

The Daily Star HONOURS 733 NATION BUILDERS OF TOMORROW Vow to build poverty-free Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star yesterday honoured 733 students from the English medium schools for achieving outstanding results in O-level and A-level examinations of 2005-06.

Receiving the awards, the students vowed to build a prosperous and poverty-free Bangladesh. They also committed themselves to serving the people and making significant contributions to the nation-building efforts.

The hall room of the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre was packed out much before the formal beginning

of the awards ceremony at 9:00am. The awardees of 56 schools gathered at the venue braving the early morning chills. Along with them came their teachers, parents and well-wishers.

Valerie A Taylor, founder of the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), and British High Commissioner in Dhaka Anwar Choudhury graced the lively ceremony as the chief and special guests.

The "Nation Builders of Tomorrow" as the event was titled received the awards amid rapturous applause from the audience.

Editor and Publisher of The

Daily Star Mahfuz Anam welcomed the guests, school heads and teachers and the awardees. Former adviser of the caretaker government and Scholastica Chairperson Yasmeen Murshed delivered the vote of thanks.

Scenes of jubilation marked the four-hour gala event that was addressed also by Alan Field, South Asia Regional Manager of Edexcel International, Imran Rahman, managing director of Brac Bank, and Stein Naevdal, chief marketing officer of Grameenphone.

Rihab Rubaiyat of Dhanmondi Tutorial and Raqueebul Islam Ketan of International Turkish Hope

School spoke giving their reaction to being honoured by the premier daily of the country.

In her speech, Valerie Taylor suggested that the students should pursue a life "without fear and favour" to overcome the difficulties and sufferings they might have to encounter in their professional life.

Calling them the future leaders, she pointed out that the standard of a nation is judged by the attention it pays to its vulnerable groups.

She urged the young scholars not to judge anyone from outside and added, "Man looks at the outward appearance but the God

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Three get world highest marks in 3 subjects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Bangladeshi students obtained the highest marks in the world in three subjects in the O level examinations held in November 2005.

Shara Singh of Chittagong Grammar School got the highest mark in the world in mathematics, Russell Mahmood of Oxford International School of Dhaka got the highest mark in human and social biology, and Moutia Saha Natasha from South Herald School of Khulna got the highest mark in Bengali.

They were among the 733 brilliant students who were awarded and honoured by The Daily Star in a

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Full of passion, inspiration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the outstanding young talents expressed their desire to serve the nation through establishing themselves in different fields, mainly science and technology.

The nation builders of tomorrow dream of a poverty-free Bangladesh and are committed to work to take the country to a prestigious position in the world.

"I dream of a poverty-free Bangladesh which will be considered a power house in economic and education sectors," said Ahsan Mosharrar Barkatullah of Scholastica, who got the highest marks in seven subjects with 10 A's in the O level examinations without having to take the exams more than once.

He wants to study economics and become a great economist to serve the nation.

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CA HOLDS HIS FIRST ECNEC MEET TODAY Graft-infested Chandpur power project seeks to increase cost

SHARIEF KHAN and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed holds his first meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) today to consider approval of 15 projects, including a couple of controversial ones, worth Tk 2,230.98 crore.

The projects include the revised budget for the Chandpur 150MW power project awarded to the blacklisted Chinese company Harbin amid allegations of gross irregularities and corruption. Harbin's Chinese competitor in the project's tender CMEC has already sought the government's intervention to stop this corrupt scheme

and ensure justice.

The Power Development Board (PDB) seeks a revised budget of Tk 686 crore for this power project, including an increase of the cost for power plant components by \$16 million.

The PDB proposal seeks to increase the budget of \$45.2 million for the first phase 100MW gas turbine plant to \$61.57 million. The price quoted by Harbin for this was around \$45.2 million (Tk 288 crore). The PDB awarded the project to Harbin ignoring a government review committee's reservations on the plea that Harbin was doing it for a cheap price tag. The Hawa Bhaban pushed this project all along when the BNP-led four-

party alliance government was in power.

The other controversial project is the third Karnaphuli 50MW hydropower unit rehabilitation project. Whereas a new plant can be installed at a cost of Tk 150 crore, the proposal seeks to obtain Tk 180 crore for its rehabilitation under an Italian soft loan. This project was pushed by ANH Akhtar Hossain, who is now in jail as a graft suspect.

