



**THE
BUSINESS
STANDARD**

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The 6th Nahreen Khan Memorial Lecture took place on Wednesday, 27 November 2024, in the Manzur Elahi Auditorium at East West University (EWU). Renowned economist Professor Rehman Sobhan delivered the keynote speech titled Constructing a More Just Society in Bangladesh.

In his lecture, Professor Sobhan addressed inequality in Bangladesh, focusing on four key areas: market injustice, inequitable social opportunity, political injustice, and state injustice. He highlighted the persistent poverty of farmers, exacerbated by middlemen and syndicates who profit at their expense. Professor Sobhan also discussed disparities in education and healthcare, emphasizing that unequal access is dividing the nation into two distinct societies. Additionally, he criticised the dominance of wealthy individuals in political participation, particularly in parliament, where business interests often influence policymaking.

Despite the challenges, Professor Sobhan proposed several solutions to create a more equitable society. He advocated for providing private land to the landless, offering workers ownership stakes in industrial factories, and allocating at least 5% of the national budget to education. He also recommended establishing a universal healthcare insurance system through public-private partnerships and setting national goals to reduce discrimination against women and minorities.

The lecture honoured the late Nahreen Khan, a former EWU student and the daughter of Dr Akbar Ali Khan, a former advisor to Bangladesh's caretaker government. Several distinguished speakers also addressed the audience, including EWU Chief Advisor and former Bangladesh Bank Governor Professor Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Shams Rahman, and Air Cdre (retd.) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, Treasurer of EWU.

Faculty members, students, officials, and relatives of Nahreen Khan attended the event, which underscored the need for collective efforts to address inequality and foster a just society in Bangladesh.