

Revise gender policies to empower women

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current gender policies should be revised and amended to help reduce drop-out rate and early marriage, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The discussion on “Gender Budget Monitoring” was jointly organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and SANEM at the capital’s CIRDP auditorium.

Attending as chief guest, State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam said, 44 ministries now have gender budgets, with their allocations increased by 25-34 percent in fiscal year 23-24.

“Men and women have different needs, and a 50-50 allotment of budget might not be feasible. Nevertheless, 43 percent of the budget is now gender sensitive, it is close to 50 percent, which I think is quite a progress,” he added.

The state minister, however, shed light on the rising number of early marriages as an alarming cause behind hindered progress.

Society is yet to recognise women as individuals. The lack of content creation specifically on and for women and distinct ministries and departments dedicated to serving them further help linger social stereotypes associated with feminine gender roles, stressed Towfiqul Islam

Khan, senior research fellow, Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Israt Jahan Urmi, senior reporter, DBC News.

They attended the event as special guests. They suggested enhanced legal aid and allocation, facilities for working women like day-care centres at zilla and upazila levels, and strict budget monitoring to help establish equality.

Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, blamed domestic violence for social inequality.

New policies, in alignment with existing ones, have to be crafted to better cater to women’s needs.

FAUZIA MOSLEM
President of Mahila Parishad

“New policies, in alignment with existing ones, have to be crafted to better cater to women’s needs,” she added.

Nilufa Karim, gender budget trainer; Prof Hannana Begum, vice president of Mahila Parishad; Shahanara Begum, treasurer, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association; and representatives from Action Aid Bangladesh also spoke at the event.



Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus and Dr Mahathir Mohammad with the participants of Social Business Day 2023 in Malaysia recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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Pvt hospitals, perform unnecessary C-sections

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said caesarean sections are being performed at private clinics and hospitals unnecessarily when patients seek childbirth assistance.

Due to the negative role of private clinics and hospitals, the C-section rate is not coming down, said the minister while addressing an event marking World Population Day 2023.

“Once an expecting patient is taken to private clinics and hospitals, they perform C-sections. However, the procedure is unnecessary most of the time. All should be aware of this,” he stressed.

The minister stated that the current rate of C-sections in private hospitals around the country is 70 percent.

A recent study by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics said the overall rate was 41.4 percent countrywide in 2022.

The minister also urged patients to opt for institutional delivery (delivery in a hospital) to

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PRAYER TIMING		AUGUST 3	
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-20	12-45	5-00	6-47 8-15
JAMAAT 4-55	1-15	5-15	6-50 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			

Increase efforts to combat trafficking

Speakers urge govt at national dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a national-level dialogue yesterday said although Bangladesh has made progress in combating human trafficking, the government needs to enhance its effort to reach every trafficking victim as multi-dimensional challenges still remain.

They said addressing root causes of human trafficking such as poverty, inequality and lack of education is essential. Besides, building awareness among communities and enhancing the capacity of investigators and

RECOMMENDATIONS
Build awareness among communities
Enhance capacity of investigators, prosecutors
Reach every victim, hold perpetrators accountable
Collaborative effort, robust legal framework

prosecutors are prerequisites to fighting the heinous crime.

The home ministry with support of the Counter Trafficking in Persons Technical Working Group (CTIP-TWG) of Bangladesh UN Network on Migration organised the dialogue at a city hotel, observing World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said Bangladesh will not tolerate human trafficking as the government has a “zero tolerance” policy to this end.

Human trafficking and illegal migration cannot be solved by a single entity but those demand cumulative effort from all sectors. We will reach every victim and hold every perpetrator accountable.

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN
Home Minister

Human trafficking is not an isolated issue but a symptom of deeper problems within the societies that thrives in the shadows of poverty, inequality and desperation.

CHARLES WHITELEY
EU Ambassador to Bangladesh

“We will reach every victim and hold every perpetrator accountable,” he said, addressing the dialogue as chief guest.

However, human trafficking and illegal migration cannot be solved by a single entity but those demand cumulative effort from all sectors, the minister added.

According to the US state department’s 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report, courts and tribunals in Bangladesh convicted 94 traffickers in 35 cases in the latest reporting period compared to the previous reporting period when courts convicted 18 traffickers in 11 cases.

Courts sentenced most traffickers to fines, with 33 traffickers receiving terms of imprisonment and 61 traffickers receiving penalties of fines only, the report says.

Although convictions increased, the imposition of fines rather than jail time weakened deterrence, undercut the government’s overall anti-trafficking efforts, and likely created security and safety concerns, particularly for victims who cooperated with

investigations and prosecutions, it adds.

Gwyn Lewis, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh, at the dialogue said despite extensive efforts, trafficking in Bangladesh remains a challenge, stressing to address issues like sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced labour which are linked to trafficking.

