

SXUK confers D.Litt on Mamata Banerjee

In a historic move, Father John Felix Raj, Vice-Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) conferred the D.Litt (Honoris Causa) on Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, in the fourth Convocation ceremony on 6th February, 2023, in the presence of Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose, Governor of West Bengal.

The university felicitated Dr. Mamata Banerjee with this great honour in academics for her contribution in the development of higher education in the state. Fr. Raj handed over the citation to her. The Governor called it an occasion "where a deserving woman leader has been honoured with a degree".

Dr. Banerjee dedicated this honour to the common people, especially to the weaker sections of the state.

The programme began with the inauguration of Loyola Tirtha by the Chief Minister - the newly constructed administrative block that houses the Office of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and other offices.

The university's executive committee recommended Mamata's name for the honour, in recognition of her "exemplary contribution to social development and education in the state", Father Raj said, in his inaugural address. He also read out the annual report and narrated the activities of the University in different sectors. After that, the Chief Minister was conferred on the prestigious degree.

While delivering the Convocation address, Dr. Mamata Banerjee praised the University for imparting quality education and compared it with renowned universities of the West. She acknowledged and extolled numerous development programmes that the university undertook in various sectors.

Besides congratulating the degree recipients, she expressed a hope that a government-sponsored Saint Mother Teresa Chair Professor be introduced at the university. "Today, I propose from the Government of West Bengal a respected chair for the sainthood of Mother Teresa at St Xavier's University, so that it can work for education, and a message can go to the world. Yes, Bengal gives full respect to mothers", she said.

"She became an honorary alumna of the university's alumni association on Monday," said Father Raj. She was also accorded with an honorary alumni membership



card and a memento by Vatsal Chirimar, Ho'ny Secretary of St. Xavier's University Kolkata Alumni Association.

The Governor was equally effusive in praising the University for its decision, as he equated her with Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, Winston Churchill and many other renowned personalities.

Strongly criticising the nexus between politics and education that have been crippling the academic scenario in many universities, the Governor admired the politics-free education and campus of SXUK, and expressed his happiness of finding "a happy marriage of knowledge and statecraft". He venerated the quality of missionary education across the world, including the Xaverian family.

A total of 770 students received their degree completion certificates on this convocation day. Out of them, there were 113 rank holders who secured first, second and third positions respectively in different programmes.

Out of these rank holders, 60 students belonged to postgraduate programmes, and 53 students belonged to undergraduate programmes. There were 33 medal-recipients who were awarded with gold, silver and bronze medals. Two faculty members of the University were also felicitated for completion of their Ph.D. programmes, during their service.

The first issue of the University's research journal and the magazine, were also inaugurated. The programme concluded with a hope to meet new heights in the future.

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