

The Daily Star honours meritorious students

610 awarded for outstanding results in 'O' and 'A' level exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star honoured 610 outstanding achievers in the 'O' and 'A' level examinations of July 2004-June 2005 academic year amid fanfares and jubilation at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

Speakers at the gala event styled 'Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow' called on the young scholars to keep their studies on to the highest level wherever available, but with the ultimate goal to serve their country as its future leaders.

Every year since 1999 The Daily Star has been awarding Certificates of Excellence and medals to the students who secure six or more A's in two consecutive sittings in the O level and a minimum of three A's in the A level exams held under Cambridge University and the University of London.

This seventh round of the prestigious award went to 610 students from 39 schools - 469 for brilliant O level scores and 141 for A level scores.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, as chief guest of the gala, presented the certificates and medals to the future 'nation builders'.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam presided over the felicitations with David Davies, global relationship manager of Edexcel International, UK and Omer Rashid, director marketing of Bangalink, present among the guests.

Anwar Choudhury lauded the achievements by the Bangladeshi students. "Each of them has achieved better results than I did and I am, as British High Commissioner here and as a son of the land and the soil, also very proud."

"You have made your parents and teachers proud and now you have the real possibility to make your nation proud," he observed.

The UK has become the largest bilateral donor to Bangladesh and it wants to make sure that every Bangladeshi child gets the chance to go to school, Choudhury said.

Referring to the importance of English language in the globalised world, he said English language must not be treated as a mere language.

English language plays a very significant role in global integrity and global knowledge, the British High Commissioner said. "This is why we are working to expand English language activities massively."

Appreciating the large number of good grade achievers in an internationally competitive framework, Mahfuz Anam in his welcome speech said: "You have made us proud. We thank you for your achievement and we will work together to build Bangladesh."

There is no achievement unless it touches the community and the people who have actually given them the opportunity to grow, he said recalling that this year English medium schools and their teachers have done something again to make all proud.

English medium schools and The Daily Star have created a relief fund for the needy in the society, he said. "All of us have worked together to raise Tk 11 lakh which we have distributed to 1,100 families in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagar, Gaibandha and Kurigram districts. It is an evidence of how closely you feel for the community."

Anam lauded contributions of the parents, schools, teachers and management of these institutions who have played very important roles from their respective positions in achieving the success by these students.

Addressing the awardees, David Davies said these students have achieved some of the best results in the world in their subjects. "Students of today in Bangladesh have the opportunity to [integrate] into the global world of tomorrow."

"We have seen in recent years

the problems which can arise when there are misunderstandings between groups from different cultures," he said adding, "these students here today have made an excellent foundation on which to help to build the world of the future."

Edexcel has been working with examination boards in many countries around the world to help them to develop their examination systems using the latest technology, Davies mentioned.

In his address, Omer Rashid appreciated the achievements of Bangladeshi students, noting that this type of recognition is very important which will encourage them to contribute more to build the nation.

Sarah Fouzia Chowdhury from Scholastica, who received 10 A's in one sitting and Prathama Komal Nabi from Sunnydale School, who secured 11 A's in two consecutive sittings spoke on behalf of the O level awardees.

Yasir Bin Baqui from Sunshine Grammar School, Chittagong, who achieved 5 A's in one sitting in June 2005 session spoke on behalf of the A level awardees.

This year 56 candidates -- 38 O level and 18 A level students -- received awards for obtaining the highest marks in each subject in each session. Special awards were given to 10 candidates -- 7 students from O level and 3 from A level -- who have obtained the highest number of A's in one sitting.

Two students from O level and four students from A level were awarded for obtaining the highest number of A's altogether.

Sadya Afreen Mallick rendered inspiring patriotic songs and Elita Karim of The Daily Star conducted the ceremony, which went on for more than three hours.

16 die

FROM PAGE 16
Albanians kidnapped and killed by Taliban fighters last week in an area between Kandahar and neighbouring Helmand province.

Initial reports had said five policemen were killed in the attack in Maiwand district but Kandahar governor Asadullah Khaled on Saturday revised the toll upwards to nine.

On Saturday, suspected Taliban rebels killed former Ghanzi province governor Taj Mohammad, known as Qari Baba, and his four companions in the southeastern province, one of the hotbeds of the Taliban.

PBCP leader

FROM PAGE 1
Shamsul got caught in the 'crossfire' and died on the spot when he attempted to flee during the hour-long shootout.

Two constables were also injured during the gunfight.

One pipe gun and four bullets were retrieved from the spot.

According to police, Shamsul was accused in 20 criminal cases including 19 for murder.

Khaleda's gift

FROM PAGE 1
also for Rahul and Priyanka -- Sonia Gandhi's son and daughter.

