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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awards an injured peacekeeper at an event held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka, marking International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers yesterday. PHOTO: PID

Gender budgeting the way forward

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday stressed for a gender sensitive national action plan, proper budget allocation, and a robust monitoring system to improve women's status and empowerment.

They also emphasised the importance of gender budgeting in reducing inequality, and noted that gender-sensitive planning, budgeting guidelines, and monitoring tools are essential for effective implementation.

Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, with support from UN Women Bangladesh, organised the national workshop titled "Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Guideline (GRP) and Monitoring Tools" at a hotel in Dhaka.

Presiding over the event, Navanita Sinha, deputy country representative of UN Women in Bangladesh, said, "For the first time in the history of Bangladesh, gender budgeting was started for four ministries in 2009-10 fiscal year. Now, gender budgeting is being formulated for 44 ministries."

Proper gender budgeting is important for reducing discrimination and inequality towards women, she added.

"Despite comprising over 50 percent

of the country's population, women still face discrimination and oppression," said BNPS executive director Rokeya Kabir.

"The policymakers must address issues like the quota system for marginalised communities, sexual harassment of women and girls, and women's inheritance rights," Rokeya Kabir, also a freedom fighter, added.

Allocation in the national budget is crucial for equitable resource distribution, and gender budgeting is integral to women's economic, social, and political empowerment.

ROKEYA KABIR
BNPS executive director

She highlighted that allocation in the national budget is crucial for equitable resource distribution, and gender budgeting is integral to women's economic, social, and political empowerment.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'It's their personal matter'

Says Quader on graft allegations against ex-IGP, former army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The offences of ex-IGP Benazir Ahmed and former army chief Aziz Ahmed are their personal issues and they will have to face the music, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"Benazir was our IGP during the Awami League term. Now it's his personal matter. We cannot blame an organisation for that. When the matter came to light, the ACC started investigating. After the investigation, they will surely file a case," said Quader.

The AL general secretary said this at a press conference held at the AL president's political office

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS

Policy actions can aid their reintegration

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday emphasised the importance of having a policy brief for advocacy to ensure safe migration of women and gender-sensitive reintegration.

"Due to the absence of a framework of services ensuring equity, returnee women migrant workers experience a wide variety of challenges affecting their ability to reintegrate with



is not gender neutral, as women migrants face different challenges, opportunities, and vulnerabilities compared to men.

"Returnee women migrants are particularly vulnerable. Most people have negative attitudes towards migrant women, perceiving that women working abroad are physically abused... Social norms and values often go against them, and in some cases, their husbands, children, and parents do not accept them," she said.

CWCS executive member advocate Farida Yeasmin also partially presented the concept note.

It included eleven recommendations for sustainable social and economic integration,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

their families and communities, cope with psychosocial trauma, and find sustainable livelihood opportunities," said Prof Ishrat Shamim, president of the Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS).

She said these while presenting

a concept note titled "Media Advocacy on Reintegration of Returnee Migrants" at a press briefing held at Jatiya Press Club.

CWCS, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised the briefing. Shamim said migration

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Service centres
- Separate database
- Adopting rehabilitation policy

REPORTS ON POLLS EXPENSE
EC ignoring its legal obligations: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even five months after the 12th national election, the Election Commission hasn't fulfilled its legal obligations to provide reports on the expenditures of candidates and political parties, said Transparency International Bangladesh in a statement yesterday.

Claiming the EC is violating the country's electoral laws by maintaining secrecy in this regard, TIB said, "There are no instances of the EC taking any punitive measures against candidates and political parties who have failed to submit their expenditure reports on time, which is not expected from a constitutional body."

TIB Executive Director Ittekkharuzzaman said the candidates, parties, and even the EC itself are disregarding the legal obligations related to election expenditures.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Toxic PFAS found in water near textile factories'

Says study

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

High percentage of a harmful substance was found in the water near the country's garment factories, according to a new study.

The substance - Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as "forever chemicals" - was found for the first time in the country, according to studies conducted by the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) and Ipen, a network of NGOs.

The study tested 31 surface water samples and four tap water samples from areas near textile factories in 2021 and 2022.

According to the study, titled "Present Threat: PFAS in Textiles and Water in Bangladesh," PFAS was found in 27 of the 31 surface water samples (87 percent).

Furthermore, of the 27 samples containing PFAS, 67 percent contained one or more globally banned PFAS-based chemicals, such as PFOA, PFOS, and PFHXS.

Tap water contamination was also high, with PFAS detected in 75 percent of samples.

Researcher at Ipen Global and co-author of the study, Jitka Strakova, presented the study virtually in a programme organised by ESDO in the capital yesterday.

Particularly alarming was the level of contamination in the Karnatali river, where PFAS concentrations reached 1,152.2 nanograms per litre, more than 300 times the proposed EU limit.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Existing law needs reform
Speakers on Conciliation of Disputes Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice for poor and marginalised women in Bangladesh can be more secured by reforming the Conciliation of Disputes (Municipal Areas) Board Act, 2004, said speakers at a national seminar yesterday.

Referring to "Promoting Rule of Law through Strengthening Formal and Informal Justice" project, they said in 2022, around 48 percent of the main applicants of six municipal corporations in Madaripur, Shariatpur, and Gopalganj were women.

They also observed that only nine percent of people go to court, while 87 percent are interested in resolving disputes with the help of local elected representatives and dignitaries.

The law needs to be reformed to further enhance citizens' rights and access to justice, and in a way that is complementary to other laws.

DR DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA
Convener of Citizen's Platform for SDGs

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A woman returns home, trudging through knee-deep water while carrying her daughter and two large bottles of drinking water. In the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, some areas in the capital are still suffering from waterlogging. The photo was taken on Matuail's Medical Road yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON