

# 63 students

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candidates of both the groups.

This year the top scorers of the world in particular subjects include 16 more students on last year's 47 while the national-level top scorers number 65 against last year's 20.

Saif Mohammed Chowdhury of Chittagong Grammar School was awarded with Mufad Nabeel Memorial Trust award for the highest achievement in computer studies in the O-level.

Hasibul Ameen of Manarat Dhaka International College and Anik Islam Badhan of Oxford International School on behalf of all the high achievers attributed their success to the teachers, parents, friends and their hard work and called on their peers to be the catalyst for change.

The ceremony was marked with jubilation as the audience burst into cheery applause as the name of each attendee was announced in the four-hour programme.

BRAC Bank Ltd, Edexcel International and Monash University, Malaysia sponsored the programme with Channel i as the media partner.

Awardees from 67 English medium schools were honoured in the ceremony. Musical and dance performances by students of various schools made the programme even livelier. The Daily Star initiated the unique annual event in 1999.

Meanwhile, the presence of cricket sensation Tamim Iqbal made the event extra special for the audience. They clapped, cheered and chanted the name of the star batsman as he walked to the podium. His appearance was kept as a surprise which

added some extra glamour.

"Whatever you are doing, keep up the good work and success will follow you," said Tamim giving a word of advice to the students.

Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan, also the chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), handed over the certificates and medals to the future nation builders.

Speaking as the chief guest, he said accreditation and recognition during his student years used to come mostly in extra-curriculum and sports activities.

"This is of some significance that we live in a time when academic achievement receives more credit than it was used to," he said.

The CPD chairman also pointed out that almost all students now aspire to become engineers and doctors, but none seek to be a civil servant or politician.

This is in sharp contrast to the past when many wished to be civil servants and politicians, he added.

While the trend is not very surprising, considering the lack of charm and incentives for pursuing those careers, it offers a degree of concern, said Rehman Sobhan, adding, "This will leave a gap between the talented and those who are in power."

He urged the students to do something for the country instead of pursuing personal achievements.

"You cannot reach the fullest potential if your country is not progressing. Approach the world and seek excellence," said Rehman.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam also congratulated the students along with their teachers and parents for making the country proud with the brilliant results.

He urged the parents to instil fundamental values of humanism, humility and tolerance for the diversity of the society.

"Bangladesh faces enormous challenges in many respects, and in this challenging environment you are amongst the lucky few who are getting such world-class education," said Mahfuz Anam, adding, "You must make the best out of this opportunity."

He said, "You [students] can be the nation builders of tomorrow if your heart and mind is with the people of Bangladesh."

The students will be sought after from all over the world as they gain more education and skills, he continued.

"Get the best education; learn everything you can and then go out to the world to show them what you are made of," said Mahfuz Anam, "But at the end of all, you must return to the roots and serve the people whose love and affection have made you grow."

Robert Winnington Gibson, British high commissioner to Bangladesh, said the greatest resource that a country possesses is its people. Development, education and training of this resource are the defining factors for Bangladesh's success today and will be in future.

Mahmoodun Nabi Chowdhury, head of Brac Bank, termed the students' gathering a constellation of stars.

Isabel Sutcliffe, director of Regulation, Standards and Research, Edexcel, UK and Jan Clohessy, director of Advancement, Monash University, Malaysia also spoke in the event moderated by Elita Karim of The Daily Star.

## Egypt elects panel for new constitution

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's Islamist-dominated parliament and senate began meeting yesterday to elect a panel to draft a new constitution amid calls by liberal groups for protests against Islamist influence over the charter.

The constitution drafted by the 100-member assembly -- half of it legislators and the rest public figures and trade unions -- will replace the one annulled by the ruling military after an uprising ousted president Hosni Mubarak last year.

According to a schedule established by the military, the panel is meant to finish its work before presidential elections, which now seems unlikely ahead of the vote due to be held in May.

Some presidential candidates fear that could leave the new president without constitutionally defined powers, while the dominant Islamist Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) angles to give more powers to a prime minister in the new charter.

## Train hits car

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railway station said.

The train pushed the car 30 yards away, said Shahar Banu, a 50-year-old employee of a shop, who witnessed the clash. When the car was being dragged, five shops along the railway track, including the one where she works, were damaged.

Banu said her husband Ohab Ali Mollah, 62, and a van driver sustained injuries as bricks from the shops' walls fell on them.

Some 10 to 12 people were sitting on the engine of the train. Three to four of them fell to the ground when the collision occurred, she added.

A local, Shahadat Hossain Jibon, rescued two persons with severe injuries and took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

One of the victims, Rafiqul Islam Montu, 35, sustained fractures in the left leg and head injuries. The other victim, aged about 40, was declared dead. His identity could not be known immediately.

