. It was heartening. I know that with the right kind of leadership and management, Bangladeshis can do extraordinary feats. There are many such examples all around us. We should recognize them in bold headlines. Such events and activities give us hope in our people and country. Holding of this sort of successful performances is also a source of inspiration for others.

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