

DHL-THE DAILY STAR BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS



“We want to work with the private sector hand in hand to create better workplaces for workers and create more jobs for people.”

MA Mannan, planning minister.



“For the last 20 years, the Bangladesh Business Awards have honoured the most outstanding accomplishments and contributions of business leaders in the nation.”

RS Subramanian, senior vice president for DHL South Asia and Managing Director of DHL Express India



“It’s crucial to provide opportunity to the people who are left behind.”

Ayman Sadiq, CEO of 10 Minute School



As our economy continues to thrive and our middle class continues to grow, education and skills will be the most important factor for upward social mobility.

Shahir Chowdhury, CEO of Shikho



From left, SM Khaled, managing director of Snowtex; MA Mannan, planning minister; Abdul Muktadir, chairman and managing director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals; Md Miarul Haque, managing director of DHL Express Bangladesh; and RS Subramanian, managing director of DHL Express India, at the 20th Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel last night.

PHOTO: STAR

THE WINNERS OF 20TH BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS

MA JABBAR Business Person of the Year

Born in 1961 in the capital's Tejgaon area to a humble businessman, MA Jabbar aspired to be a business tycoon for as long as he can remember.



After completing his higher secondary education at Chattogram College and schooling at Adamjee Cantonment High School, he took off for the US to study computer science and technology at the University of Texas, Dallas. But his heart stayed in Bangladesh. So soon after completion of his studies in the early 90s, he returned home to his family business: the Dulal Brothers. Nestled in Dhaka's bustling Farmgate area was the Dulal Brothers' modest garment factory of 300 workers. The company was struggling to survive for want of work orders from abroad. But Jabbar, fresh from his first-hand experience of the great American entrepreneurial spirit, had an off-kilter idea: go big or go home. So in 1994, the troubled company, which was set up three years earlier, went big on expansion and there has been no looking back since. Today, Dulal Brothers has transformed into DBL Group, a sprawling conglomerate of 24 business and industrial units in areas ranging from textile, spinning, dyeing, finishing, garment, pharmaceuticals, ICT, dredging, ceramics and packaging DBL Group, led by its managing director Jabbar, exports goods worth about \$500 million, and it is expecting to cross the landmark \$1 billion in annual turnover by this fiscal year, up 15 percent year-on-year. Over the next five years, it plans to invest \$750 million in its DBL Industrial Park at Sylhet, cross \$2 billion in annual turnover and hit an employee count of 85,000 from its existing 43,000.

BKASH Best Financial Institution of the Year

In 2011, bKash -- which means development or prosperity in Bangla -- started its journey, which, for all intents and purposes, lived up to its Bangla meaning. From its inception, bKash has become an integral part of the lives of millions, particularly in rural areas, who were overlooked by formal financial institutions. Today, thanks to its fast, easy and secure digital transactions, it has become a household name in Bangladesh. So much so that the word "bKash" has become a verb;



people now say "bKash koro (me)" instead of "send me money". Catering to people's daily transactional needs, it is empowering them to fulfil their dreams as well as take the country forward. The company now has a robust network of nearly 300,000 agents and more than 260,000 merchants across the country with over 63 million verified customers and a wide range of services. bKash started as a joint venture between BRAC Bank and Money in Motion LLC, USA. In April 2013, International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, became an equity partner and in March 2014, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation became an investor in the company. In April 2018, Ant Financial (Ali Pay), an affiliate of globally reputed Alibaba Group, became an investor in bKash. And last year came global tech investor SoftBank. With its exponential growth, the company has been recognised globally and locally. It was ranked as the 23rd company in the annual list of Fortune Magazine's "Change the World in 2017" among the top 50 companies across the world making changes based on social issues.

PRAN-RFL GROUP Enterprise of the Year

Fair price with a wide variety of products has been the modus operandi of Pran Group, which has enabled it to continue to expand its footprint all over the world. "We dreamt of becoming a billion-dollar company like Unilever or Nestle but it is tough with few product lines," said Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive officer of Pran-RFL Group. With world domination in mind, it has taken the strategy of launching thousands of products and hundreds of brands to reach out to all types of consumers. Pran-RFL Group has more than 8,000



products and 100 brands in its portfolio. "If every product can bring in a million dollars, then our dream of hitting hundreds of billions of dollars in turnover may come true." Thanks to product diversification, Pran was able to continue to expand its business in any situation. In 2022, the growth rate for domestic sales was 22 percent while its overseas sales rose 13 percent. Its annual turnover is about \$3 billion (considering USD 1=Taka 86). Its net profit growth rate was 16 percent and revenue growth was 6 percent. "This turnover is almost nothing in comparison to our dream -- it's a dot on a bigger map." Many food companies log in revenue of \$100 billion in a year, he said. By 2025, Pran-RFL Group hopes to log in exports of \$1 billion and by 2030, \$2 billion. In fiscal 2021-22, its exports were \$532 million. The company is doing well in India, Africa, America and Europe, Chowdhury said, adding that the company is eyeing the ASEAN market too.

Business icons honoured

FROM PAGE 1

After 50 years of independence, Bangladesh is making a giant leap towards prosperity with inclusive growth, said Kamal Quadir, founder and CEO of bKash.

"Keeping up with this pace, in just over a decade, bKash has relentlessly worked to bring unbanked and underbanked people into the formal financial sector under the regulations of Bangladesh Bank from the very beginning, which reflected the government's vision."