Montu told reporters at DMCH that he had boarded the train at Fatullah Railway Station. He said he had been sitting beside the man who died in the clash.

Abdul Matin, a sub-assistant engineer of Bangladesh Railway, said the accident had left the train engine and four compartments damaged. The oil tanker of the engine was cracked.

A rescue engine reached the spot and hauled the damaged train to Kamalapur Railway Station around 1:15pm. Police wrecker removed the private car from the rail track at 1:55pm, said Matin.

Shyampur police said they had detained the car driver, Siraj Sharif, 52. Police quoted him as saying that he had been coming from the residence of the car owner at Shyampur IG Gate and was heading to a CNG filling station at Jurian.

Siraj said he was alone in the car when the collision happened.

Locals said that before the gateman of the level crossing Babul lowered the barrier, Siraj already pulled into the rail track.

Sub-assistant Engineer Matin said that in February 2011 a collision between a train and a truck at an unauthorised level crossing left several people killed at Nandalalpur in Pagla, Narayanganj.

Following the accident, he closed 12 unauthorised level crossings from Narayanganj to Kamalapur, and Gandaria level crossing was one of them, he said.

About three to four months ago local people broke the pillars and opened the gate. Some other level crossings were also opened under political influence.

Local people said they had opened the gate so they could take a shortcut to the other side and that they had employed the gatemen on their own to prevent any accident.

## KEPZ couldn't start

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In reply, the KEPZ argued that the DoE clearance gave KEPZ a contour map allowing it to develop the 2,500 acres in different segments, by trimming the hills and filling up ditches. The KEPZ denies having violated any part of the clearance.

The KEPZ added that it was strictly following the DoE environmental clearance and if the DoE sees anything wrong then it was the clearance itself to blame, not KEPZ.

Upon hearing KEPZ's argument on March 7, the DoE took a few days' time to decide its next course of action. Sources said the DoE was considering deployment of a third party surveyor to see if KEPZ violated the clearance.

"Should we refrain from touching the hills, then all we can develop here is a cottage industry, not export-oriented industries," says Adviser to KEPZ Mohammad Hasan Nasir drawing attention to the hilly landscape of the area.

The KEPZ is also troubled by National Revenue Board's withdrawal of 10-year tax holiday for all EPZs.

Korean company Youngone, which owns the KEPZ, is now running the first phase of a massive shoe factory on 3.72 lakh square foot area. Three more units of such size were being implemented.

It has developed 300 acres of industrial plots, 22km of internal road network, a dormitory for foreign investors and expatriate staff. Development of another 300 acres of industrial plots and 10km of roads were also underway.

"This hilly land was barren, dry and it used to be the den of smugglers and pirates," noted Nasir.

After developing the area with a budget of \$200 million, this same area has now become lush green with many lakes, which serve as the water source for the vegetation, he said. When fully operational, the KEPZ would have 500 industrial units, with \$1 billion investment and employ around 100,000 people directly and another 200,000 indirectly.

But different governments coming up with hurdles were holding the KEPZ back, he said.

In 1995, the then BNP government led by Khaleda Zia signed a memorandum of understanding with South Korea to set up the Korean Export Processing Zone. The following year, the then Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina framed a new law to allow operation of private EPZs. In 1999, the government handed over 2,500 acres of land to Korean company Youngone to develop the EPZ.

But Youngone could not

open the zone as the BNP-led alliance government assuming power in 2001 declined to give it operating licence without mentioning any explicit reason. In September 2006, just before quitting power, the BNP government conditionally issued a licence, which the KEPZ authorities deemed unacceptable.

The last caretaker government re-issued the licence as per the private EPZ law. But even that did not end the ordeal KEPZ had to go through.

"For an EPZ to develop and become operational, it needs four essential clearances: operational licence, environment clearance, Customs SRO (Statutory Regulatory Order) and deed of transfer of land," said KEPZ President Jahangir Sadat, adding, "Without solving these issues, the KEPZ cannot perform."

### DISAGREEMENT OVER ENVIRONMENT CLEARANCE

The DoE suspended the KEPZ's development work on the grounds of violating its environment clearance. The DoE had issued the clearance after seven years of exercise.

The KEPZ had hired its own consultant to prepare an environment impact assessment study in 2002 and submitted the report to DoE in 2003. The DoE took a long time to review the study and in 2007 it dismissed the study and asked KEPZ to prepare a detailed study through the Centre for Environmental and Geographical Information Services (CEGIS) under the Water Resources Ministry.

Two years later, CEGIS completed the study and the government approved it in 2009. The study gave a land development plan in which the area would be developed in nine different elevations, ranging from six metres to 30 metres. The plan also showed areas where the original elevation would not be changed.

The development plan was used as a guide by the KEPZ authorities for the last two years to streamline the hills and ditches and convert certain areas suitable for industrial installations.

In January, the DoE suddenly stopped the development work saying that the KEPZ was cutting hills with excavators and had removed 40,000 cubic feet of earth from 40-50 foot high afforested hills, damaging the environment.

In the notice to the KEPZ (written in English), the DoE said, "There was no permission for cutting of hills in the first Environment Clearance Certificate issued by the DoE on 23-11-2009. There is permission only for dressing of hills."

In response the KEPZ said

the DoE's 2009 clearance, issued in Bangla, clearly stated that the KEPZ was allowed to remove or cut hills as per the land development plan in the environment impact assessment and forbids anything outside that plan. They were just following the plan, the KEPZ said.

The KEPZ officials also argued that the 2009 clearance used the Bangla word "mochon" in dealing with hills. The meaning of the word is unambiguously "removal", but now the DoE is using the word "dressing".

"We are now waiting for the DoE to clear this issue," said Jahangir Sadat, adding, "We are not at fault because we were following the law. If there was anything wrong, then it has to be the environment clearance itself."

## DoE seizes

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along with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) and police personnel went to the KEPZ project area around 7:30am and conducted a drive for six hours, DoE sources said.

During the drive, the team found that the company was cutting hillocks by bulldozers and filling water bodies, causing destruction of biodiversity and environment in the area. The bulldozers were seized and handed over to Anwara Police Station.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Hasan Nasir, in-charge of the project, said KEPZ had all clearance and approval for developing an industrial plot in the area.

"After examining for seven years, the government and the DoE gave us a clearance certificate for developing the export processing zone," Nasir said.

He added that the company had stopped its activities at the spots where the DoE objected to levelling hills in its previous drive in January.

Claiming that the development work was "authorised and organised", Nasir said if the department finds any record of breaking provisions, the KEPZ authorities will abide by its order.

The DoE team leader, Munir Chowdhury told The Daily Star that KEPZ had got clearance from the department for developing an industrial plot, but the clearance does not permit them to raze hills.

Earlier on January 22, the DoE directed KEPZ to stop cutting hills in the area. It also issued a show cause notice.

A case is underway in this connection under the environment preservation act, 1995 (amendment-2010), said DoE sources. KEPZ will also be fined for the environmental damage in the area, they said.

## Stage set

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This will be the second phase of awarding foreign nationals and organisations after conferring "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" posthumously on former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi on July 25 last year.

Sonia Gandhi received the award on behalf of her mother-in-law at a function at Bangabhaban.

Dipu Moni said a national committee has prepared a list of 560 foreign national and organisations and the process to honour foreign friends will continue.

"The third phase of the awards may be conducted again in Bangladesh or the awards will be handed over during the prime minister's or my visit abroad and also through Bangladesh missions abroad," she added.

Meanwhile, most of the awardees and their representatives have already arrived in the city. The Bangladesh government is bearing all of their costs including travel and accommodation.

The awardees are from India, Russia, USA, UK, former Yugoslavia, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Cuba, Argentina, Switzerland, Bhutan, Sweden, Denmark, Vietnam, Germany, Australia, Canada and Ireland.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar, Lt Gen (ret'd) Jack Frederick Ralph Jacob, Moharani Bibhu Kumari Devi and Ambassador Arundhati Ghose of India have confirmed their participation.

Richard K Taylor, Anna Braun Taylor, Lear Levin, Father Richard and William Timm from the USA; Simon Dring and Julian Francis from the UK; Marshal Josip Broz Tito from Yugoslavia; Prof Tsuchiyoshi Nara and Takamasa Suzuki from Japan; Dr Kirsten Westergaard from Denmark; Barbara Dasgupta and Suni Dasgupta from Germany; and Nora Shariff from Ireland will also join the reception.

The honouree organisations are Mitra Bahini, UNHCR, BBC, Akashvani (All India Radio), Kolkata University Shahayak Samiti, Oxfam and International Committee of the Red Cross.

It was a hard job to trace the friends of Bangladesh as many of them have either expired or changed their addresses, mentioned Dipu Moni. "But we have succeeded to contact 110 persons and organisations."

Addressing the press conference, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam said the government has taken up adequate security measures for the foreign guests as Bangladesh is currently trying the war criminals.

Asked about dropping the names of some Pakistanis who had opposed the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh, the foreign minister said there were a few Pakistanis who stood in favour of Bangladesh and they will be awarded later on.

Regarding a controversy in Tripura over honouring its Chief Minister Manik Sarkar, both the ministers claimed the controversy erupted from wrong information.

Manik Sarkar played a crucial role during the Liberation War by providing food, shelter and other necessary support to the Bangladeshi freedom fighters; so there should be no controversy at all, insisted Dipu Moni.

