



Nurul Islam Nahid



M Omar Rahman



Sadequr Rahman



Robert Winnington Gibson



Simon Young



Syed Mahbubur Rahman



Sandeep Gupta



Clockwise from top left, a top view during the 16th O- & A-Level Award Presentation Ceremony (2013-14) at Mirpur indoor stadium; a cultural performance by students; students who attended the programme to receive awards; registration by students before entering the hall; guests take snaps on their mobile phones; a student takes selfie with The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ/AMRAN HOSSAIN/RASHED SHUMON

Hopes, here

FROM PAGE 1
 recognition on 180 students -- 52 for achieving the highest scores in the world in different subjects and 128 for outperforming the rest in Bangladesh.

Presence of teachers, friends and families marked the colourful function where the outstanding achievers received medals and certificates of excellence. The stadium in the capital's Mirpur resounded with loud cheers and jubilation while names of the awardees were being announced. The Daily Star initiated this

with red and green of our national flag. Starting with a documentary on the glorious history of the nation, music and dance performances by students of several schools made the ceremony lively.

Selfie booths set up by Microsoft Mobile Devices and Services on the premises of the indoor stadium was a special attraction in this year's event.

Speaking as the chief guest, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "We are proud of such excellent achievements made by our children. I envisage these achievers leading not only the country but also the world."

Congratulating the awardees

and secondary levels, he said, "We want to provide a world-class education to our children so that they can acquire knowledge and develop their skills in technology."

"We want our new generation to become complete human beings imbued with moral values, honesty and patriotism," Nahid said.

The presence of ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan made the event extra special for the audience. They clapped, cheered and chanted the name of Bangladesh Cricket Team's vice-captain as he walked to the podium. His appearance was kept as a surprise which added some extra glamour to the event.

"We need to improve and do well in all fields of education," said Shakib.

He thanked The Daily Star for organising such an inspiring event and shared memories of his

"However, much remains to be done and that is what we now have to work hard for," he said.

He said the awardees will seek the best knowledge and acquire the best skills abroad, but the knowledge and skills must be used in the service of the people of Bangladesh.

"You have achieved great things, but your greatest achievements will be building the country that has nurtured you," Anam said.

Urging them to return to the motherland, he said, "You are the future nation builders, so do not underestimate the value of serving your own country."

The Daily Star editor also urged the parents to inculcate in their children some fundamental values -- tolerance, democracy and curiosity.

Special guest of the programme Robert Winnington Gibson, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said the best resource of the country is its people and of those people, the young are outstanding.

He said to become an Asian powerhouse, the country needs rapid economic and social development in which education is the underpinning factor.

He urged the students to be inspired, bold and daring and pursue world-class education so that they could be the engine to the development of the nation.

Thanking the British Council in conducting the exams despite many obstacles, Gibson asserted that despite speculations, the spring and summer sessions of O- and A-level examinations would take place in Bangladesh.

"They will not take place overseas. They will take place here," he said repeatedly.

Speaking on behalf of the achiev-

ers, Shah Habibur Rahman, who got five A*s (stars) in his A-level exams from Manarat International School and College, said Bangladesh was not the most conducive place on the planet for educational grooming.

"Riots, strikes, exam postponement and cancellations -- you name it! But instead of demoralising you, these obstacles only help your spirits soar because you don't let the intimidation win over you," he said.

"You soldier through the academic rigor although you happen to be someone from the tiniest part of the globe, whose voice would never be heard otherwise," Habibur said, expressing his gratitude to the examination authorities and The Daily Star.

Mahin AR Rahman of Mastermind thanked his family and teachers for his outstanding performance in the O-level examinations in which he obtained 11 A*s in one sitting.

"We never know what the future holds for us. In which case a great man once said, 'The best way to predict the future is to invent it,'" he said. "They say success is not final and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts."

