

# Forbes Middle East honors prominent Lebanese figures

By Brooke Anderson

The Daily Star

BEIRUT: The prestigious Dubai-based Forbes Middle East magazine Monday night honored 29 Lebanese men and women from different professions in recognition for their achievements in various fields.

This is the first time Forbes Middle East has awarded these prizes since its creation a decade ago.

The award ceremony took place at Le Royal Hotel Dbyeh and was attended by a large number of officials and key business leaders in Lebanon.

Those who were honored came from different fields: entrepreneurs, doctors, philanthropists, politicians, artists and media experts.

Veteran journalist Raghida Dergham dedicated her award "to every girl who dreams of being in my place. Dare to break the glass ceiling. Don't be afraid."

Winners were selected from six categories: Lebanon's seven richest people, including the Mikati bro-

thers - telecom tycoons Taha and Najib Mikati - and four Hariri brothers, Bahaa, Saad, Ayman and Fahd Hariri; and Lebanon's top 10 companies listed on the Beirut Stock Exchange, ranked according to their assets, value, profits and revenues.

It also included less traditional professionals: the top 15 most powerful Lebanese businesswomen, including Elissar Farah Antonios, CEO of Citibank UAE; Randa al-Asaad, CEO of Arif & Bantoak Consulting Architects and Engineers; Mona Bawarshi, CEO of Gezatri Transport; Hala Fadel, founder and partner in Leap Ventures; and Ingie Chalhoob, president and managing director of the Etoile Group; Lebanese stars on the global stage, including Elissa, Ragheb Alama, Carole Samaha, Najwa Karam and Nancy Ajram; top Lebanese startups headquartered and founded in Lebanon, including music streaming platform, Anghami; internet of things application platform Scriptr; and developer and publisher of online games, Falafel Games; and

the top 35 influential Lebanese business personalities, including CEO of venture capital firm Berytech Maroun Chamma; politician and Chairman of Edle Sands Roger Eddé; and chairman and CEO of the food and beverage company Kasabiy Chtaura, Akram Kasabiy.

The event also honored people who weren't from the business sector but who nonetheless have played a role in shaping future leaders.

Former Education Minister and adviser to the president Elia Hoss Saab was recognized for his work with young people in Lebanon.

"We must invest in our youth. If we invest in the education of our youth, we'll make a change," Hoss Saab said, adding that he's also a believer in gender equality.

"Lebanon is a vibrant country. Forbes Middle East wanted to showcase the top people shaping the economy - not only the billionaires, but also women, startups, individual professionals and visionaries," head of sales Krishna Narayanan told The Daily Star following the awards



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ceremony and dinner.

"They've been an inspiration to others, and we should bring them out. ... They will be an inspiration to budding entrepreneurs."

Khaloud al-Omiss, CEO of Forbes Middle East, sees the event as a good way to boost the morale

of Lebanon's business community, coming at the right time as the country struggles through a recession.

"Lebanon is a land of culture, history and arts. It's an inspiring country," she said.

"We know Lebanon is going through a tough situation, and they

need our support. Maybe this event will support the business community and encourage them to celebrate their success.

"We want them to appreciate what they have. We're coming to support the business community, especially at this time."