

# BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2014

The Daily Star

AWARDING EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS  
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT • SATURDAY OCTOBER 3, 2015



From left, Yasmin Aladad Khan, senior vice president of DHL Express for Southeast Asia and South Asia; Rubana Huq, managing director of Mohammadi Group; SM Mahbul Alam, a director of Walton Group; Anis A Khan, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank; AMA Muhith, finance minister; Muhammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group; and Desmond Quiah, country manager of DHL Express Bangladesh, pose for photographs at the Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on September 11.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Cheers for change makers

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The best and the brightest of the business community were once again feted at the Bangladesh Business Awards, the country's premier event for entrepreneurs, in the presence of Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

Initiated in 2000 by DHL Express, the world's top logistics company, and The Daily Star, the country's leading English-language newspaper, the award ceremony has gone on to become a widely-anticipated event in the calendar for business leaders.

Moments of positive energy played out once again on September 11 at Sonargaon Hotel, where leading industrialists, diplomats, politicians, corporate heads and civil society members gathered to make the 15th edition of the event a resounding success.

This year, two enterprises and two individuals were honoured for their contribution to the economy through hard work, ethical practices and governance.

"Nothing can be more pleasant than pursuing excellence. If you have that excellence, you will be rewarded one day."

He said the winners of the Bangladesh Business Awards, past and present, provided the much-needed spark to the economy.

Thanks to the contribution of its citizens, the private sector and the government, Bangladesh has briskly progressed from its bleak start as a free nation four decades ago, he added.

Yasmin Aladad Khan, senior vice-president of DHL Express for Southeast Asia and South Asia, said the annual event is very special to her company as it celebrates individuals and enterprises for their commercial acumen, business leadership, foresight and contribution to Bangladesh and its development.

Her several trips to Bangladesh in recent times have convinced her that the country has much to offer. "We believe exciting times lie ahead and Bangladesh has much more to look forward to."

"Facebook just connects, Google just aggregates others' content and Amazon just distributes what others produce."

The products that these companies sell were all there, for years and in every country, but only these companies saw the opportunity in being the facilitator, Anam said.

He urged the government to create a congenial environment so that the business community can channel all its energy into creativity and thrive internationally.

Much of the innovative skills of the entrepreneurs are used up in handling political crises, policy bottlenecks, infrastructure and energy inadequacies, bureaucratic obstructions and inefficiencies of various types, according to Anam.

"Imagine that we have been able to set our business leaders free from all these shackles. The totality of their creative energy would then be devoted to creating the types of companies that I have mentioned."

He finished his speech by calling on the private sector, which accounts for 80 percent of the country's economic activities, to do some serious soul-searching, as they are no longer the small kids playing the grown-ups' game.

"They now have the experience, the knowledge and, in many cases, the money," Anam said, while calling for more outlay on human resources, research and development, and service training institutes.

"We terribly lag in management skills," he said, citing the case of the garment sector, where mid-level managers have to be hired in huge numbers from abroad despite the sector being more than three decades old.

The gala event was rounded off with Muhith handing out the awards to: Aziz Khan; Anis A Khan, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank; SM Mahbul Alam, a director of Walton; and Rubana Huq.

Speaking on behalf of Walton Group, Alam said his company is proud to have won the coveted award as it now allows his company to join the club of illustrious conglomerates like Square, ACI, BSRM and Meghna Group, some of the past winners.

About the award, Anjan Chowdhury, whose father Samson H Chowdhury, founder of Square Group, won in the inaugural edition, said it is an unequivocally prestigious award as winners are picked on strict criteria.

"It encourages existing and new businesses," said the Square Group director, whose comments echoed the sentiments of the country's business community.



**BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**  
Muhammed Aziz Khan has been honoured for his long, successful career dedicated to the development of the economy

**OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN BUSINESS**

Rubana Huq of Mohammadi Group was recognised as the most deserving woman in business

**BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION**  
Mutual Trust Bank emerges as the most deserving financial institution through distinguished performance

**ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR**  
Walton Hi-tech Industries stood out as the most deserving company for innovations and diversity in business



Nothing can be more pleasant than pursuing excellence. If you have that excellence, you will be rewarded one day

Muhammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation, won the prestigious accolade of the Business Person of the Year, while Rubana Huq, managing director of Mohammadi Group, was honoured as the Outstanding Woman in Business.

Mutual Trust Bank took home the award for the Best Financial Institution and Walton Hi-tech Industries was recognised as the Enterprise of the Year.

At the presentation ceremony, all speakers extolled the winners for their outstanding contributions. The winners too were jubilant.

Muhith, who graced the event as the chief guest, said the pursuit of excellence is a reward in itself.

Just like it has with readymade garments, Bangladesh can succeed with other products as well, including pharmaceuticals, plastics, electronics, food and shipbuilding, Khan said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the awards celebrate the success of individuals and enterprises that have built Bangladesh and shown new ways to enhance productivity and wealth and Bangladesh's name on the global stage.

To become a smart nation businesses have to be smart first and the starting point for that is to spot opportunities where there seem to be none and most importantly, act on them before others.

He cited some of today's biggest brands -- Facebook, Google, Amazon and Uber -- to further his point.