The recognition from the DHL-The Daily Star is a validation of the MFS provider's steadfast journey. "It has not been a sprint, but a marathon with corporate discipline, compliant practices and customer-centric focus," Quadir added.

At the event, Ayman Sadiq, founder and CEO of 10 Minute School, and Shahir Chowdhury, co-founder and CEO of Shikho, both educational technology start-ups, were honoured as youth icons.

Sadiq shared a number of stories about how 10 Minute School and its largely free educational contents are changing the lives of students, including the underprivileged, from across the country by helping them get into the best universities in Bangladesh.

Chowdhury also talked about the changing landscape in the education sector and how digitalisation is shaping it.

"Digitalisation in the educational sector has been taking place for many years. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the pace," he said, adding that e-learning is crucial to bridge the skill gap and making education accessible.

Mannan also gave away the trophies to the winners of the 19th edition of the Awards, which took place virtually in December 2020 for the global coronavirus pandemic.

Abdul Muktadir, chairman and managing director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals, was the Business Person of the Year, while Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Berger Paints Bangladesh, was the Outstanding Woman in Business.

Dutch-Bangla Bank was the Best Financial Institution and Snowtex the Business Enterprise of the Year.

Muktadir and SM




A partial view of the audience at the 20th Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel last night.

PHOTO: STAR

Khaled, managing director of Snowtex, received the crests.

Li Jiming, Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh; Vikram K Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh; Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh; Syed Alamgir, managing director and CEO of Akij Ventures; Nasir Ahmad Choudhury, adviser and founding managing director of Green Delta Insurance; Golam Mainuddin, chairman of British American Tobacco Bangladesh; Naser Ezaz Bijoy, CEO of Standard Chartered Bangladesh; Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank; Md Kyser Hamid, managing director and CEO of Bangladesh Finance and Investment; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of MasterCard; and Sabiha Amjad and Uzma Chowdhury, directors of Pran-RFL Group, were present on the occasion.

Azra Mahmood, famed choreographer and television presenter, was the master of the ceremony.



**WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2022
ART COMPETITION**

World Mental Health Day will be observed all over the world on 10 October 2022. This year's theme is- **Making Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority.** To observe this day in Bangladesh, an art competition will be held. You have a chance to win the competition with an attractive award and a certificate.

You can participate in the competition under two age categories:

- 8 to 15 years
- 16 to 24 years

The topics are:

1. 'Mental Health means ...'
2. 'To promote mental health and wellbeing I will...'

Please send your original artwork; and your name, age, topic, title of the artwork (in a separate paper) in an envelope titled **World Mental Health Day 2022 Art Competition** at the address below by **14 September 2022:**

Address: The NCD team.
World Health Organization Country Office for Bangladesh
House-SW(I) 1/A, Road 8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

Join the competition, show your talent, win the award!

It's Tariqat, once again

FROM PAGE 1

recommendations accepted. It had proposed former senior secretary Kazi Habibul Awal as Chief Election Commissioner and the president appointed Awal as the CEC.

It had recommended Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan as an election commissioner, which he became.

Five years ago, Tariqat Federation had recommended KM Nurul Huda for CEC and ultimately, he got the post.

Of the 39 registered political parties, 28 joined the recent dialogue with the EC and nine, including the BNP, skipped. Two parties wanted another time for talks.

During the talks, 10 parties, including the main opposition in parliament Jatiya Party and the Gono Forum, were vehemently against the use of EVMs.

Tariqat Federation claimed to be more meticulous than others when asked why its recommendations were accepted while those made by other parties were not.

Its Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari told this paper, "Before giving any proposal we always think about it and gave good suggestions, thus those suggestions yielded good results."

"No political party came up with this suggestion [EVMS for 150 constituencies]. But we did. We gave the proposal considering Election Commission's capacity.

Election Commission's decision proved our proposal was logical and realistic."

Maizbhandari was confident with their winning streak and said the EC would also accept the first recommendation they made during the dialogue.

"I am sure the Election Commission will decide to hold the elections in phases."

The party during the talks had also asked for the deployment of army personnel for protecting the ballot papers and the EVMS and forming a monitoring committee with officials of home and defence ministries.

The EC on August 22 said it was reviewing the proposal for general elections in phases.

IGP Benazir

FROM PAGE 1

officials for alleged human rights violations.

"In 2009, I was working as the first secretary of the Bangladesh mission in New York..."

"I joined Rab in 2015. So why was I included in that list?" asked the IGP while addressing a civic reception accorded to him in New York on Thursday, said a Police Headquarters press release yesterday.

Benazir is now in New York to attend the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit.

The IGP said, "I don't want to blame the US administration or the Americans, because it was done by those who did not vote for Bangabandhu's boat in the 1970 election and those who were against the Liberation War in 1971."

He said the group hired four lobbyist firms at an annual cost of \$25 million, and those firms spent three years lobbying for the "so-called" sanctions.

The IGP said it was once thought that social media would revolutionise journalism, but now fake information is being circulated through it.

Without mentioning any names, he said there are 22 "information terrorists", and they have to answer.

"Information terrorists are against the country; they are spreading propaganda against humanity. Dirty things should be discarded as soon as they are seen on Facebook."

The press release said Hindal Qadir Bappa, leader of the Awami League unit in the US, presided over the event.