

# BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2012

The Daily Star

AWARDING EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT • THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2013



## OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS

### Rowing against the tide



Masuda Islam

SOHEL PARVEZ

Masuda Islam's journey as an entrepreneur began in the mid 1980s, upon completion of her undergraduate degree. For a brief period she taught at a school, but the job did not gratify her enough. She wanted to do something that would leverage her creativity and the skills she had picked up during her time at university.

And one day that opportunity came, when she was in Mauchhak market with her daughter. Her daughter was clad in a frock made by Masuda, which caught the attention of one kidswear vendor. So much, that he went up to her to enquire where the dress was from.

Upon learning that the piece was all Masuda's doing, he straightway ordered several iterations of the frock for his store.

"I accepted the offer on the spot, although I had no extra money on me then to buy the fabrics and accessories

school. Still, it was not enough; she had to call upon extra help to stitch the dresses, which were selling like hot cakes.

Empowered by the runaway success of her clothing business, she decided to try out other things. She spotted that the country was lacking in frozen snacks market, and in 1996, she started her ready meals business, from her kitchen.

She started off with supplying three frozen snack items to a large departmental store at Gulshan. Just like her dresses, her food items, too, received an overwhelming response.

In 2000, she shut down her other venture to concentrate on her fledgling food business full-time.

"The dress-making business was serendipity for me, and I looked at it solely as a source for making money -- there was no overriding passion for it. But my entry to the food business, is a different story altogether. I always had this desire to devote myself for social causes, and providing safe food was the perfect way."

Today, her firm, Protina BD Foods, makes 100 items, including frozen snacks, sweets, bakery and vermicelli, under the brand Protina. She employs 26 people, and her asset value stands at more than Tk 1 crore.

She, however, continues to supply frozen snacks to Agora and other supermarkets, with all the items made under her supervision at home for quality control.

Masuda, a mother of two, says juggling a family and a growing business did not come easy to her. "All of it would not have been possible without the unconditional support from my husband and family."

Now that her children have grown-up, Masuda has chalked up grand plans for her company.

Next in her scheme of things: supply safe vegetables and processed carrot noodles.

However, she is not aggressive in her expansion bids; rather she wants to go slow.

"I believe in quality. If I go for a huge expansion hastily, it may be difficult to maintain quality," she says.

"I don't want to compete with others through massive expansion and sales promotion. I want to compete through higher quality."

Everyone who is engaged in food business should focus on making safe food, she says, adding that she has been working to find ways to offer pesticide-free vegetables.



Musicians pay tributes to sitarist Ravi Shankar, who campaigned for Bangladesh through his 1971 concert in New York.

## IN MEMORY OF RANA PLAZA VICTIMS



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Guests observe a one-minute silence in memory of those killed in the Rana Plaza collapse on April 24. The deadliest accident in the industrial history of Bangladesh claimed 1,131 lives.



Finance Minister AMA Muhith



The Daily Star Editor & Publisher Mahfuz Anam



DHL Express Country Manager Desmond Quiah

## ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

### Going all-out to do the best



Mohammed Abdul Jabbar

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

DBL Group plans to double its workforce to 30,000 and raise turnover to \$600 million by 2016, aiming to become a leader in the country's business domain, said its top executive.

Mohammed Abdul Jabbar, managing director of the Group, said they have devised a detailed expansion plan that will also make a visible contribution to the country's gross domestic product.

DBL Group, one of the largest 100 percent export-oriented composite knit garments and textile manufacturer in Bangladesh, began its journey in 1991 with 37 sewing machines and less than 100 people in its garments units. It now has a strong backward linkage with facilities for spinning, knitting, dyeing and finishing, garments, washing, packaging and printing.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jabbar, DBL Group now has 19 subsidiaries in areas of garments, textiles, telecommunications and ceramics, with turnover coming to around \$243 million in 2012. The number of employees stands at 15,700.

"We had long-term vision. From the very beginning of our journey, we have been rigid in maintaining quality and on-time delivery. We marched forward with strong team spirit and commitment," Jabbar said.

As overseas orders started flowing in, the Group reinvested profits in setting up state-of-the-art backward linkage industries. The Group has also invested in a washing plant, printing, garment screen printing and corrugated carton factory.

Jabbar said the strong backward linkage industries have helped the Group control its quality strictly and shorten lead time, resulting in higher growth.

The Group exports apparel items to 42 countries in Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Asia and has customers such as H&M, Wal-Mart, Esprit, Puma, G-Star and Decathlon.

"We provide good quality products, at shorter lead times and at competitive prices. This helped us gain the confidence of our buyers, resulting in higher revenues," said Jabbar.

DBL Group is using trans-border financing from DEG, a member of Germany's KfW Bank Group, and International Finance Corporation to source modern capital machinery and equipment from countries like Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Scotland, US and UK, for its dye house named Colour City.

The Group is implementing the Colour

City project to set up a European standard fabric and yarn dyeing-finishing project. It is also implementing DBL Ceramics, a fully automatic ceramic tiles factory, and Mawna Fashions Ltd, a 100 percent export-oriented garments sewing factory.

The Group will expand its garments and panel printing facility, spinning, knitting and accessory manufacturing in the coming months.

A European diplomat, who visited DBL factories last month, said the Group has one of the most eco-friendly facilities in the country.

Jabbar, who has a degree in computer science from the University of Texas, urged the youth of Bangladesh to be focused and committed, to think global and be ethical. They should incorporate corporate social responsibility into their business and never compromise on quality.

**The Group exports apparel items to 42 countries in Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Asia and has customers such as H&M, Wal-Mart, Esprit, Puma, G-Star and Decathlon**

Jabbar, now 52, sees a bright future for Bangladesh's garment sector, provided all stakeholders are committed. The government should come up with necessary infrastructure, policy and regulatory support, he said.

"We feel, by 2025, garment exports from Bangladesh can reach \$75 billion."

He said the fire at Tazreen Fashions and the collapse of the Rana Plaza building have severely affected the image of the sector. "At present we already have several challenges and the two incidents have further pushed us into crisis. Bangladesh is likely to lose lots of business contracts. The small factories will suffer the most."

"For safety and labour standards, the first requirement is awareness and mindset. To improve the safety and labour standards in the factories, we need to do a gap analysis within the factory, based on the country's legislation and buyers' standards."



Singers perform at the event to commemorate legendary musician George Harrison whose song on Bangladesh still evokes fond memories.

## ROLLOFHONOUR

<b>2000</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Salina Akther (Aakor)	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Micro Electronics Ltd	<b>2004</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Selina Quader (Agroconcern)	<b>2006</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Zinet Fatema (Jahan Metal)	<b>2008</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Sabrina Islam, CEO of Reflections	<b>LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD</b> Nasir A Chowdhury, MD of Green Delta Insurance	<b>2011</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Sharmin Hossain Chairman, Fresh and Safe Agro Ltd (FASAL)
<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Concord Engineers & Construction Ltd and Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Ltd	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Syed Manzur Elahi (Apex Group)	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Incepta Pharmaceuticals	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Acme Laboratories Ltd	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Meghna Group	<b>2010</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Tanya Tazeen Karim Architect & Co-founder Tanya Karim NR Khan & Associates	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Advanced Chemical Industries Limited M Anis Ud Dowla, Chairman
<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Samson H Chowdhury (Square Group)	<b>BEST JOINT VENTURE ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Grameenphone Ltd	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Kazi Zahedul Hasan (Kazi Farms Group)	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Md Nasir Uddin (Pacific Jeans Limited)	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Abdul Monem, Abdul Monem Group of Companies	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b> BRAC Bank	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Anwar Hossain Chairman, Anwar Group of Industries
<b>2001</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Rehana Kashem (Saatrang)	<b>2003</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Monjulika Chakma (Bain Textiles)	<b>SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD OF THE YEAR</b> Unilever Bangladesh	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION OF THE YEAR</b> Dutch-Bangla Bank	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b> Alihussain Akberali FCA-CIP, Chairman	<b>2009</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Kaniz Almas Khan, CEO of Persona	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b> Prime Bank Limited Md Ehsan Khasru, Managing Director
<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Otobi Limited	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> MM Isphani Ltd	<b>2005</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Hasina Newaz (Orchid Printers)	<b>2007</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Nilufar Farooq (Ikebana)	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Square Pharmaceuticals	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Amjad Khan Chowdhury CEO, PRAN-RFL Group	<b>LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT</b> Mahbubur Rahman President, International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh
<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Anisur Rahman Sinha (Opex Group)	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> Mohammed Mizanur Rahman (PHP Group)	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> BRB Cable Industries Ltd	<b>ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Bengal Plastic Industries Ltd	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b> Eastern Bank Limited Ali Reza Iftekhar Managing Director & CEO	<b>LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT</b> Md Matulul Islam Chairman, IIDFC	<b>LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD</b> Late MA Samad Bangladesh General Insurance Company
<b>2002</b> <b>OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS</b> Geeteara Safiya Choudhury (Adcomm)	<b>BEST JOINT VENTURE ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR</b> Coats Bangladesh Ltd	<b>SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD OF THE YEAR</b> Youngone Group	<b>BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR</b> KM Rezaul Hasanat (Viyellatex Group)	<b>BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION</b> Pubali Bank		