



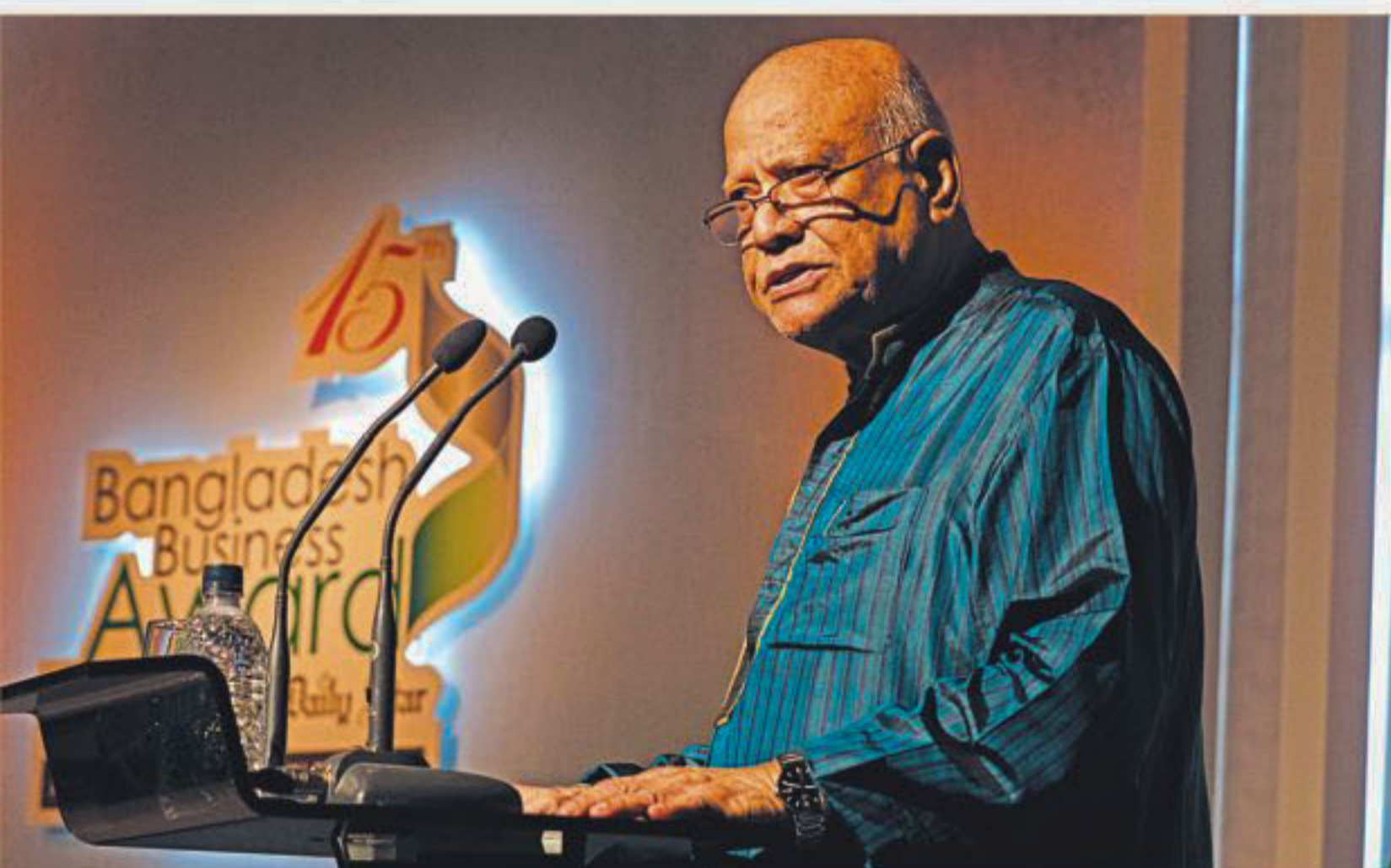
People from different strata of society join the Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka last night.

STAR

BUSINESSES THAT STAND OUT



Here are the stories of four businesses and entrepreneurs who elicit admiration by inspiring others. They do things differently and find new ways to create jobs for others and drive growth for themselves. The Daily Star and DHL Express salute these luminaries.



Finance Minister AMA Muhith shares his thoughts at the event.



Yasmin Aladad Khan, senior vice president of DHL Express for Southeast Asia and South Asia, speaks at the programme.



Artists perform a dance at the gala night.

BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Infrastructure trailblazer



Muhammed Aziz Khan

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

He ventured into business in 1973, at a time when there was hardly any track record of the country producing successful entrepreneurs.

