

BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2011

The Daily Star

CELEBRATING THE BEST IN BUSINESS ON THE 40TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE
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Finance Minister AMA Muhith poses with award winners: *from left*, Towhid Samad, chairman of Bangladesh General Insurance Company, who received the trophy on behalf of his late father; Anwar Hossain, chairman of Anwar Group; Ehsan Khasru, managing director of Prime Bank; M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of ACI; Mahbubur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh; Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Group, who was conferred a special award; and Sharmin Hossain, chairman of Fresh and Safe Agro, at a ceremony at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on the night of May 18. *Extreme right*, Desmond Quiah, country manager of DHL Express, and *second from right*, Ramesh Natarajan, vice-president of DHL Express, Rest of South Asia, are also seen.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

A night for corporate stars

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The best part of winning an award is that it inspires the winner to strive for a greater height of success in the days ahead. It is a source of encouragement for the winner. So, cheers of encouragement enthralled the audience as business leaders got together at Sonargaon Hotel on May 18 to see the winners of the Bangladesh Business Awards 2011.

The Daily Star, the country's most-read English newspaper, and DHL Express, a global giant in logistics, celebrated the outstanding achievements of four entrepreneurs and two institutions in an awards ceremony on the night.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith handed out the awards. Each awardee was introduced by brief audiovisuals illustrating their exploits.

Anwar Hossain, chairman of Anwar Group of Industries, won the "Business Person of the Year" laurels. The septuagenarian continues to work tirelessly towards transforming a nearly 200-year-old family business into a business empire that now employs 14,000 people.

The Best Enterprise of the Year award went to Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI), a drug and consumer goods manufacturer and a food processor that champions the quality of its products. M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of ACI, received the award on behalf of the company.

MA Samad was posthumously given the Lifetime Contribution award for his contribution to the private insurance industry. Samad led Bangladesh General Insurance Company Ltd, the country's first private sector insurance company, until his death in 2005.

MORE ON PAGE 4



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD Setting a moral compass in business

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

With a life in business spanning five decades, Mahbubur Rahman is a byname for boundless experience and insights.

During the early sixties, when the Dhaka city was a hotbed of political activity, Rahman stepped into the world of business. As a young university graduate in political science, Rahman joined the National Bank of Pakistan in 1962 only to leave it quickly. It was a blessing in disguise, and he followed his own destiny -- entrepreneurship.

Rahman insists that nobody inspired him to be a businessman. "Probably I was destined to be one," Rahman says.

In 1962, Rahman set up Eastern Trading Company, an importer of consumer goods. After independence, the company was changed into Eastern Trading Bangladesh Ltd. It was later shortened to ETBL Holdings.

Now, the 50-year-old company, ETBL Holdings, has nine associated units operating in banking, insurance, housing, international trade and cold storage.

But Rahman is widely recognised for being more than just another highly successful businessman. He is regarded as a voice of reason and moral conscience among his friends. He spent most of his life making trade bodies effective, professional and ethical. He has also striven to make businesses run in line with international best practices.

Rahman was the president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry for 1992-94. Before that, he led the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry as its president for two terms.

As the president of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh, Rahman, now 70, is still active in promoting good business practices rooted in fair entrepreneurship, dedication and commitment to quality. His latest project is Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre that helps settle commercial disputes in a quick, transparent and cost-effective manner.

These efforts define him as a man with a vision of building a business community around a strict code of conduct.