Sources said the Cabinet Purchase Committee has already approved the proposal on February 8. Although Akhtar was no longer the power secretary at that time, the proposal approved by the purchase committee bears his signature. The

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PHOTO STAR

Jubilant winners at the 8th Award Presentation Ceremony for the Outstanding Students of O and A Levels. The Daily Star organised the even at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

BNP chief, top leaders differ on 'mistakes'

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Differences of opinion between BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and top leaders of the party on vital organisational matters are increasing day by day as the latter urged her to take initiative for self-correction and fire the corrupt ones from the party.

According to party sources, some senior leaders repeatedly urged Khaleda to find out the mistakes the party had made while in power and take disciplinary action against those involved in various wrongdoings and corruption during that period.

But the party chief sharply differed with them, rejected their proposals and angrily asked them not to tell her anything that went

against party interests. A heated debate with her took place in this regard.

"She believes that the BNP did everything right and nothing wrong when in power for the last five years. What is going on in the country now and the 'unexpected' situation for her party are the outcome of conspiracies by certain quarters," a party high-up said seeking anonymity.

Many of the party leaders are now losing interest in visiting the party's controversial Hawa Bhaban office mainly due to Khaleda's stance that their party did not do anything which led to the present situation in the country, sources pointed out.

In other developments, intra-party conflict is growing at every

level between two groups whom party insiders described as 'corrupt' and 'deprived' ones. Those in the corrupt group made huge money taking advantage of the party's being in power for the last five years but the deprived group did not get any benefits. But in the changed situation now, the corrupt leaders are now on the run.

Against this backdrop, a number of senior central leaders and those from district units met party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at his Gulshan residence in the capital in the last few days. They urged him to keep the party on right track to face the changed situation. They also told him that 'unbelievable corruption' at various levels of the party is responsible for the

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FIVE YEARS OF FOUR-PARTY RULE Suppliers' credit favoured with 'motive for graft'

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The volume of suppliers' credit increased by 248 percent during the five-year period of the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government (FY'02-'06) compared to the corresponding period of the Awami League (AL)-led government (FY'97-'01).

According to Economic Relations Division (ERD) statistics, the volume of soft loans dropped by 1.52 percent during the same period of the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance's regime.

Sources said despite strong oppositions to financing projects through suppliers' credit, the immediate past government went

on with it largely with a motive for corruption.

There are a number of instances that indicate large amounts of funds were misappropriated by such an opaque financing system, sources said.

The ERD statistics show that from FY'02 to FY'06 Bangladesh received suppliers' credit worth \$739.59 million while in the five years from FY'97 to FY'01 the total of such credit had been \$212.16 million. The BNP-Jamaat-led government took more than a half of the total suppliers' credit the country has received since independence, the data reveals.

ERD sources said the suppliers' credits were taken for projects in

railway, telecommunications, roads and highways, and industries sectors.

Sources explained that since soft loans are invariably tagged with many conditions, different ministries are more inclined to take suppliers' credit. The BNP-Jamaat government after coming to power, however, adopted a policy guideline on suppliers' credit scheme where such a mode of financing was allowed only as an exception.

Sources said although the BNP-Jamaat alliance government's finance minister M Saifur Rahman also had a strong stance against financing projects through suppliers' credits, he was compelled to

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KARWAN BAZAR FIRE Industry ministry probe report today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The industries ministry probe body investigating Monday's devastating fire at the BSEC Bhaban at Karwan Bazar in the capital submits its report to the ministry today. The report will be made public tomorrow.

Mizanur Rahman, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence and one of the five members of the probe committee, confirmed that the committee has completed its work.

A five-member BSEC probe team headed by BSEC Secretary Khalilullah Khan will also submit its report tomorrow.

Meantime, members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) who had been guarding the charred

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PHOTO STAR

The law enforcers remove corrugated iron sheets, left, and blankets meant for relief that were seized from the office of the commissioner of ward No 37 in Tejgaon in the city yesterday.

Rejoinder and our reply

HRC Shipping Limited sent a rejoinder to news items published in The Daily Star on February 22 and 24 on export being hampered due to tussles between foreign and local shipowners.

The company in a detailed rejoinder described its position regarding the matter. It claimed that actual facts were not reflected in the news items. It alleged that a prescribed authority issued a waiver to a foreign-flag vessel to carry export goods from Mongla violating the Bangladesh Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance 1982.

It said the prescribed authority without enquiring into the presence of Bangladesh-flag carriers issued the waiver to foreign-flag carrier MV Khaleda.

