

Aiming beyond great grades

Nine top achievers dream of better Bangladesh, want to change the world

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They have achieved the highest grades in A-levels and O-levels in the country, which is something for all to be proud of. The achievers are happy too, but they say the grades are not everything.

In a dazzling celebration of talent, the bright young minds spoke of values and dreams of transforming peoples' lives through knowledge and skill.

"One thing I believe is that education is beyond marks and grades. It is all about what we learn and how we use that knowledge to make an impact on the life of people around us," said Afeya Jahin, who achieved 11 A*s in her O-levels.

She is one of the nine students, who scored the most A's in the 2016-17 A-levels and O-levels in the country.

They were given special recognition at The Daily Star's A-levels and O-levels awards presentation ceremony in the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Jahin, who studied at Changes, said

everyone had abilities and specialties that needed to be discovered.

"So, my friends, I urge you to follow your dreams and passions and be crazy enough to change the world," she told an auditorium packed with students, teachers and parents.

Anindya Hoque, achiever of 11 A*s in the O-levels exams, said he dreamt of seeing a world free of injustice and inequality.

"I dream of a developed Bangladesh, where one will not find people suffering from hunger or living without a roof above them. At the end of the day, what matters is whether we can bring about that change," said Anindya of SFX Greenherald International School.

Abdullah Al Sajid, who also scored 11 A*s in the O-levels, said everybody needed to change as the world was changing.

"But, while we change we have to remember to keep our moral values--the very foundations upon which we, as a human being, are built," said Sajid

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The nine, who achieved the highest number of As in their O- and A-level exams in the country, pose for a photo with their recognition crests at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the capital yesterday. More photos on page 10-11.

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"Special message to the girls -- nothing is impossible. You can dream big, achieve big."

CHRISTINA VIMALA SUPRAMANIAM
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FACULTY OF SCIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM.



"Be innovative, think out of the box and lead the nation."

PROF CHOWDHURY MOFIZUR RAHMAN,
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF UNITED INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



"You have been well brought up, well-educated, and have the requisite talent and focus. If you can't be the change, then who can?"

HARISH DORAISWAMY
VICE-PRESIDENT (SCHOOL AND QUALIFICATION) OF PEARSON SOUTH ASIA



"I believe you will turn problems into opportunities, weakness into advancement, anarchy into peace, calamity into courage, poverty into abundance, and people into resources to build a prosperous Bangladesh."

CHOWDHURY AKHTAR ASIF
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CRO OF BRAC BANK LTD

58 bask in global glory

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build a prosperous Bangladesh and serve its people at The Daily Star's 19th O and A-Level award ceremony.

"We are among a minority of people who were given the opportunity to have an international [standard of] education. For this reason, we have a responsibility to give back to not just our families, but to our nation as a whole," said Asif Mallik, who achieved 6 A* in his A-levels, the highest in the country.

The criteria for the award was to achieve at least six As in O-level or three As in A-level in the 2016-17 academic session.

Awardees from 95 English medium schools from across the country gathered in front of the podium for what was to become one of their most memorable day.

The audience was kept enthralled throughout the proceedings which began with a documentary on the glorious history of the nation followed by dance performances by students of several schools.

The presence of the awardees, their guardians, teachers, friends and other family members added another shine to the event.

Boisterous applause and cheers rang throughout the stadium as names of the awardees were announced.

The outstanding achievers soon received medals and certificates.

BRAC Bank Ltd and United International University (UIU) were the celebration partners while the University of Nottingham and Edexcel were the associate sponsors. Channel i was the media partner.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam welcomed the guests and the organising partners shortly after the programme began around 9:30am.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Mahfuz Anam handed over the certificates to the awardees.

Speaking as the chief guest, Asaduzzaman termed the awardees the main force in the country's journey of progress.

He said an independent Bangladesh was achieved with the sacrifice of many lives. He highlighted how the country is moving forward by mentioning Bangladesh's eligibility to graduate

from Least Development Country to a developing one.

"Our journey has begun and we have to go a long way. And you are the main force in this journey."

"You have to lead. You have to be at the forefront," he told the awardees amid applause.

Sharing his Liberation War memories, he said he was in awe seeing the love, sacrifice and courage of many young children of illiterate farmers.

"We have to have the courage, patriotism, sacrifice, and love for the country. We have to move forward keeping this in mind," Asaduzzaman said, adding he hoped the awardees would build a beautiful, developed and humane country with their achievements and with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Referring to the Holey Artisan attack, the minister said although progress has been made in the country's education system, there were questions whether it was producing enlightened citizens.

Some of the youth were getting derailed and manipulated in the name of religion and thus engaged in militancy, he said.

"It is because they have darkness in their minds. They got an education, but did not become enlightened human beings," he said, advising parents and teachers to nurture cultural activities alongside education.

"We will be able to remove the darkness if we can enlighten our citizens."

Ayman Sadiq, an entrepreneur and internet personality, blended personal stories with advice for the young minds in his inspirational speech.

"The advice for you is 'do something out of the box'. People will surely value you," he said. It is important to get out of the comfort zone and confront challenges for the magical things in life to come true, he noted.

The founder and chief executive officer of the Youtube channel '10 Minute School', Ayman was named as one of the winners of the Queen's Young Leader Award for 2018 and was listed as one of the 30 social entrepreneurs in Asia under 30 by Forbes in 2018.

He advised the students to inspire at least one person everyday and make people laugh.

"There are lot of people -- security guards, rickshaw-pullers, bus conductors, CNG-drivers -- whom we don't give salam [to]. So give salam to anyone of them. You will find that you make his day beautiful. And you will feel good as well."

