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## KEEP REACHING FOR THE STARS

2,563 stellar students receive 23rd The Daily Star HSBC O & A Level Awards

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium erupted in cheers yesterday as 2,563 O- and A-level students were recognised for their outstanding results at a ceremony hosted by The Daily Star and HSBC Bank to celebrate the students' hard work and success.

Speakers at the event with the tagline "Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow" implored the students to seek top-tier education worldwide but never forget their responsibility to their nation.

Beaming like stars, the students clutched their awards, their eyes sparkling with dreams of achieving greatness.

Behind the scenes, their teachers and families, the unsung heroes, basked in the reflected glory, knowing their tireless support had made this moment possible.

This year, 1,847 O-level and 716 A-level students from 111 English medium schools of academic sessions October/November 2022, January 2023, May/June 2023 and October/November 2023 were awarded at the event.

The awardees included 62 students

who topped the country and 20 who topped the world in O-levels, alongside 42 national toppers and 18 global toppers in A-levels.

The audience burst into applause as each student's name was announced at the 23rd The Daily Star HSBC O & A Level Awards.

Eminent author and physicist Prof. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, while addressing the event as chief guest, remembered the heroes who fought for their mother tongue in February, 1952.

"Remember to serve your three mothers: your own, your tongue, and your land," Zafar Iqbal urged, quoting renowned writer Dr

Shahidullah. Addressing the awardees, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said, "You've made us proud with your brilliance. Learn abroad, but return to serve your people."

Matt Cannell, deputy high

commissioner and development director at the British High Commission in Dhaka; Mahbub-Ur Rahman, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh; Abdullah Al Mamun, regional development manager for Pearson Edexcel Bangladesh and Nepal; and Shahin Reza, country manager, Bangladesh, of Cambridge Assessment International Education, also spoke at the programme.

Surid Ahammad of BAF Shaheen English Medium School and Nawfa Zayaan Nawa of AG Church School spoke on behalf of the students.

Zunaed Rabbani moderated the event.

The programme started with the national anthem and a video presentation on the struggles surrounding the emergence of independent Bangladesh.

To celebrate the multiplicity of religions in the country, the programme began with recitations

from the Quran, Bible, Bhagavad Geeta, and Tripitak, delivered by Abdul Wahid Moaz of Academia, George Ananta Munshi of Summerfield International School, Srabanam Karmakar of Lords - an English Medium School, and Tathoi Barua of AG Church School, respectively.

A cultural programme, comprising dances performed by groups of students during intervals, lent further festivity to the auspicious occasion.

Students from Mastermind English Medium School, BAF Shaheen English Medium School, Scholastica Mirpur, Heritage School, and Bangladesh International Tutorial Limited performed in the programme.

Parents and students were seen taking pictures inside and outside the auditorium.

Nigar Sultana, ecstatic to see her daughter honoured at the event, said, "A mother wins when her daughter wins! Mahpara Fatin was in debate clubs, took dance and music lessons, and now she has achieved academic excellence. All my daughter's hard work has paid off."

Moshiur Rahman, a teacher at Orchid International School in Mirpur, said, "I am extremely proud of the fact that the students I have

taught in the classroom are receiving awards for their achievements. A student's accomplishment is also an accomplishment of a teacher."

HSBC Bangladesh was the title sponsor of the five-hour-long programme, while Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge Assessment International Education were academic partners, and Deepto TV was the broadcast partner.

Since 1999, The Daily Star has been awarding students who secure at least six A grades in two consecutive sittings in their O-levels, and three A grades in their A-levels.

This year's was the 23rd edition of awarding future leaders of the nation. Over the years, this one-of-a-kind programme has become a source of inspiration for many.

Last year, a total of 2,617 students were hailed for their hard work and dedication.



The high achievers pose for a photo with eminent author and physicist Prof. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam during the 23rd The Daily Star HSBC O & A Level Awards held at the Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium yesterday.

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