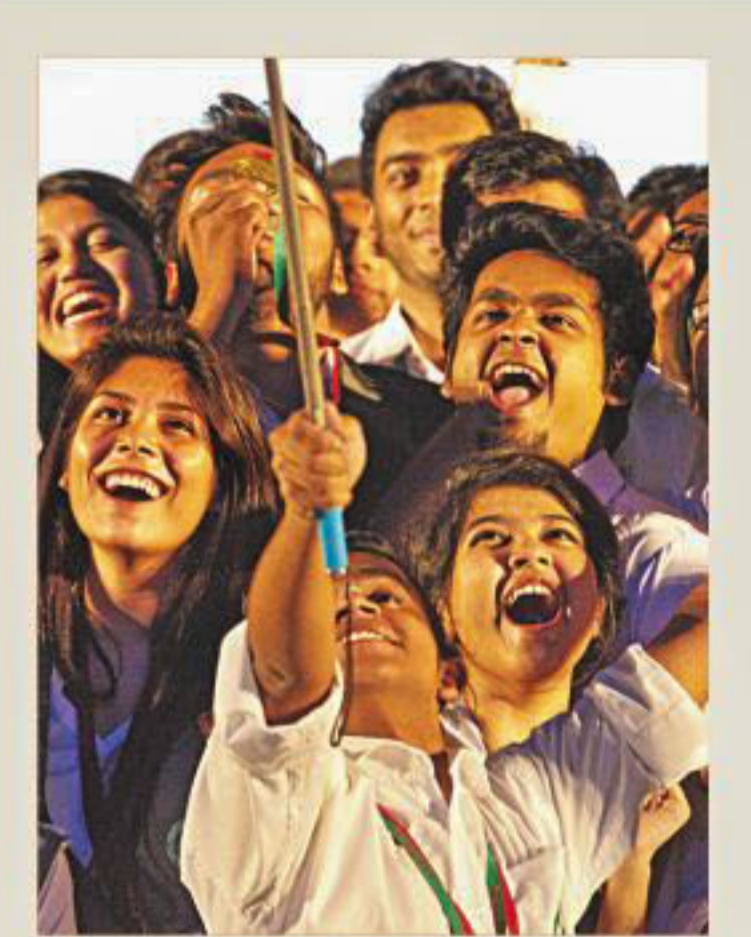
Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Brac Bank Ltd, said the achievers have made the country proud.

"Learning is like rowing a boat upstream. If you stop rowing the boat, you will fall behind," he said.

Simon Young, regional director of Pearson Edexcel Asia, said, "Your success will inspire, motivate and help shape the future of generations to come."

He urged the students to come back and use their knowledge and experience obtained from their studies abroad in the development of the country.

Prof Sadequr Rahman, school of science, Monash University Malaysia, Prof M Omar Rahman, vice-chancellor of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), and Sandeep Gupta, general manager of Microsoft Mobile Devices and Services, also spoke at the programme.



Selfie icing on the cake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A photograph captures the exalting moments in your life, turning them into mementos to relish for years on.

The Daily Star O- and A-level award winners, their proud families, teachers and friends gathered at the two selfie booths on the premises of the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the capital's Mirpur to frame some of their rare moments of honour.

Set up by Microsoft Mobile Devices and Services that sponsored the programme for the first time, the selfie booths instantly provided the students with prints of the photographs, the soft copies of which could be accessed at <http://1drv.ms/1wZrpFM>.

The pictures of the award ceremony can also be accessed at the same website, making it easier for the students to obtain the photographs without visiting The Daily Star office.

This year's special supplement on the event also came out yesterday. The supplement contained short introductions and photographs of the high achievers in O- and A-level exams that took place between June 2013 and June 2014.

uni- qu e annual event in 1999. This year 1,224 students who got at least six A's in O-level and 356 who received three A's in A-level were awarded.

Brac Bank and Monash University, Malaysia were the celebration partners while Edexcel, Independent University, Bangladesh, and Microsoft Mobile Devices and Services were the associate sponsors of the event. Channel i was the broadcast sponsor.

