

Six champions



ANWAR HOSSAIN MANJU
ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST MINISTER

“We have created a special fund for this purpose [mitigate climate change risks]; no country has done this.”



A dance troupe performing at the 5th HSBC-The Daily Star Climate Awards ceremony at the Radisson Blu in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



FRANCOIS DE MARICOURT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF
HSBC BANGLADESH

Everyone from leaders to individuals have a role to play to tackle climate change. In fact, Bangladesh is quite active in its fight against climate change. Bangladesh has the world's half green factories. Bangladesh Bank is also active in ensuring that finance goes to sectors that protect the environment.

FROM PAGE 1

Deputy Governor Shitangshu Kumar Sur Chowdhury and HSBC Bangladesh Chief Executive Officer Francois de Maricourt handed the trophies of the “5th HSBC-The Daily Star Climate Awards” at the Radisson Blu in the capital yesterday. Waste Concern is the knowledge partner for the awards.

Ispahani Agro Ltd, a sister concern of MM Ispahani Ltd, was awarded in the Climate Champion in Green Business Category for its pioneering work in protecting the environment, farmers and crops from pesticide poisoning. The company introduced the country's first non-hazardous biopesticide.

Ispahani Agro's business motto is “Safe food for better life”. In 2007, the company started its venture with quality seeds to ensure farmers get adequate return on their investments. Later, the company added the biotechnology unit to maintain the balance of nature.

Its products have received positive response. Some 13.5 lakh farmers have so far used the company's biopesticides.

Hamza Textiles Ltd, a concern of DBL Group, won the award in the Green Operations (100 percent Bangladeshi owned companies) category.

A green garment manufacturer, the company has adopted extensive eco-friendly production methods, which has drastically reduced energy usage and carbon emissions. It also uses organic cotton in its production. Its energy-efficient technologies consume 25 percent less power. The garment waste is recycled to make yarn. It has cut down water use for dyeing by 40 percent. The light system in its factory saves 70 percent electricity.

The Climate Champion in Green Operations with full or partial foreign ownership went to Renata Ltd, a leading pharmaceutical company in Bangladesh.

The medicine maker has instilled a commitment to preserving the environment into its organisational culture by releasing minimal to zero harmful waste in the environment. Located at the heart of the capital, the company's corporate headquarters makes most of the natural light. It has a park on its premises filled with trees where one can easily come across some wild animals. It has outdoor meeting spaces.

The company's manufacturing plant releases almost nothing in the air. Its effluent treatment plant treats all liquid before releasing into the environment. Its system has reduced carbon emission by 2.7 million kg a year.

AWARDEES



VALERIE A TAYLOR
FOUNDER AND
COORDINATOR OF CRP

“It is encouraging and it is an honour.”



MA JABBAR
MANAGING DIRECTOR
DBL GROUP

“Sustainability is in the DNA of our group. Wherever we do our business we will always protect the environment.”



SYED S KAISER KABIR
CEO & MD
RENATA LIMITED

“We are green to the core. It is nice to be recognised.”



MUHAMMAD MUNIR CHOWDHURY
DIRECTOR GENERAL
(ADMIN) OF ACC

“People are running after material gains ignoring and destroying the environment and violating laws. We will have to address it.”



MOKARAM HOSSAIN
WRITER AND EDITOR
OF TARUPALLAB

“Since my childhood, I have been working to protect trees. I thank The Daily Star and Prothom Alo for publishing reports highlighting my work.”



FAWZIA YASMEEN
GENERAL MANAGER, SUPPLY
CHAIN ISPAHANI AGRO

“The award is a big encouragement for us. It is a huge recognition because we had to overcome hurdles to make our venture a success.”

The Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), which serves people with physical challenges through healthcare and rehabilitation, won the award in the Climate Champion in Community Engagement for its efforts to leave a positive impact on the environment through its operations.

It ensures that its regular operations do not harm the environment.

One of initiatives taken by the CRP is recycling paper it uses or the paper it collects from its partners and donors. It uses the recycled paper as office stationery like envelopes, files and visiting cards, and make toys for children with challenges it takes care of. From recycled paper, it also makes chairs, tables and even furniture.

Another of its initiative deals with kitchen waste. It makes fertiliser from the waste which it uses in its garden and nursery plants. It treats waste water before discharging into the drainage system. It also manages medical waste through a high temperature incinerator.

The organisers also awarded two individuals under Special Mention category.