"Most people die at 25, but get buried at 75," Ayman said and asked young students to live life to the fullest by pursuing their dreams.

Congratulating the awardees, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam said nothing gave the elder generation greater pleasure than seeing these

never to delink yourself from the society."

Saluting the parents, especially the mothers for their countless efforts, Anam said schools were important, but the most important school was home.

"It is at home where you inculcate values. It is at home where you teach your children fundamental values of courage, integrity, honesty, empathy, and how to love your fellow human beings," he said.

He requested parents to teach children to be tolerant to other peoples'



"Do something out of the box ... People will surely value you."

AYMAN SADIQ
FOUNDER AND CEO OF YOUTUBE CHANNEL 10 MINUTE SCHOOL



"... I urge you to be patriotic, I urge you never to de-link yourself from the society."

MAHFUZ ANAM
THE DAILY STAR EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

young brilliant minds succeed.

"Now in the brilliant international world, you will be going as ambassadors of Bangladesh. It means you have to be very proud of your cultural heritage, linguistic heritage --how we struggled for our mother tongue in 1952."

Advising the students to come back to serve the nation, Mahfuz Anam said, "In the future, you have to give back to the country, wherever you go, however famous you become. Remember this is where you started and this is where you must make your contribution."

"I urge you make these potentials into a full-fledged success in your life. I urge you to be patriotic, I urge you

views.

Congratulating the outstanding achievers, Chowdhury Akhtar Asif, deputy managing director and CRO of Brac Bank Ltd, said: "You are the future of Bangladesh and Bangladesh is the future for you too."

"I believe you will turn problems into opportunities, weakness into advancement, anarchy into peace, calamity into courage, poverty into abundance, and people into resources to build a prosperous Bangladesh," he said.

Giving some examples of success of young Bangladeshis, Asif advised the awardees to reposition themselves as more mature persons and future leaders of whom much would be expected.

Asif also thanked The Daily Star for this initiative.

Prof Dr Chowdhury Mofizur Rahman, vice chancellor of UIU, said given the technological advancement and dominance, it was certain that in the future, talent more than capital, would rule the world.

In this context, Bangladesh has the enormous possibility to win the race since 60 percent of its population falls under the below 30 age bracket, he said.

"So you represent the future Bangladesh. We are eagerly looking at you to build a prosperous Bangladesh," said Prof Chowdhury.

"Be innovative, think of the box and lead the nation," he advised.

Harish Doraiswamy, vice president (school and qualification) of Pearson South Asia, said the young award winners have the world at their feet.

"They will enter a world in the midst of great flux and tremendous opportunity. For it is in times of uncertainty that breakthrough opportunities to change the world emerge," he said.

Many, if not all, of you will be part of transforming Bangladesh and the world, he hoped.

"You have been well brought up, well-educated, and have the requisite talent and focus. If you can't be the change, then who can?"

Christina Vimala Supramaniam, associate professor of faculty of science at the University of Nottingham, said the world was changing very fast and that the students needed to think accordingly.

Stating that food security would be the major challenge in the coming days, she, also a bio-scientist, said, "How are you going to do that? We need technology, we need technologies."

The present generation is good at inventing things for space-- the next frontier, Christina said, adding: "Think global and go far from where you are right now."

"Special message to the girls -- nothing is impossible. You can dream big, achieve big."

This was the 19th edition of the award ceremony which The Daily Star began in 1999.

A dream comes true

Humanitarian Lucy gets Bangladesh citizenship

BSS, Dhaka

Octogenarian British humanitarian Lucy Helen Francis Holt's dream of becoming a Bangladeshi citizen came true as she received a citizenship certificate from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.



The Bangladesh government honoured the 87-year-old, who has been living in Bangladesh for 57 years, with granting her citizenship for her immense love for this country and for rendering services to the humanity.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed over the Bangladeshi citizenship certificate to Lucy Helen at a function at her official Ganabhaban residence here this afternoon," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told reporters.

After getting the citizenship, her long ordeal for visa renewal every year has ended.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana and PM's daughter Saima Wazed Hossain were present on the occasion.

PM's Principal Secretary Nojibur Rahman and Secretary of the Security Services Division of the Home Ministry Farid Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury were also present.

The press secretary said both Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana talked to Lucy, a humanitarian who is now working at Oxford Mission in Barisal city.

Lucy informed the premier that she had a wish to meet Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib. "That desire was

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Trump declares

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heinous crimes are committed indiscriminately: in intimate relationships, in public spaces, and in the workplace."

"Too often, however, the victims of assault remain silent. They may fear retribution from their offender, lack faith in the justice system, or have difficulty confronting the pain associated with the traumatic experience," it continued.

"My administration is committed to raising awareness about sexual assault and to empowering victims to identify perpetrators so that they can be held accountable."

At least 20 women have publicly accused Trump of engaging in sexual assault or harassment prior to becoming president. The White House has maintained that the women are lying.

Last month, Trump described allegations that he kissed a receptionist without her consent as "Another False Accusation" in a post on Twitter, calling instead for coverage of "the story of the women taking money to make up stories about me. One had her home mortgage paid off."

Since former film mogul Harvey Weinstein's dramatic downfall over allegations ranging from harassment to rape, the #MeToo campaign has seen a deluge of accusations topple men from powerful positions in a number of industries including Hollywood, the media and politics.

In February, allegations of domestic abuse led two Trump staffers to resign. The Republican leader came under fire for lamenting the "shattered" lives of those accused, saying the allegations could be false.