She said with the support of humanitarian and development partners, the UN continues to work with Bangladesh government to ensure that all survivors of trafficking have access to national protection services.

IOM Bangladesh Officer in Charge Fathima Nusrath Ghazzali said addressing trafficking in persons requires a comprehensive approach based on promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedom of all human beings.

“We need to redouble our outreach efforts and ensure support for every victim,” she added.

Combating human trafficking

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Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed in road accidents yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Rajshahi, three people were killed on the Rajshahi-Naogaon highway in Rajshahi’s Mohanpur upazila in the morning.

The deceased are Abul Hossain, 55, Zahangir Alam, 45, and Azibar Rahman, 35.

The accident happened as a Rajshahi-bound three-wheeler first hit a bicycle and then collided with a battery-run auto-rickshaw at Baksoil around 10:00am, said Sub-inspector Ibrahim Khalilullah of Mohonpur Police Station.

The three-wheeler hit the bicycle while it was taking a turn on the highway.

The victims died on the spot, SI Ibrahim said.

Azibar was transporting four cattle in the three-wheeler, Zahangir was driving the auto-rickshaw and Abul Hossain was riding the bicycle.

Their bodies were sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Four others including Mamun, driver of the three-wheeler, were admitted to the same hospital with injuries.

Meanwhile, two traders were killed when their truck, loaded with mangoes, overturned while overtaking a passenger bus in the Mirzapur upazila of Tangail yesterday.

The accident took place near Jamurki Bridge of Dhaka-Tangail highway at around 9:30 am, said police.

The deceased traders are Ariful Islam, 23, and Artha Barman, 18, of Narsingdi district.

‘Uncle, nephew murdered by colleagues’

Reveals PBI after a 5-year probe into death of two press workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two bodies, two mysteries unsolved.

In November 2017, press worker Sohel Mia was beaten unconscious by unidentified assailants. He later succumbed to his injuries in a Dhaka hospital.

His distant uncle, Iqbal Hossain, initially faced blame for the murder but four days later, his lifeless body was discovered hanging from a tree in Narayanganj’s Rupganj area.

Both of them worked at a printing press in Dhaka’s Kadamtali area. The press employees claimed it to be a suicide, fuelled by remorse of killing his own nephew while in hiding.

For five long years, the truth behind these deaths remained shrouded in mystery.

But yesterday, the Police Bureau of Investigation said Iqbal was not the perpetrator behind his nephew’s murder; instead, both of them were killed by their colleagues at the printing press for a dispute over using excessive electricity at the press.

According to PBI findings, 12 press workers were involved in the double murder, said PBI chief Banaj Kumar Majumder. Additionally, two drivers played a role in hanging Iqbal’s body in Rupganj to stage the incident as suicide, he added.

After the press workers beat the uncle and nephew, Iqbal died on the spot while nephew Sohil was critically injured and unconscious. The killers then hired a pickup van by paying its owner Tk 20,000 and used it to carry the body of Iqbal from Kadamtali to Rupganj.

The PBI has so far arrested eight individuals involved in the incident. Among them are printing press workers Jamal and Mamun, pickup driver

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Twelve press workers were involved in the double murder. Additionally, two drivers played a role in hanging Iqbal’s body in Rupganj to stage the appearance of suicide.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Local tractor driver Rubel dragging a fishing trawler ashore at the Kuakata sea beach with help from fishers. Small trawlers are also pushed into the water in a similar manner, as there are no ferry ghats nearby. Rubel receives around Tk 15,000 per month for the job.

BASIC BANK LOAN SCAM CASES

ACC ordered to submit 20 charge sheets to HC today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to submit the charge sheets of 20 corruption cases, which were filed in connection with the BASIC Bank loan scam, before it today for examining those.

Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu passed the order while hearing of 20 petitions filed by four BASIC Bank officials seeking anticipatory bail in the cases.

The four accused officials are BASIC Bank’s

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COMBINED MILITARY HOSPITALS

Recruit required manpower: JS body

UNB, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Defence recommended recruiting necessary manpower in the Combined Military Hospitals.

The parliamentary watchdog in its 24th meeting asked the government to take steps in this regard. Chairman of the parliamentary body Mohammad Shubid Ali Bhuiyan chaired the meeting held in Parliament Bhaban.

In the meeting, the committee discussed the overall activities of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and the steps taken to modernise the Bangladesh Survey Department.

The parliamentary committee suggested the government to recruit necessary manpower for the Survey Department by quickly implementing the organogram and the recruitment rules.

Committee members Muhammad Faruk Khan, Elias Uddin Mollah, Nazmul Hassan, Nasir Uddin, Mohibur Rahman and Naheed Ezaher Khan attended the meeting.

High officials from three armed forces and the defence secretary were present, said a press release.