Muhammad Munir Chowdhury was honoured for his fervent and passionate work that ranges from preventing river grabbing to hill cutting. A senior government official, he is well-known for his love for nature and battle against land grabbers and polluters.

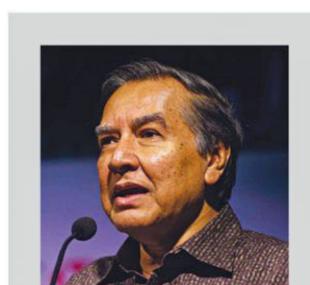
Mokaram Hossain won the accolade for raising awareness through his compelling books and replanting trees across the country as well as listing every single tree of more than 100 years old in Dhaka city.

He is closely associated with an organisation named Tarupallab, which tries to reach out to people. It has organised 25 “See Tree Know Tree” events in and outside Dhaka since 2008. Tarupallab is a group that studies nature.

Mokaram plans to set up an institute where people will come to know about the environment easily, establish a database of trees in Dhaka and the country, and launch an initiative to protect old and rare trees. Tarupallab also plans to set up a nursery where all kinds of trees will be sold at affordable prices.

In his address, Francois de Maricourt, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, said the award was a humble effort that gave an excellent opportunity for organisations and individuals in Bangladesh to showcase their green business and operational initiatives, research work and knowledge management initiatives -- all aimed at raising awareness on environment preservation and mitigating the risks of climate change.

He said investors want to invest in sustainable projects and reduce carbon footprint of their operations. “And they want to support the public sector to upgrade its infrastructure and to fund new technology. This can only be achieved by strong leadership and



MAHFUZ ANAM
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF
THE DAILY STAR

“So our intensity to participate in the efforts aimed at tackling climate change is somehow muted. So those who think that climate change is happening somewhere else are living in a fool's paradise.”

partnership with all other actors in the financial system. HSBC stands ready to play its part.”

In Bangladesh, HSBC focuses on three key areas as part of its corporate sustainability initiatives: community, education and environment, said Francois.

The event, attended by politicians, central bankers, corporate leaders, development partners and former caretaker government advisers, started with the popular song “Dhono dhanno pushpe bhora, amader ei bashundhara” by the students of Jagannath University's music department.

Minister Anwar Hossain Manju and BB Deputy Governor SK Sur Chowdhury praised HSBC Bangladesh and The Daily Star for launching the awards.

Manju said the government boldly speaks on the global stage about its programmes and projects aimed at mitigating risks of climate change.

“We have created a special fund for this purpose; no country has done this.”

The minister said young entrepreneurs were eager to adopt green practices in their businesses.

SK Sur Chowdhury said Bangladesh was the fifth most adversely affected country in the world. “Through this event, I have come to know that we are not sitting idle. We are doing something.”

The deputy governor said the government, individuals, regulators, private sector, banks, financial institutions and companies would have to work together to fight the impacts of climate change.

Francois de Maricourt said one-third of the population of Bangladesh would be affected by climate change and rising temperatures.

“Everyone from leaders to individuals have a role to play to tackle climate change. In fact, Bangladesh is quite active in its fight against climate change. Bangladesh has the world's half green factories. Bangladesh Bank is also active in ensuring that finance goes to sectors that protect the environment.”

Mahbub Ur Rahman, deputy CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, said the environment might be dull as a topic but it was important for the country as “climate change is the biggest threat”.

“The migration from rural areas to urban centres went up in 2015 from 2014. We have seen April rains that were unexpected. Two crore people will be displaced by the next 50 years because of rising sea level.”

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the country had made great strides in food production but the achievement could be destroyed in years by the impacts of climate change.

He called for collective and individual efforts to fight climate change.

“On an individual level, we can cut water consumption. We can manage waste in a better way through area-based efforts. Our residential buildings can go for rainwater harvesting and use the water for many purposes.”

He also called for saving the four rivers surrounding the capital city.

HSBC and The Daily Star launched the initiative, the foremost award in the country in the area of environment, in 2010 to recognise organisations and individuals actively working towards preserving the environment and managing the risk of climate change through their business practices, socially-driven initiatives or knowledge-sharing practices.

HSBC is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world, and has become the first major bank to go carbon neutral, achieving this goal for its global operations nearly a decade ago by managing and reducing direct emissions, buying green electricity, where feasible, and offsetting the remaining emissions.

The bank also sponsors climate research and encourages its customers to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Since its inception more than 25 years ago, The Daily Star has relentlessly been campaigning against environment polluters, river and water bodies' grabbers and forest destroyers.

