

MOHAMMAD MUSA, Ph.D.

PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

Honorable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chancellor of East West University, His Excellency Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, Dr. M. Osman Farruk, Honorable Minister for Education, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, the convocation speaker, Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Founder Vice Chancellor & President, Board of Directors, distinguished members of the Board, distinguished guests, Registrar, respected teachers, administrative officials, members of the media, graduating students and parents, Good morning and As-salamu Alikum.

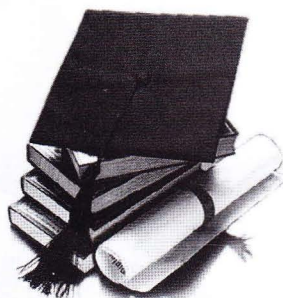
Congratulations to today's successful graduates. I am really proud of you all for your outstanding achievement.

This is our fourth convocation and 9th year of our journey. We are relatively young. But our success is noteworthy. "Founding Fathers" of EWU, as Dr. Farashuddin would like to call them, have always been very kind to their creation. They are constantly at work for the wellbeing of the organization they created in 1995, which started its journey with only 2 departments, 20 students and 6 faculty members in the Fall semester of 1996. Their relentless pursuit in making the organization an ideal home for "excellence in education" has started to pay dividends. EWU has already become an organization of 110 full-time and 30 part-time faculty members to inspire, guide and educate about 4,000 students registered in eight departments under three Faculties. Sheer number is not our yardstick for measuring success. Had the number been our target, we could easily add at least two thousand new students this semester alone. For a total of 2,469 applicants applied for seats in our undergraduate and graduate programs in this semester. As we believe in quality, we administered rigorous tests and finally admitted only about one-fourth of them.

Thanks to the visionary leadership provided by the Board members through Dr. Farashuddin, EWU has been able to create a culture in which each member, be he or she a faculty member or an administrative official, shares the same common goal, a sense of belongingness, and a team spirit. All of us work here as if we have a mission to accomplish and would not rest until the mission is in fact accomplished. You can see this team spirit working when you watch Mr. Nurul Islam working in the admission office and faculty members cutting jokes at each other in the MBA office after a full day of work.

Still today I recall with amazement the day I decided to be part of EWU family six years and a half ago. To many of my friends, well wishers and relatives, it was a decision to be ridiculed about. They thought I must be making a mistake of my life. For I was going to join an institution most of them then do not know about; but the institution I was leaving behind was something to brag about being part of it. Only I knew in my heart, I was making the right decision. Time proved that indeed I made the right decision. In my initial years at EWU, I had to suffer from identity crisis. While giving my identity to people whom I met for the first time, after saying that I was Professor & Pro Vice Chancellor of EWU, I used to add that I once worked for IBA and NSU to prove my worth. I had a problem then; but no more. I now take pride in my association with EWU. What a change 6 years and a half made!

I have a new problem now and, I know, I do not have any solution to this problem. After each admission test, I would invariably receive calls, and sometime visits, from those whom I knew before and also from those whom I did not. But all of them would invariably ask me if I could help their



candidates get admitted into our programs. After about two decades, a high school classmate of mine showed up in my office a few days before the admission test of Spring 2005 semester with a similar request. Telling a friend with whom I spent my high school days as classmates that if his son could not get into our program fair and square through our admission test, there was nothing that I could do was a very painful experience I would definitely love to avoid. But that is where I think our strengths lie.

Do not get me wrong. I am not in any way trying to say that we have achieved something to brag about. I, in fact, believe that we have a very long journey to complete before we would be able to reach to our cherished land, a land where EWU would really become a home for excellence in education, a land where EWU would be recognized as one of the finest institutes of its kind not only in Bangladesh but also in South and South-east Asia.

We know that to make a first-rate university, we need to have a proper mix of faculty, staff and infrastructural facilities. We continue to make first-rate faculty appointments. Probably we have the largest full-time faculty among the private universities in the country, and we have a noteworthy faculty by any measure. Our administrative machinery is as smooth and efficient as it can be. With whatever limited resources we have, perhaps, none among all private universities in the country provides better infrastructural facilities than us. We have 6 state-of-the-art computer labs, a very large library, an English Language Lab, 2 digital labs, 3 pharmacy labs, one VLSI lab and our own VSAT. All our offices and classrooms are well-equipped and air-conditioned.

We provide all these infrastructural facilities and many more in 5 high rise buildings in our current temporary campus at Mohakhali. We are soon adding one more building to ease our accommodation problems. Frankly, we are growing at a rate that has outpaced our housing capacity. Good news for us that, by the end of this year, by the grace of the Almighty, we would lay the foundation stones in our own permanent campus at Aftab Nagar off Progati Sarani near BTV building. Inshallah, by year-end 2007, we would move to our permanent campus with a total space more than sufficient to accommodate 5,000 students.

Enough about EWU! Let me now turn my attention to those for whom we are gathered here today - the graduating class of 2005.

This is a defining moment of your life. After years of hard work and sometimes painful sacrifices, you have reached this point of recognition for demonstrating competence in your respective fields. Standing at this crossroad of your life, you can look back and cherish many of the good memories you experienced during your student life and also look forward to a life still uncharted but full of challenges. I am confident that we have given you the needed foundation to meet those challenges. But you've got to remember that each new challenge you face will be unique and will demand unique solution. In order to be at the top, you have to find out that unique solution first. Therefore, you are well advised to acquire new knowledge whenever possible.

You do not live a life for you only. You are part of a family, part of a community and part of a society. You have a definite role to play as a member of your family, member of your community and member of your society. If you fail to do your part, then you do not have a descent life to live for yourself, for your family and, above all, for your society. Remember, we are destined to live in a society we make.

There is an unhealthy competition for amassing wealth going on. It is apparent that 'ends justify the means' has become the motto for most of us. However, whatever benevolent the 'ends' are, achieving those 'ends' through unjust, unfair and illegal means can not bring any peace and prosperity for anyone. Therefore, do what is right and forsake what is wrong.

We are a nation of 140 million people, with so many problems and so many possibilities. It is aching and crying for help. It is incumbent on you to respond to this call. Do respond. Lead the nation in whatever way possible. Help make this nation prosperous.

In concluding, let me congratulate you again on your remarkable achievement. Enjoy your new found success. Remember what Mother Teresa said, "Life is a promise; fulfill it."

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.