But in the course of the last four decades, Muhammed Aziz Khan has established himself among the country's most successful entrepreneurs.

Khan's first steps as an entrepreneur were taken with a friend, whose father's passing brought him into business. The 18-year-old Khan borrowed Tk 30,000 from his father to partner in a venture.

With over a decade of solid real-world experience behind him, in 1985 he set up Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation Ltd (SIMCL), with a view to developing the country's infrastructure.

"My brothers joined me and we started this amazing journey. We are very fortunate to be pioneers."

Today, SIMCL's subsidiaries are the first private sector power generator, port owner, and operator and provider of information communication connectivity via fibre optic.

SIMCL's jewel of the crown, Summit Power, generates roughly 16 percent of the country's total electricity.

So far, Summit invested \$1.2 billion and provided employment to 5,000. Its revenues stood at Tk 5,000 crore last year, up 64 percent year-on-year.

An MBA from the Institute of Business Administration, Khan has immense respect for other entrepreneurs. "Bangladesh is a role model for entrepreneurship. Nowhere in history were so many people, especially women, employed in such a short time as in our apparel and textile industry."

OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS

Braving rough waters paid off

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Running a business in Bangladesh is far from easy. Entrepreneurs have to overcome several challenges and risks, and being a woman in the garment sector, the task may be even trickier.

But Rubana Huq, managing director of Mohammadi Group, a leading apparel maker, has braved all the challenges in the last 19 years.

The group that began its journey in the garment business with only one factory in Khilkhet, Dhaka with 500 workers in 1985, exported apparel worth \$70 million last fiscal year with 15 percent year-on-year growth.

She joined the company as a junior officer in 1995, and it is her dedication, hard work and worth that made her the company's managing director in 1998.

Going from strength to strength, Rubana showed her managerial and entrepreneurial calibre to take the company to a new height. The group now employs 9,000 workers in its eight factories, Rubana said.

The company has also expanded the business to other sectors -- real estate, software, power plant and digital distribution of television channels.

"I always incentivise good performers to encourage them. I also hold regular talks with officials and workers." The group plans to expand garment business by at least 30 percent in the next few years.

"Attaining sustainability is my target. I want my group to grow at international standards so nobody can question compliance or the quality of products."



Rubana Huq

BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

MTB: the symbol of trust in management

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Mutual Trust Bank can boast about one thing that its peers cannot: its board consists of the country's most successful conglomerates.

But the influential and successful board members do not interfere in the managerial affairs -- and that is the reason behind the bank's meteoric rise.

The chief executive of the bank has several times higher credit approval authority than in any other banks in Bangladesh.

"The board has empowered the management with the maximum possible power to run the bank effectively but with proper accountability and reporting," said Anis A Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank.

The strategy worked well. The bank paid 20 percent dividends for its shareholders for 2014 -- higher than the industry average of 10-15 percent. Its operating profits rose nearly 24 percent year-on-year to more than Tk 572 crore in 2014.

Net profits recorded a whopping 68 percent growth and earnings per share almost doubled to Tk 3.12. Its capital adequacy ratio stood at 10.77 percent, higher than the Bangladesh Bank's mandated 10 percent.

What is more impressive is its nonperforming loans (NPL), which came down by around 1 percentage point to just 2.67 percent last year. The overall banking sector's NPL was over 10 percent.



Anis A Khan

ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

Walton: from importer to manufacturer



SM Mahbul Alam

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Walton is among those rare companies that morphed into manufacturers from importers and achieved enviable success in less than a decade.

Walton Hi-tech Industries, established in 2006 by SM Mahbul Alam, a director of Walton Group, has become a leading brand in the local consumer goods industry with its electronic, electrical, automobile and home appliances, mainly due to competitive prices and ease of use.

The company's turnover stood at about Tk 3,500 crore last year.

Walton will strive to prove that "Made in Bangladesh" is the mark of ultimate confidence, said SM Mahbul Alam, a director of Walton Group.

"Imported products often failed to meet the requirements of our customers as tastes vary from nation to nation. So we set up Walton Hi-Tech Industries after feeling that these items could be made locally," he said.

Currently, Walton controls about 80 percent of the local refrigerator market in terms of unit sales and around 30 percent of the local television market.

The firm's annual production capacity is 1.4 million refrigerators and freezers, 300,000 motorcycles, 300,000 air-conditioners and 1 million television sets.

It markets some 41 products with 320 models and plans to move into manufacturing all of those gradually. Walton employs around 14,000 people and exports products to 19 countries, including the UAE, Myanmar, Sudan, Qatar, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.