The nominations were adjudicated by a panel of eminent jury members who are experts in the fields of environmental preservation and climate change.

Tainted

FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), a pro-ruling Awami League student body, in a press release named Jewel Rana and SM Abu Sufian Chanchal president and general secretary of the university unit on December 27 last year. Its council was held in November.

Contacted, Sufian claimed they had thoroughly checked track records of the leaders before picking them for the posts. “We have tried to choose leaders with clean image and those who have dedication for the organisation,” he added.

On Friday, the JU BCL president and general secretary in a press release declared the 214-member committee, the biggest ever in recent time. The last one comprised 161 members.

The new committee includes 44 vice-presidents, nine joint secretaries, nine organising secretaries, 53 assistant secretaries, 27 executive members, and one publicity and one office secretary having two assistants each.

Police to get complete unit

FROM PAGE 1

Counterterrorism officials said the new unit -- to be named “Police Anti-Terrorism Unit” -- would enhance their capacity manifold in the fight against militancy.

They believe the unit would make their jobs easier as it would have the jurisdiction and manpower to look into militancy anywhere in the country.

Headed by an additional inspector general, the unit would initially have 592 members, said Mohammad Moniruzzaman, assistant inspector general (confidential) of the police headquarters.

Headquartered in Dhaka, the unit would also have a deputy inspector general (DIG), an additional DIG and eight superintendents of police, he said.

Members from Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT), bomb disposal unit and the dog squad would be included in the unit. It would also have a research wing, which will continuously conduct studies and researches on militancy and terrorism, sources said.

Trained commandos from the rapid

response teams in metropolitan and range police units would also join it, added the sources.

As many as 40 police officials -- 25 from Armed Police Battalion (APBn) and 15 from Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) -- completed a commando training from the National Security Guard Centre in India in December last year.

They are now providing commando training to others at APBn Specialised Training Centre in Khagrachhari.

Additional DIG (training and sports) of police headquarters KH Mahid Uddin said the first batch completed commando training at Khagrachhari on April 6 and the process to train another batch was underway.

He said the commandos would join the new unit and would be quite useful in anti-militancy drives.

Police have long been demanding the formation of a fully-fledged counterterrorism unit specialised in battling militancy across the country.

The police headquarters in 2011 had

sent a proposal to the home ministry for the formation of “Police Bureau of Counter-Terrorism”. The proposal pitched for setting up bureau offices in all divisional headquarters after appointing the required manpower.

The bureau, however, was never formed amid objections from other law enforcement agencies. The agencies thought they were enough to handle the matter, said sources in the police headquarters.

In the following years, the country witnessed a sharp rise in militant activities, including attacks on bloggers, publishers, different Muslim sects, foreigners, and people of other religions.

In the face of growing demand for a special counterterrorism police unit, the government in February last year formed the CTTC so that police members could concentrate fully on the fight against militancy and deal with the menace effectively.

Around the same time, the police headquarters forwarded the proposal for the “Police Anti-Terrorism Unit” to

the home ministry in a bid to step up the fight.

IMPROVED VERSION OF CTTC?
Talking to The Daily Star, several police high officials said the new police unit would get most of its manpower and expertise from the CTTC unit, which has 407 members.

“The new unit would be the new form of the CTTC unit with a nationwide jurisdiction,” Monirul Islam, chief of CTTC unit, told this correspondent.

Asked about the fate of the DMP's CTTC unit, a top official at the police headquarters said no decision had been taken about it yet. But there would definitely be a separate unit for the DMP areas, he added.

The official said he was not sure what would happen to the unit in future. “The decision will depend on time.”

During a meeting with police high ups at the police headquarters on March 27, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said it seemed the militant activities in recent years were a “rehearsal of bigger subversive

activities”.

He instructed all police units to increase intelligence gathering, vigilance and monitoring to prevent militants from setting up dens.

Top officials of the police and the Rapid Action Battalion, who attended the meeting, agreed that formation of a national counterterrorism unit was a “demand of time” to combat militancy effectively.

Last month, police busted five hide-outs of “Neo JMB” -- two in Chittagong, one in Sylhet and two in Moulvibazar. A total of 19 people, including five children and five women, were killed. According to police, 16 of them were killed in suicide attacks.

“Neo JMB”, an offshoot of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, was behind last year's Gulshan café attack, in which 22 people, including two police officials and 17 foreign nationals, were killed, said police.

Since the attack, around 57 Neo JMB “operatives” were killed in different anti-militancy drives.