The prescribed authority in collusion with the owners of foreign-flag ships are working against the interest of the owners of Bangladesh-flag ships, it pointed out. As a result the owners of Bangladesh-flag carriers are continuously suffering and struggling hard to survive, it added.

The HRC brought the issue

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SEIZED LUXURIOUS SUV Criminal case against Huda for using 'fake' registration number

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhanmondi police filed a criminal case against former communications minister Nazmul Huda on Thursday for using an automobile with a fake registration number.

Police, on Sunday, seized the luxurious Cadillac Escalade sports utility vehicle (SUV) bearing registration number Dhaka Metro Gha-11-9999.

Sub-Inspector AKM Monjurul Haq Akon filed the case with Dhanmondi police station (PS).

"We're examining relevant papers of the automobile and have primary evidence that the registration number is a fake. Both the police and joint forces are investigating the matter," said a police officer.

Talking about the registration number, the officer told The Daily Star, "Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) did not issue the

number." The officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmondi PS said Nazmul Huda did not seek a registration number for his SUV from BRTA, and put a fake number plate on the vehicle instead.

"It's a fraud case under article 420," the OC said.

Nazmul Huda's family however claimed that the luxurious SUV must have a genuine registration.

"It's funny to know that former communications minister Nazmul Huda would use an automobile without registration," a member of the Huda family told The Daily Star.

Huda submitted all the relevant papers of the vehicle including its registration papers, the family member claimed adding, "The showroom from where we bought the car, arranged the registration."

Meanwhile, the luxury Infiniti SUV of Harris Chowdhury, which

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Deer seized from Falu's retreat

UNB, Savar

Forest Department yesterday seized 15 spotted deer from Baganbari (retreat) of former BNP lawmaker Mosaddek Ali Falu at village Gohail in Shimulia Union of Ashulia.

A team of the Forest Department with the help of local police raided the Baganbari of Falu, who was also the political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

The team seized the deer and kept those under the care of the manager of the retreat.

Police and Forest officials said Falu bought four spotted deer from the Forest department at Tk 2,000 each in 1995. Over the years, the number of deer has risen to 15 through breeding.

Notice

Our weekly page Star Tech could not come out today due to unavoidable reasons. We regret the inconvenience caused to our valued readers.

More relief materials seized from BNP leaders' houses

STAR REPORT

Security personnel yesterday recovered 565 corrugated iron (CI) sheets and 63 blankets meant for relief from a ward commissioner's office in Dhaka and 69 other CI sheets from the house of Mymensingh's Islampur upazila president of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal.

They also arrested Kotchandpur upazila BNP General Secretary Faruk Hossain during the anti-crime crackdown.

Police arrested 1,450 people including 22 convicted, 658 wanted criminals and 17 accused in Arms and Explosives Act in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday, said a press release.

In Dhaka, Rab personnel recovered 37 CI sheets from the house of one Shafiquddin near BG Press staff quarters mosque in Tejgaon yesterday morning.

During interrogation, he said he bought the sheets from commissioner of ward No 37 Ruhul Amin Bhuyian alias Jahangir, who is also the vice-president of Tejgaon thana

BNP.

Acting on his information, Rab men raided the ward commissioner's office at Begunbari around noon and found CI sheets and blankets of government relief fund.

Sixty-three blankets were found in gunny sacks while 565 CI sheets were piled up inside the office. Ten kilogram of rotten rice was also found there.

The Rab men picked up office assistant Nazir Ahmed for interrogation.

In Narayanganj, the joint forces yesterday recovered 37 CI sheets from Dharmaganj of Fatullah in the district and arrested day labourer Din Islam.

The day labourer told the law enforcers that local BNP leader and union parishad member Laku Mia, a close aide to now arrested former MP of Narayanganj Giasuddin, kept the CI sheets under his possession on February 26 to save himself.

In Saktihira, police recovered 47 CI sheets from BNP-backed UP member Abu Taher's house at Nijdevpur village in Kaliganj

upazila.

Locals said Taher received the sheets from former Bangladesh Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Alauddin and covered his shop with those.

In Jhenidah, detectives arrested Faruk Hossain, general secretary of Kotchandpur upazila BNP and chairman of Kushna UP, from his house in Kotchandpur town yesterday morning.

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Former minister Hafizuddin sued for killing

UNB, Bhola

Former water resources and commerce minister Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed has been sued again in a killing case.

A man, Khorshed Alam, was shot dead allegedly by Hafizuddin Ahmed in Lalmonohar upazila of the district during the 2001 national election.

Though a case was filed at that time in connection with the killing,

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