Formal launch of Duke of Edinburgh's Award

THE Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation, Bangladesh announced the formal launch of the Award programme in Bangladesh on 24th March, 2009 at the residence of the British High Commissioner. Present at the occasion as Chief Guest was Prof. Dr. Alauddin Ahmed, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Education, Social Development & Political Affairs. Also gracing the occasion with her auspicious presence was HRH The Countess of Wessex whose presence motivated and encouraged participating students. The function was jointly hosted by HE The British High Commissioner Mr. Stephen Evans and the Chairman of the DEA Trust Mr. Osman Morad.

Emphasizing the need for holistic development of youth, Professor Dr. Alauddin Ahmed said, "Our young people will lead us to the future that we want for this country, and therefore it is a great pleasure to inaugurate the Duke of Edinburgh's award for them.. I am confident that this program will prepare them well for facing the challenges of tomorrow."

"The overwhelming response we received from the institutions shows the high level of commitment that the teachers have for developing their students. This also encouraged us to make the award program available in other cities and I am happy to announce that we will start the award program in Chittagong in the second half of this year," said Mr. Morad, outlining the vision for the Foundation.

The British High Commissioner appreciated the effort of everyone involved in the process of this transformational change and expressed his hope of seeing Bangladesh as one of the leading countries in South Asia for the Award program. HRH the Countess of Wessex exchanged views with many Award



aspirants from different institutes and shared her ideas about the program. The programme was attended by trustees, National Director of the Award, head of participating institutes, award leaders and other distinguished guests.

Following are the 15 participating institutions which had been awarded with the Certificate of Recognition in the programme:

1. American International School Dhaka, 2 American International University, 3. Bangladesh International Tutorial, 4. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, 5. European Standard School, 6. Grace International School, 7. Independent University, Bangladesh, 8. Jahangirnagar University, 9. Maple Leaf International School, 10. Mastermind, 11. Oxford International School, 12. The Red Brick School, 13. The University of Asia Pacific, 14. United International University 15. University of Dhaka

The award began its journey in Bangladesh on 20th August'08 when HE the British High Commissioner Mr. Stephen Evans formally initiated the programme in Dhaka for the students of 12 institutions, and in only one month, by 20th September'08, 460 students enrolled in the award and started their journey towards exploring a better self. But the actual process of introducing the award in Bangladesh started in 2006 when supported by the initiative of the International Secretariat of the award a Board of Trustees had been formed, and the Board thereafter started doing the groundwork and framing the structure to introduce the award in Bangladesh.

One of the most distinguishing features of the award is its flexibility in offering individual choice and considering individual ability. The award helps the young people to know and accept their own strengths and weaknesses, and thereby helps to become more aware of their own potential. Ferdous Kazi Tamanna, one of the award participants from the American International University Bangladesh , phrases her experience of the award as "It's a great experience for me. This award made me realize that there is nothing called 'impossible' and if people want, they can touch the sky. The award also made me feel that I can do something for my country and for my people."