Awardees from 73 English medium schools from across the country gathered in front of the podium decorated

rd- winners, he hoped that the achievers would prepare themselves to take the country forward with their leadership in order to materialise the dreams of the Liberation War.

Mentioning that the number of girls is higher than boys at primary

school days with the audience.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said Bangladesh has come a long way and made tremendous progress in agriculture, human resources, commerce and human development indices.

becoming a pilot, Mahin now wants to be an engineer to follow his father's footsteps, but only to go farther. "I want to surpass my civil engineer father through my work... and make him proud."

He also plans to go abroad for higher studies and return home later to work for his country.

RAKIBALMAHDI
 Unlike his peers, Rakib Al Mahdi, who received the world's highest mark in Biology in the A-Level examinations in January 2014, took admission at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

"I am studying Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) at Buet because Bio-Medical Engineering, which I want to pursue in future, is a branch of EEE," said the former student of Dhanmondi Tutorial.

Having scored 591 marks out of total 600, Rakib is one of the 19 A-Level students who scored the world's highest marks in different subjects during the June 2013 - June 2014 academic sessions.

SANJIDAALI
 Sajida Ali achieved the world-highest mark in Bangladesh Studies in her O-Level examinations she took in June 2014 from Bangladesh International Tutorial.

She scored 100 out of 120 in the subject along with seven A*s and two A's. Sanjida is among the 27 students from Bangladesh who obtained the globally highest mark in different O-Level subjects.

"I would like to be a doctor in Bangladesh and launch an NGO to help the poor and make my parents and my country proud," she said.

PROMIT ALLEN GOMES

With a natural knack for painting and drawing, Promit Allen Gomes of SFX Greenherald International School did not even practice for his Arts examination last June.

"I had gone to the movies with my friends even the day before the exam," he said, still finding it hard to believe that he had scored 99/100, the world's highest, in the O-Level Cambridge examination, in which he painted three pictures -- a shell, a shoe and a dawn landscape.

Thanking his teachers, Promit said though he actually wanted to be an economist, painting would always have a special place in his life.

MD FAISALALAM
 The high achievers not only make their parents proud but also bring glory to their institutions.

Having secured the highest mark in English Language and Literature in Bangladesh, Md Faisal Alam had set an example for his fellow students of Dhaka International School.

"We are very happy and proud," said Principal Md Aminul Islam of the newly established school. "We feel encouraged and plan to train teachers so that the number of achievers from our school increases in the coming years."

Though the current political unrest is severely hurting education, it would work hard to emerge as one of the country's best schools in near future, he said.

Faisal said despite limited resources and books on English Literature and Language, his achievement had been possible only because his teachers were there for him even after class hours.

A triumph despite political gloom

FROM PAGE 1
SHAH HABIBUR RAHMAN

"I cannot explain how happy I felt when Habib gave his speech," said Hasina Kadir, mother of Shah Habibur Rahman who obtained over 90 percent marks in five out of the six subjects he took in his A-level examinations in May-June 2014.

As a top achiever, Habib gave one of the two valedictorian speeches at the programme.

"I used to work at a government primary school," said Hasina. "But after he got admitted to Manarat (International School and College) in 2000, I left the job."

"I felt that my first priority was my children's education and my lawyer husband supported the decision," Hasina said. She now feels her decision

paid off.

Habib, who recently became champion at a national Biology Olympiad and would soon fly to China to participate in the Asian Physics Olympiad, wants to study Physics at one of the best universities and become a physicist.

MAHIN AR RAHMAN

Having scored 90 percent plus marks in 11 O-Level subjects in January 2014 exams, Mahin AR Rahman perhaps couldn't say more to thank his family and teachers for their contribution to his success.

"My father is the soul and my mother is my body. Without either, I am either a defunct body or a living ghost," the student of Mastermind School told The Daily Star after receiving the award for his academic excellence.

Though he would once dream of

