

BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2010

The Daily Star

11 YEARS OF AWARDING EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS

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Awardees pose with trophies at the 11th Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony organised by The Daily Star and DHL Express at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on June 25. From left, Alihussain Akberali, chairman of BSRM Group; Tanya Tazeen Karim, an architect; Faruk Khan, commerce minister (chief guest); Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank; Amjad Khan Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Pran-RFL Group; M Matiul Islam, chairman of Industrial and Infrastructure Development Finance Company; Ramesh Natarajan, vice-president (Rest of South Asia), DHL Express; and Desmond Quiah, country manager of DHL Express, attend the ceremony.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN



A special night for the change makers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

An award brings delight to its recipient, but some awards stand out with their special significance. Business awards given by The Daily Star and DHL Express are one of them.

The business community gathered at Sonargaon Hotel on June 25 to meet the winners of this year's Bangladesh Business Awards.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, set the tone for the glittering annual event with an inspiring speech showering accolades on leading businesses for their roles in taking the economy to a new height.

He said how businessmen braving all odds, including an energy crisis, wobbly infrastructure, red tape and political confrontation, marched on, changing the economic scenario, creating jobs and enriching the state coffers.

Anam made a fervent appeal to the government to pave the way for businesses to utilise full potential so that the Bangladeshis are able to make a mark as "a proud nation, an emerging economy".

Desmond Quiah, country manager of DHL Express, described the buoyant spirits Bangladesh has demonstrated in the last 11 years to emerge as one of the competitive developing economies in the world.

"This nation has succeeded despite natural disasters. Even during the global recession, its economy defied the threat," he said.

In this light, it is important to acknowledge

the country's dynamic business leadership that drives and sustains the momentum, said Quiah.

The Daily Star, the country's most-read English-language newspaper, and DHL Express, the world's leading logistics company, give out the awards to the country's best businesses and the people behind them.

This year, three entrepreneurs and two enterprises were awarded at the event, which is the country's premier recognition for the private sector that has made remarkable strides in economic development.

The Daily Star and DHL together stepped into the 11th year of a partnership of standing by the country's growing private sector.

The June 25 night recognised Amjad Khan Chowdhury, chief executive officer of PRAN-RFL Group, as the Business Person of the Year for transforming a simple idea of producing agro-processed foods in 1991 into a company of 30,000 employees.

A rapturous applause rang out for M Matiul Islam, the doyen of the banking sector, when he picked up the Lifetime Achievement Award for a career that spanned six decades.

In the post-Liberation War Bangladesh, Islam, the country's first finance secretary, helped the sector take shape by championing nationalisation of six banks and setting up private banks later.

Eastern Bank Ltd was named the Best Financial Institution for continuously innovating products and services and exploring

new markets. It is often cited for its sound performance and management built up over the years. An inspired Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL, however, said the award was long overdue.

Architect Tanya Tazeen Karim, one of the few women famed for designing buildings at home and abroad, emerged as the Outstanding Woman in Business -- an award that recognised her footprints in design solutions and consultancy.

BSRM Group, which has been in operation for the last six decades, won the Enterprise of the Year Award for its historic presence in the steel industry. Alihussain Akberali, the company chairman, said the secret of the company's success lies in integrity, hard work and a relentless quest for innovation. "We want to tell the nation that we have not let it down."

Faruk Khan, commerce minister, who graced the ceremony as the chief guest, congratulated all winners for continuing to tell Bangladesh's economic growth story to the world.

He said the awards are an important initiative to help businesses succeed and drive economic growth.

The minister did not shy away from admitting that there are many stumbling blocks and challenges holding up Bangladesh from exploiting its full potential. He vowed that his government would do everything possible to help businesses flourish.