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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 (GRP) Guideline 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.

BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir

said, "Despite comprising over 50 percent of the country's population, women still face discrimination and oppression."

"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.

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Media needs to safeguard interest of the country

Says Arafat

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday urged the country's media to work with utmost sincerity, safeguarding the interest of the country and its people.

He also said the government is working to ensure a congenial atmosphere for journalism.

Arafat said this while addressing the Bangladesh Press Council (BPC) Padak 2023 distribution ceremony at Tathya Bhaban auditorium on the city's Circuit House Road.

He said, "We believe that freedom of the press is a part of our Liberation War

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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 in place 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 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 this 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 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, such as doorstep migration

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'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 Straková, presented the study virtually

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PBI plea to scrap bail of Transcom CEO, 3 others rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a petition filed by the Police Bureau of Investigation seeking cancellation of bail of Transcom Group Chief Executive Officer Simeen Rahman, its Head of Transformation Zeraif Ayat Hossain and two others in separate cases.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rashidul Alam passed the order, said a sub-inspector at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

The magistrate also rejected a 10-day remand prayer filed by the PBI with the court earlier.

The two others are Transcom Group's chief financial officer Kamrul Hasan and executive director (corporate affairs and law) Md Fakhruzzaman Bhuiyan.

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REPORTS ON POLLS EXPENSE

EC ignoring its legal obligations

Says 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 Iftekharuzzaman said the candidates, parties, and even the EC itself are disregarding the legal obligations related to election expenditures.

Candidates and parties have shown disinterest in submitting expenditure reports within the stipulated time, and the EC has not taken any punitive measures despite the crossing of the deadline, he added.

The 12th national polls took place on January 7, 2024, with February 7, 2024, being the deadline for candidates to submit their reports and April 7, 2024, for political parties.

EC is responsible for ensuring accountability of candidates and political parties that fail to adhere to electoral laws, Iftekharuzzaman said, adding, "The inactivity of EC is further encouraging candidates and parties to break the laws. This is embarrassing for a constitutional body like the Election Commission."

GRAFT ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AZIZ, BENAZIR



“

It's their personal matter. When it came to light, ACC started investigating. After probe, they'll surely file a case.

OBAIDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary



“

The government will not give protection to anyone and the law will take its own course.

SALMAN F RAHMAN
Adviser to PM



“

Not just one Aziz and one Benazir. You have fostered countless persons like them who are plundering public money.

MIRZA FAKHRUL
BNP Secretary General



“

Who elevated Aziz and Benazir to these positions? They indulged in stealing and looting. Why haven't cases been filed against them?

MAHMUDUR RAHMAN
MANNA
Nagorik Oikya President