

The New ICONS

Six iconic personalities of Bangladesh -- Korvi Rakshand Dhrubo, founder of Jaago Foundation; Under-14 female footballers Marzia Akter and Krishna Rani Sarkar; weightlifter Mabia Akter Simanta; swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila and Under-19 cricketer Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- attended the award distribution ceremony to inspire the future leaders of the country.



Chief guest Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, middle, among the six young iconic personalities who were honoured at the event for their outstanding contribution to the nation.

PORIMOL PALMA

Perfecting her swimming strokes in a pond for hours in her village home, did the thought ever cross Mahfuza Khatun Shila's mind that one day she would be a youth celebrity in Bangladesh?

The answer could be a straight "no" but she stuck to her passion and followed her dreams to do something great through hard work.

Her reward and recognition are the

Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Jaago Foundation founder Korvi Rakshand Dhrubo at the 17th O & A Level Award Presentation Ceremony held at the Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Around 2,000 students, who did outstandingly well in the O & A Level examinations (2014-2015), their parents, and the teachers showed love to the youth icons with hearty ovation as their audio-visuals were projected on large screens.

said, describing her determination. Mabia Akter Simanta, the first woman athlete who won gold medal in weightlifting 63kg (women) in the same game, said she did not understand what weightlifting meant in the international arena in her early days.

"When I realised that, I started practising harder," said Simanta, who now dreams of going to the Olympics.

Krishna Rani Sarkar, captain of Bangladesh Under-14 Girls' Football

who was accompanied by her teammate Marzia Akter, the winning goal scorer in the final in Nepal.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who led the Bangladesh team in the 2016 Under-19 Cricket World Cup where they reached the semifinals, said he was proud to be present at the programme.

"I am here because I was passionate about cricket," said Miraz, who was named the player of the tournament. He was optimistic that he could bring

Bangladesh is that girls and boys are doing equally well.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the idea of the O & A Level award was to salute the future nation builders.

"In this process, we need some inspirational figures," he said, pointing to the youth icons.

He said the youths can go anywhere in the world for studies, but they have to remember their motherland and serve her. He also



Prof Omar Rahman
Vice Chancellor
Independent University of Bangladesh

Ravi Chandran
Country Director
IDP

Saidur Rahman
Country Manager
Pearson Edexcel Bangladesh

Zara Jabeen Mahbub
Head of Communications
& Service Quality, BRAC Bank

Joshua Yap
Associate Dean, Nottingham
University, Malaysia Campus

Mahfuz Anam
Editor and Publisher
The Daily Star

two gold medals in swimming at the 2016 South Asian Games in India early February this year.

The Daily Star on March 5 gave recognition to Shila, weightlifter Mabia Akter Simanta, Under-14 female footballers Krishna Rani Sarkar and Marzia Akter, cricketer

Eminent writer Professor Muhammed Zafar Iqbal presented them with crests.

"I used to swim in my village pond in my childhood. I first got the opportunity for professional training at the BKSP [Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan] in 2002," Shila

Team that won the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship in Nepal last December, said she had to fight social taboos as a footballer.

"I had a dream since my childhood to become a footballer. I ignored those barriers to achieve what I wanted to be," said Sarkar,

more laurels for the nation.

Congratulating them, Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said it was a matter of immense joy that the youths were making the country proud.

"What a joy it brings when our girls win gold medals," he said, adding that the main strength of

introduced a young leader, Korvi Rakshand Dhrubo, founder of Jaago Foundation.

Korvi studied abroad but returned home and founded the organisation to help the poor.

"Think of your passion. Believe in your passion," Korvi said.

