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## CELEBRATING THE FUTURE LEADERS

2,375 stellar students receive 24th The Daily Star HSBC O & A Level Awards

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The atmosphere in and around the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Purbachal was buzzing with youthful energy, proud smiles, and a palpable sense of accomplishment yesterday as 2,375 O- and A-level students received well-earned recognition for their academic excellence.

Hearts swelled with pride as each name echoed through the hall, met by thunderous applause. One by one, the students rose, faces radiant with joy, as they made their way to the podium to receive their awards, marking a proud moment in their academic journey.

These students were honoured at the 24th The Daily Star-HSBC O & A Level Awards, themed “Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow”, a celebration of hard work, perseverance, and success.

They were recognised in the presence of the true but often overlooked heroes—parents who poured their hearts into their journey and teachers and mentors who stood by them through times of uncertainty.

Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul and Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, the joint chief guests of the programme, along with Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, handed over the awards.

The esteemed guests congratulated the students, saying they had made the

country proud with their outstanding results.

Addressing the students, Asif Nazrul said, “Dream big and strive to achieve those dreams. Always ask yourself: will I live only for myself or for others as well? And if you choose to live for others, let it be for the people of your country.”

Meanwhile, Rizwana Hasan said, “You can go to any developed country and secure a good career for yourselves, but if you do, the new Bangladesh we all dream of will never become a reality. We must all recognise our role in nation-building, and my primary request to all of you is to serve the country.”

“If you are truly going to be the nation-builders of tomorrow, then you must first love your country,” said Mahfuz Anam.

He expected many of the students present to go to some of the best universities in the world. “Through your global exposure and education abroad, strengthen your commitment to returning and serving this country.”

Tanmi Haque, head of International Wealth and Premier Banking of HSBC

Bangladesh; Razib Mahbubul, country director, IDP Education Bangladesh Ltd; Abdullah Al Mamun Liton, regional development manager for Pearson Edexcel Bangladesh and Nepal, also spoke at the programme.

Meanwhile, Rahat Ahmed, founder and managing partner of Anchorless Bangladesh; Ayman Sadiq, founder and CEO of 10 Minute School; Shahir Chowdhury, founder and CEO of Shikho, held three separate inspirational sessions. Priyonti Tabassum Haque of SFX Greenherald International School, one of the highest A\* grade achievers in A levels, and Zilani Haque of ABC International School, one of the highest A grade achievers in O levels, spoke on behalf of the students.

Zunaed Rabbani moderated the six-hour-long event that started around 9:50am, where principals of 57 schools also received crests.

This year, 1,824 O-level and 551 A-level students from Edexcel and Cambridge curricula, of academic sessions October/November 2023, January 2024, May/June 2024, and

October/November 2024 were awarded.

The awardees included 67 students who topped the world and 62 who topped the country in O-levels, alongside 15 global toppers and 32 country toppers in A-levels.

From 112 English-medium schools across the country, these students stood out by achieving at least six A grades in two consecutive O-level sittings and three A grades in their A-levels under the Cambridge board. Additionally, students who attained a grading of 7 or higher in six subjects in one or two consecutive sessions in their IGCSE exams, along with three A's or above in IAL exams within one or two consecutive sessions, were recognised.

The programme began with a one-minute silence to commemorate the victims of the July uprising, followed by the rendition of the national anthem.

Later, recitations from the Quran, Bhagavad Geeta, Bible, and Tripitak were delivered by Abdur Rahman Labib of Philosophia, Binoy Biswas of Lords, Raina Julia Gomes of SFX Greenherald International School and Akanksha Tathoi Barua of AG Church School, respectively.

Between segments, cultural performances were put on by students of BAF Shaheen English Medium College, Mastermind English Medium School, Bangladesh International Tutorial, Heritage School, Narayanganj, and Summerfield International School.

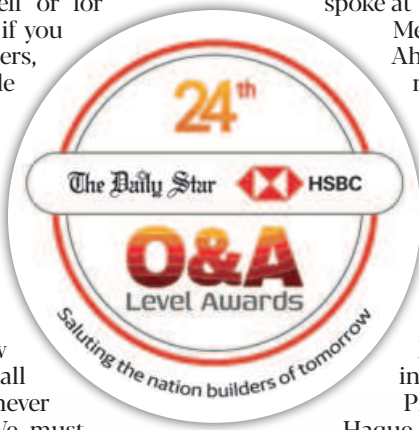
Maple Leaf International School Principal Ali Karam Reza's eyes welled up with tears as he spoke, pausing intermittently regarding the success of his students.

“We work hard so that our students achieve good results and accomplish something meaningful. I cannot find the right words to express this emotion.” Farzana Akhtar was overjoyed that her son, Naiful Hakim Khan Alamgir, achieved the country's highest score in A-level Accounting.

“Seeing such a grand celebration fills me with happiness. Those who will lead this country in the future should be taught moral values from an early age. Academic education alone is not enough.”

HSBC Bangladesh was the title sponsor of the programme, while Pearson Edexcel was the academic partner, and IDP was the education partner.

The Daily Star started this unique annual event in 1999, which, over the years, has turned into a source of inspiration for many.



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Distinguished guests and students observe a minute of silence in honour of the victims of the July uprising at the 24th The Daily Star HSBC O & A Level Awards at Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center yesterday.

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