While most of the sarees have been bought from Tangail Sari Kutir at New Bailey Road, some of them in white and off-white colours were ordered to the weavers at Rupganj, Narayanganj with prescribed designs.

Energy ministry

FROM PAGE 1
can pay off the bank loans as well as other liabilities.

The government should make up the deficit of the BPC by keeping a certain amount reserved in the budget, another suggestion says.

The energy ministry had earlier sent this proposal to the finance ministry but did not get any response.

FINANCE MINISTRY'S TROUBLE

Finance ministry sources said they are considering the proposal of Sonali Bank. On the energy ministry's proposal, they said a decision in this regard will have to come from the highest level of the government.

"We are in trouble. One the one hand, it is very difficult for the government to raise fuel prices before the next elections and on the other, as we are not adjusting local prices of fuel with international market prices, it is putting a huge pressure on fiscal management," one source pointed out.

The government does not have the resources to provide budgetary support to the energy ministry's proposal, the sources said.

Sonali Bank needs cash support to overcome the crisis it is facing, and the finance ministry is examining this, they added.

"All problems will be resolved soon after we receive the result of the appeal," a senior EC Secretariat official told The Daily Star.

Draft voter list

FROM PAGE 1
publication of the draft and final voter lists as it is waiting for the outcome of its appeal against a High Court directive that asked the secretariat to revise the existing voter roll instead of preparing a fresh one.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will hear the appeal on March 20.

"All problems will be resolved soon after we receive the result of the appeal," a senior EC Secretariat official told The Daily Star.

Offer to LDCs

FROM PAGE 1
These six leaders are Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Sugar of Fiji, Kalopate Lavalav, three ambassadors to the WTO -- South Africa's Faizel Ismail, Chile's Mario Matus and Benin's Samuel Amehou, Member of Indian Planning Commission and former WTO Deputy Director General Dr Anwarul Hoda and Executive Director of Bangladesh's Centre for Policy Dialogue Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya. They visited Washington DC, Brussels and London during March 6-10 and talked to public representatives and their staffs, foreign ministry officials, private sector people, researchers and civil society members.

These people included the Chief of Staff of the Subcommittee on Trade of the US Wage and Means Angela Paolini Ellard, US State Department Undersecretary for Economic Business and Agricultural Affairs Joseette Shiner and Deputy Assistant Administrator USAID James Smith.

During the discussions, the US officials showed a lukewarm response to initiate more steps to accommodate LDC demands in the trade deal specially in the view that the US domestic situation is not very favourable for more trade concessions compatible with WTO compulsions. This is because the Trade Promotion Authority, which is a Congressional authority to the president to directly negotiate trade agreements with other countries on a fast track, is on its way out, the GSP issue is coming up for renewal and the farm bill is set to be reviewed with subsidy cuts on the cards.

As such the US officials hold the view that whatever they have done for the LDCs is final and sealed.

However, the US feels that if the Doha Round concluding deal becomes a broader package with more areas for market access such as more cuts in industrial market access to developed countries, and greater EU market access in agriculture and service sector access to developing countries specially India, Brazil and China, then the US may find room to accommodate the LDC concerns.

Because of the low ambition level about striking a deal during the round, private sector initiative -- such as the one spearheaded by the pharmaceutical sector during the Uruguay Round -- to move the talks forward is also not visible. There is a chance that the agro companies backed by the giants such as Cargill and Monsanto will create pressure on countries to free up trade for a deal, but so far there has not been any visible alliance building effort in the horizon.

There has also not been any visible development in the Aid for Trade proposal for capacity building of the LDCs. The issues that still remain unclear are the yet to be proposed governance structure, mobilisation of resources and making it clear whether the resources will be newly committed or the old ones simply redirected.

About the duty free access, the US officials showed very specific set of mind to the six-member panel of speakers.

The situation right now is such that of the \$12 billion exports from the LDCs to the US, about \$7 billion is subjected to duty. Thirty-eight percent of the LDC exports to the US is textiles and garments, which are subjected to duty. The rest are petroleum products (51 percent) and others. Of this amount, Bangladesh exports items worth \$2.3 billion under 575 product lines of which \$2.1 billion under 354 lines are subjected to duty. As such, the items, withdrawal of duty on which could help the LDCs heavily charged with tariff.

Still, the US continues to argue that since Bangladesh and many other LDCs clocked double digit growth in its apparel exports in the post-MFA regime, it cannot claim duty and quota free market access in apparels.

The Hong Kong Declaration has also given that LDCs full and immediately effective duty-free access as it has kept aside 3 percent products on an Exclusion List. The modalities of the

resources will be newly committed or the old ones simply redirected.

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