

Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) started its journey in 2006 with four departments, 13 teachers and 180 students. In 2015, after nine years, this university was plagued by session jams, conflict between teachers and administrative officials, and severe shortage of necessary infrastructure. Students could not live in the dilapidated dormitories and due to shortage of rooms in the only academic building, classes and exams could not be held on time, which resulted in severe session jam.

Now, in 2019, the university boasts of two massive 10-storeyed academic buildings, one of which is the third largest academic building in Bangladesh. Another 20-storeyed building is under construction, which will be the largest academic building of the country. Two decrepit dormitories have been repaired and three new dormitories have been built in the last four years—two for male students and one for female students. Now, all the students of NSTU can stay in campus enjoying modern amenities. Separate prayer halls for the students and teachers of all religions have been established in the campus. For those who live outside the campus, the university has been providing free of cost transport services with a fleet of nine buses. A well-equipped

performing institutions, has established itself as one of the top emerging universities of the country in less than five years. Dr M Wahiduzzaman, the current vice-chancellor of NSTU, is one of the few academicians of the country who studied educational administration and developed academic expertise in this field through his numerous research and professional experiences.

After completing his graduate and post-graduate studies from the Faculty of Law, Dhaka University (DU), Wahiduzzaman went on to study educational administration at DU's Institute of Education and Research (IER) where he achieved first class and secured first position among all of his batchmates. Wahiduzzaman says, "Throughout my student life I was involved with anti-autocracy student movements. I was elected as the secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union in 1989. With my law degrees and political experiences, I could have built my career in legal practice and politics. But I had a passion to contribute to the education sector."

After completing his second post-graduation from IER, Wahiduzzaman joined the institution as a lecturer of the department of educational administration. He conducted his PhD at the School of

cellor of NSTU and got the responsibility to revive the dying university. There is no doubt that he has done his job incredibly well but his path was beset with difficulties. His vice-chancellorship was challenged in the court with the claim that his academic background on educational administration made him ineligible to lead a science and technology university. In response, he submitted a note before the court explaining why education is considered as a scientific discipline worldwide and why it is necessary to have academic qualification on education to run educational institutions. Ultimately, it was proved in court that the case was politically motivated and it was filed by some individuals who had been his political rivals.

"I had to spend almost an entire year to fight this case. Otherwise, I could have done more for NSTU. I believe all the vice-chancellors, principals and headmasters who have the noble responsibility to run educational institutions should have academic qualification on educational administration. They are the builders of our next generation and such responsibility should be trusted onto academicians who have recognised academic works on running educational institutions," says Wahiduzzaman.

An academician with a VISION

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

medical centre for students has also been built where students can avail free medical treatments.

Besides infrastructure, the university has also gone through noteworthy academic expansion. In the last four years, 14 departments, three faculties and two institutes have been established in the university. Besides customised classrooms, all the departments have dedicated and well-equipped laboratories. There is now a central library, which offers more than 15,000 books and 2,000 national and international research journals. The installation of an online library is also underway. Yearlong session jams have been cleared completely and two convocations have been held in the last four years.

The man behind such radical transformation is Professor Dr M Wahiduzzaman. He took the charge of NSTU as its Vice Chancellor on June 2, 2015. Under his leadership, NSTU, once one of the lowest



Professor Dr M Wahiduzzaman

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Education in University of Nottingham under Professor Emeritus William John Morgan, one of the most respected educationists of the world. His thesis on "role of mass media in non-formal education of Bangladesh with special regard to television and radio" was widely acclaimed in academia and he was offered the distinction to work as a visiting researcher at University of Warwick in the UK and at University of Canterbury in New Zealand. So far, he has published 23 academic articles in various reputed journals on education including *Social Science Review* and *Teachers' World*. He ran the department of educational administration as its chair from 2006 to 2009. He was also elected as the general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association, and led the Federation of University Teachers' Associations as its secretary general.

Thanks to his academic achievements and expertise in educational administration, he was appointed as the vice-chancellor

Wahiduzzaman is going to complete his tenure as the vice-chancellor of NSTU this month. As a recognition to his contribution for ensuring quality education and upholding human rights and religious co-existence, he has recently been awarded with the Tokurin-ji Asian Buddhist Peace Award 2019 and the title "Friend of Humanity" by the Buddhist leaders of Japan.

He says, "We have started academic partnership and exchange programmes with some of the best universities of Japan, USA and Turkey besides ongoing academic and infrastructural expansion. We are hiring non-resident Bangladeshi scholars to teach at NSTU who have been working in globally renowned universities. My dream is to establish NSTU as one of the best universities in the world. In the last five years, we have started our journey towards that direction. Now, we must ensure that this journey continues with greater pace."