"It's Bangladesh who is awarding Manik Sarkar, so we aren't considering any criticism from Tripura," she maintained.

The recipients of the awards will visit Bangabandhu Memorial Museum today.

In the afternoon, the foreign guests will go to the Liberation War Museum. They will witness a light and sound show at Suhrawardi Uddyan in the evening.

The guests will visit the National Memorial at Savar at dawn tomorrow and attend the Independence Day reception at Bangabhaban in the afternoon.

## PM to visit

FROM PAGE 1

foreign direct investment and have been working on securing another deal, under which Turkey will increase its annual credit limit to Bangladesh from \$100 million to \$250 million.

Hasina will request Turkish President Abdullah Gul for lifting the safeguard duty on Bangladeshi readymade garments (RMG).

The Eurasian country in September last year imposed 17 per cent safeguard levy on the RMG imports from the least developed countries (LDC) including Bangladesh.

This provision made Bangladesh suffer the most as it was a leading RMG exporter to Turkey and had been enjoying duty-free access as an LDC, mentioned foreign ministry officials.

During the official talks between the two countries, the visiting delegation will persuade Ankara for assisting the construction of 500 community clinics in Bangladesh, prompt registration of Bangladeshi pharmaceutical products in Turkey and importing vaccines from Bangladesh.

According to an agreement signed during the Turkish prime minister's visit to Dhaka in 2010, Ankara will fund \$11.50 million to construct the community clinics.

Besides, Dhaka may ask Ankara to establish an international vocational training institute in Bangladesh to ensure smooth supply of skilled manpower for the garments, textiles, design and fashion industries of both the countries, maintained the officials.

Under youth cooperation programme, Dhaka will seek Ankara's support for providing sports instruments for Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan (BKSP) and training of professional players and coaches in Turkey.

Bangladesh will also seek duty-free market access of its jute and jute goods. Turkey imported jute and jute goods from Bangladesh worth \$ 1.7 million in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The two countries have already agreed to raise the bilateral trade volume to at least \$3 billion by 2015 from the current level of below \$1 billion.

### Nabanita Nawar

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exam, got a big round of applause in yesterday's ceremony.

"I cannot express how great I feel," a smiling Nawar told The Daily Star.

Nawar, a student of Dhaka's Aga Khan School, aspires to be a molecular biologist.

She wishes to do something for the country in the future. But she intends to focus on her education for now.

### Md Imran Khan

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he felt honoured to be among the awardees in yesterday's ceremony.

"It's all because of my teachers, parents and friends," said Imran.

He is now studying mechanical engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) but he wishes to become an aeronautical engineer in the future.

"It is a sector that is gradually growing in the country. And I would like to be a part of it."

For his peers, he said: "Never give up on anything. You can achieve anything with passion and hard work."

### Mahnaz Islam

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her parents, the school, teachers and friends for getting five As, including the top score in Further Mathematics, in A level exams.

"I am proud of myself, and I would especially like to thank my study partner Riasat."

Now a student of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at Buet, Mahnaz feels that the present generation lacks patriotism.

Referring to Bangladesh cricket team's recent performance that brought the whole nation together, she said such things are needed to spur patriotism in the country's youth.

### Hasbiul Ameen

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had never felt happier.

"The credit goes to my parents, my school, teachers and of course my friends," said the student from Manarat Dhaka International College.

Ameen said he has always been fascinated by engineering, and seeks to build a career in the sector.

Always listen to your heart, he advised his peers.

### Shahrul Hossain

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10 As in O level exams from Bangladesh International School and College.

He thanked The Daily Star for the recognition, and also his parents, teachers and friends for their support.

Shahrul wants to study biochemistry that immensely fascinates him. "I would like to know more about biology and go abroad for higher studies. But I want to work here."

### Saadman Rahman

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(BIT), who scored 10 As in O level, gave the credit to his parents for this achievement.

"They have done everything to ensure the highest-quality education for me. They deserve the credit."

Saadman says he is interested in a lot of subjects but prefers law.

### Samira Ashraf

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Samira, who scored 10 As in O level from Bangladesh International Tutorial (BIT).

She said many students go abroad for higher studies and settle there. But they should come back and serve the nation.

"After all, the country has given them so much."

### Pulok Roy

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"The country lacks efficient doctors. That's why a large number of people go abroad for treatment," said the student of Maple Leaf International School.

Pulok wants to go abroad for higher studies. But he would return home and work for the health sector.

### Samiul Karim

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said his achievement was a stepping stone to something bigger in the future.

Karim seeks to pursue higher education in a foreign university. But he would come back and do something for the country.

"I want to be a computer engineer."

He thinks Bangladesh lags behind many nations in computer technology, and he wants to contribute to this sector.