2nd Award Ceremony of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Md. Abdur Raquib

SATURDAY 18th April 2010 was a memorable evening for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Bangladesh. It was an evening that the participants and the facilitators of the one and a half year old programme reiterated how their lives have been changed irrevocably by activities which had become new aspects of their lives, all the new people and experiences included. It was a moment to pause since so much had happened in such a short time.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme is an exciting self-development programme available to all young people worldwide. It equips them with life skills to make a difference to themselves, their communities and the world. To date, over 6 million young people from over 120 countries have been motivated to undertake a variety of voluntary and challenging activities which encourages self-discovery, life skills, and teaches about perseverance, responsibility and service to the community.

Almost all the awardees have gained a great sense of personal achievement, developed new skills, gained experiences, made new friends and attained holistic values as an individual and as a human being.

A rather tall participant who joined the award, Ornob was left in a dilemma for what to do for his physical activity and joined the basketball team experimentally. In six months, he is now playing for the national team and won us quite a few matches. The National Director of the award in Bangladesh, Mr. Suman Kumar Saha, talked about the great leaps of faith that we all had to take as participants, parents and organizers to bring out our inner talents that brought us such success and joy eventually.

The culture and traditions of our country was held up in the performances put up by awardees through some of our most treasured pieces of songs and dance notes.

"Aj aloker ei jhorna dharay" was followed by another piece that conveys the determination of the youth to break the barriers and move ahead in Kazi Nuzrul Islam's "Durgomo giri kantar moru dustoroparabar hai" "Alor potho jatri" inspired all seekers of light and wisdom not to be dissuaded by the temporary challenge of life and to keep striving till we encounter the heavenly forces who guide us through life.

A Slide Show provided glimpses of experiences undergone by the participants and the wisdom gained. Four hundred and eighty awardees were recognized along with their institutions.

The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Jim McCabe, in his speech spoke of the wonderful prospects he found in the award for the youth of this country. His Excellency Stephen Evans, the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh, recounted an anecdote of a disabled student once neglected and disowned by the rest of his peers creating an extraordinary scenario of team spirit and achievement by going it together.

The Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Alauddin Ahmed, Honorable Adviser to the Honorable Prime Minister mentioned of the promises of the Award programme held for Bangladesh and emphasized the need for holistic development of our youth. Professor Dr. Alauddin Ahmed said, "For Bangladesh, this type of



self-development program is relatively a new concept. Young people are the future of our country and this award will make us a more functional society. I hope the awardees will realize their role as citizens of a growing nation who will work toward materializing our dream of establishing Bangladesh as a financially independent digital nation.

In his speech His Excellency British High Commissioner emphasized on the importance of young people's engagement in community work for their own development and for the development of the country. He wished that the award would be successful in contributing to the transformation of mass young people from all sections of society.

The ending songs were one to free the spirit portrayed by "Majhi nao chaira de" and the one of ultimate respect for our motherland " Dhonno dhanne pushpo bhora".Participants then all gathered for refreshments after the award ceremony.