**PROFESSOR MOHAMMED SHARIF**

VICE CHANCELLOR  
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

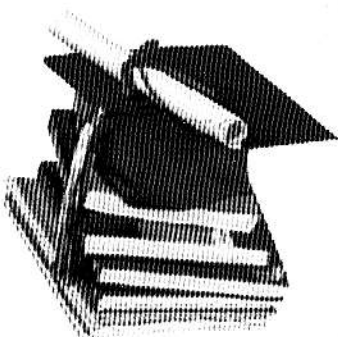


Honorable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chancellor of East West University, His Excellency Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, Mr. Ayub Quadri, Honorable Adviser, Ministries of Education, Primary & Mass Education, and Cultural Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Convocation Speaker Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam, Professor Emeritus, University of Chittagong, Mr. Jalaluddin Ahmed, President of the Board of Directors of East West University, Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Founder Vice Chancellor of East West University, distinguished members of the Board of Directors of East West University, Dr. Mohammad Musa, Pro Vice Chancellor, Deans of Faculties, distinguished guests, respected teachers, administrative officials, members of the media, graduating students and parents, As-salamu Alaikum.

I feel honored and privileged to be a part of this auspicious occasion of the Sixth Convocation of our esteemed University. Today 644 graduates will be conferred their degrees. The Convocation symbolizes the epitome of not only the academic accomplishments of our students but also the University's commitment to fulfill its obligations towards them and to the society. Let me first, therefore, offer my heartiest congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2007. We all appreciate the dedication and hardwork that have brought you here today. Well done! You are now set to negotiate the next phase of your lives in the world out there. We wish you every success and God speed.

East West University is eleven years old this day. It began its journey in the Fall Semester of 1996 with only six faculty members and twenty students. However, it has expanded significantly since then – currently it has a student population of more than 5000 and over 200 faculty members. Although it is alleged that private sector higher education is expensive, our University is proud of the fact that our tuition fees are among the lowest. In addition, our policy of generous financial assistance to the meritorious and to the financially constrained has supported several hundred students through their academic courses. Although the Private University Act of 1992 stipulates that need-based and merit-based scholarships must be provided to five per cent of its enrolled students, East West University distributes at least nine per cent of its total earnings to support more than 20 per cent of its regular students. In addition, we are always exploring new disciplines and programmes to include them in our course offerings in order to keep up with the growing demands of the ever-changing world. I would like to mention with pride that our graduates are in great demand in the current job market – indeed our graduates have already proven their worth in the corporate world. In fact, the high employment rate of our graduates certainly has been a vital factor influencing the competition for enrollment at this University.

It is my pleasure to report to you that East West University is now regarded as one of the best universities in the country. Undoubtedly the sincere efforts and commitment of the visionaries –



the 'founding fathers', the extraordinary efficiency and dedication of our faculty and administrative officials, the trust placed in us by the parents of our students, and most importantly, the willingness of our students to work hard and respect the congenial and positive atmosphere that we strive to maintain, have all contributed to this outstanding achievement. I sincerely thank them all.

Dear Graduating Students, you are among a very select group of young people who are obtaining prestigious university degrees. Not many in our country are as fortunate as you are; thousands and thousands are forced for various reasons to remain outside the realm of higher education. Since you have gotten the opportunity, we are sure you will make the best use of the knowledge and the skills you have gathered here not only for yourselves but also for the country and the society at large. We take pride in the fact that, like our former graduates who already have proven their worth, you will maintain this trend. Indeed, we hope that you will elevate your institution to loftier heights.

Dear Graduates, you have every reason to be confident, but you cannot take the future for granted. The challenges ahead of you are enormous; however, you are well trained to negotiate these hurdles in order to establish your unique identity. As graduates of East West University you will definitely be ready to confront new challenges and rise to greater responsibilities. Your responsibilities must entail uplifting those who are marginalized, tackling forces opposed to progress, upholding the truth, and nurturing a critical and open mind in the pursuit of truth.

Dear Graduating Students, we take pride in your success. We have done our best to unlock your potential. Please do not forget that sincerity, hard work, creativity, and dedication are foundations on which success can be built. Do not forget the contribution of your parents, the founding fathers of the University, the faculty, and the staff, friends and well wishers -the people who have always encouraged you to hitch your wagon to the stars.

Always bear in mind that we have certain duties towards preserving social stability. Remember, what we give to the society, the society gives back to us. There is often a conflict between self-interest and the interest of the society. You must not lose sight of the fact that the nation, the society, and humanity come first. Let me illustrate, by focusing on the duty of a teacher; a teacher's primary responsibility is to harness his or her competence in order to perform efficiently for the sake of all students. A teacher must seek new knowledge, conduct research, and thereby expand the frontier of the world of ideas. All these must be done for the benefit of students and society at large. In doing so, a teacher must get the students to participate so that they can become a part of this process of creation of knowledge. If this is done, he or she can become a successful teacher. If all of us practice this, we can make our society a better place to live and the society will progress. Just self-interest and material rewards must not blur our vision. If I choose to maximize my own interest only, society will be deprived of the benefits that I can render. Look around you. How many of us are doing what we are supposed to do? Think about the situation we are currently in and why. I will let you decide if we are working satisfactorily or not!

To conclude, the future of the nation depends on you. Whatever profession you choose for yourselves - that of a teacher, researcher, manager, administrator, bureaucrat, business executive, or technologist, you cannot afford to lose sight of the role allotted to you. You must live up to the expectations the nation has pinned on you. These expectations relate to professionalism, humanitarianism, and the upkeep of values. In short, the nation eagerly awaits a befitting return from you.

I wish you happiness and fulfillment in life.

I sincerely thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for giving me a patient hearing.  
Thank you very much!

Commencement 2007