

KEEP SHINING, SERVE YOUR NATION



PROF ASIF NAZRUL
Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser

This is a unique opportunity for me; in fact, it is a special occasion because my daughter is also among you.

In my childhood, I did not live a life of comfort. But I had the opportunity to read a lot of books, and I felt that I had to go far and see more. Allah has given me that opportunity.

The learning from my life that I want to share with you is that if you have focus, if you have strong willpower, if you work hard, then you can reach any goal, you can fulfil any dream.

Ability to think for others, the ability to have an attitude where one is willing to sacrifice for others, to sacrifice one's life for the country – that makes a person truly great.

Such events create history. New nations are born. Monarchs and tyranny fall. Civilisations advance.

You get the opportunity to dream new dreams. 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.



RAZIB MAHBUBUL
Country director, IDP Education Bangladesh Ltd

Some of you may want to become entrepreneurs, some engineers, and some may simply choose whatever your parents advise. But whatever you do and whatever you achieve in life, the most important thing is that it must bring out the best in you and the best in your life.

The achievements you have made today can help you reach the top ranks in the future.

If we look into the profiles of many renowned individuals, we will see that, at some point in their careers, they pursued higher studies abroad. They later returned and continued contributing to building the foundation of the nation.

Since 1969, our organisation has been working to support students. We have never stopped. We are still helping students achieve their dreams, whatever they wish to study, whatever ambitions they have.

You need to be prepared from a global perspective. It is not only about earning an international degree but also about gaining a broader vision that will help us build the nations we want for tomorrow.



ABDULLAH AL MAMUN LITON
Regional development manager for Pearson Edexcel Bangladesh and Nepal

The message is that the way of learning has changed. When I was a student, we used to learn in a way; now you are learning in a different way. At the same time, at Pearson, we have also made some changes.

One of the biggest changes is that the day we publish A and O level results, we give access to all students to their actual marked scripts. This way, they get to see what mistakes they made, and their teachers get to see what is the difference between an A and an A*.

Remember that success is not just about grades. It's about being fine, heartfelt, and curious. You are extremely lucky to receive British education. But with the privilege comes some responsibility.

You'll be successful in your life one day. But please try to give something back to your country. We need people like you. Keep shining. Let's work to be the better Bangladesh.



MAHFUZ ANAM
Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star

Young learners are the nation-builders of tomorrow. If you are truly going to be the nation-builders of tomorrow, then you must first love your nation.

We salute you for your performance, and we also urge you to be patriotic. Many of you will surely go to the best universities in the world to gather more knowledge and experience. Through your global experience and education abroad, strengthen your commitment to returning and serving this country.

Remember, as a great scientist, as a great biologist or a chemist or a mathematician, you can perhaps serve the world, but most importantly, you can serve your country, and we need you more than other countries.

I plead to the parents—please continue to guide your children, and you must teach your children to be tolerant. Another thing is that there is no substitute for hard work. With all the love and patriotism in your heart, your effort, your brain must be focused on learning more, gaining more knowledge, and seeking knowledge in every part of the world.



TANMI HAQUE
Head of International Wealth and Premier Banking, HSBC Bangladesh

Over the next few years, you — the students — will take some important decisions regarding your higher studies, professional pursuits, and even your place of stay. It is natural at this stage to look into the future and consider what skill sets you will need for your onward journey.

Like every generation, you will face your own unique set of circumstances that will shape your way forward. So what might those circumstances be? Standing here today, if you were to quickly survey one of the major change agents globally, artificial intelligence (AI) would probably top the list.

As I stand before the promising talents gathered in this room, I feel certain that some of you will go on to become influential members of society. The role of AI in society will actually be shaped by you, our future generation, our nation.

I can say that AI will undoubtedly be a force for change, and you will serve as our moral guides on this journey. Choose well, choose wisely. I wish you success in all your noble pursuits and hope you always serve our country and keep our flag flying high.



PRIYONTI TABASSUM HAQUE
SFX Greenherald International School
One of the highest A* grade achievers in A levels

Let us look back and congratulate ourselves for the years of hard work that we put into achieving this success and admire the people we have grown into through those challenges.

I stand here feeling incredibly proud of every single person who made it through this journey.

First and foremost, we owe our deepest thanks to our parents, the quiet strength behind everything we've achieved, always guiding and shielding us. No one in the world is prouder of our achievements than our parents.

To our teachers... Thank you. You weren't just teaching subjects. You were shaping lives.

We are standing at the edge of the future. Maybe we don't have it all figured out yet, but that's okay. The unknown is just another chance to take the road less travelled.

We've made it this far because we believe in ourselves. Whatever comes next, let's remember that we're not just moving forward, we're evolving, growing, and becoming the people we were always meant to be.

Today, the entire nation has witnessed our generation, we are ready to take on any challenges. Because where the others saw obstacles, we saw opportunities. And where the others hesitated, we marched ahead.

I'd like to get back to thanking my people because, in this journey of both gains and losses, they were unchanged. People like my parents, whose assurance and support were more than just staying up the nights with us, and my teachers, whose unmatched passion for teaching full of time, sweat and hard work acted as a blessing.

And by no means can I forget the ever-supporting peers who made this journey more beautiful. You were the ones that always had my back.

Finally, I'd like to end by saying that we should continue to face challenges, we should continue to find problems, and we should continue to solve them. Because if a single seed can turn out to be the shade for the rest, we, the warriors of tomorrow, can be something far bigger.

A milestone to treasure

AHMED DEEPTO and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Miftahul Jannat Ashra travelled all the way from Chattogram with her parents to claim the reward of years of hard work.

As she stepped onto the stage yesterday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Purbachal, her face lit up with pride.

"This award was a long awaited one for me, and it means a lot," said the Presidency International School student, who achieved notable results in her A-level examinations.

"In future, I wish to become a doctor. This award is such an appreciation for me to push myself to make my dream come true," she added.

Miftahul plans to study abroad, acquire knowledge and learn new technologies, and eventually return home.

The venue was vibrant with similar stories of ambition and perseverance, as The Daily Star and HSBC honoured 2,375 students -- 1,824 O-level and 551 A-level achievers -- for their outstanding performances.

Every name announced from the stage sparked cheers, with students lining up eagerly, their faces glowing with excitement.

Kazi Abu Baqr Khalil, Arbeen, and Shakran -- students of Playpen School -- shared their excitement after scoring 99 out of 100 in A-level Mathematics.

"For instance, the three of us narrowly

missed achieving the country's highest mark by just one point. But we have no regrets, we still achieved excellent results," said Khalil, who earned three A* grades and secured a scholarship to study Mechanical Engineering in Hong Kong.

Teachers and parents, the silent architects of these young achievers' journeys, stood proudly.

"This year, 41 students from our institution, across both A-level and O-level, came to the event to receive awards," said Farzana Hossain, a Bangla teacher at BAF Shaheen College (English Medium). "Even if someone doesn't win an award, they must not break down or lose hope."

"These young people will push Bangladesh forward," she added.

Tasnia Kabir, academic coordinator (senior section) of Summerfield International School, echoed her.

"I visit this event every year. When I see my students receive the awards, I feel that it is also my achievement."

She said, "Be yourself. Whatever you love, do that -- it is the best way to serve the country and the world."

Farhadul Islam, celebrating his son Zain Ibtida Islam's O-level success, said, "This recognition will not only boost their confidence but also encourage them to aim even higher."

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



Four topers on stage with The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul and Head of Markets and Security Services, HSBC Bangladesh Bashar M Tareq. Bottom, headteachers of the high achievers pose for a photo. The photos were taken during the 24th The Daily Star-HSBC O & A Level Awards yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR