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'Free and Independent Media- The Cornerstone of a Healthy Democracy'

Title- International media workshop for women journos of Indo-Pacific region

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The U.S Consulate General Kolkata, in partnership with the Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) and with the support of South Asian Women in Media (SWAM) and the East West Centre (EWC), hosted an International media workshop in Kolkata for Women Journalist from the Indo-Pacific.

The two day workshop which started on August 11 is being attended by around 60 women journalists from different countries, including US, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, among others. They discussed on the threats and challenges they face in their respective countries along with the good practices adopted to counter them.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the workshop, Melinda Pavek, Consul General, US Consulate, Kolkata, emphasised the role of free and independent media as the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. She also cautioned against the adverse impact of information asymmetry with respect to undermining people's trust in democratic instruments.

In this regard, she mentioned the Digital Communication network (DCN) established by the United States. The DCN is a network of more than 8,000 journalists, educators, communicators, new media professionals, and public officials who are working to combat disinformation and propaganda.

The network develops and shares tools that provide people with accurate information and fact-checking capabilities. She concluded by stating that the United States is working on developing, strengthening, and integrating more such network across media literacy, popularize fact checking, and support press freedom.

Adrian Pratt, Director, American Center Kolkata, Highlighted the role of digital technology in bolstering people's access to information in real time from across the globe. However, he also pointed out its misuse by actors to spread misinformation especially women journalists.

Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS, underlined the issue of information literacy among journalists as a critical step for combating misinformation or disinformation.

He underlined the need for disseminating correct information about the U.S. led initiative of building an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). He mentioned that often the IPEF is viewed solely as a tool for extending market access by the U.S. Such incomplete narratives often over shadow the other pillars of the IPEF namely: regional security and climate change, he added.

He concluded by highlighting the role of Civil Society Organisations in the Indo-Pacific in creating information literacy among various stakeholder groups, including the media.

Nilova Roy Chaudhary, General Secretary, SWAM, shared challenges faced by women journalists in South Asia. She mentioned that such challenges range from misogyny to trolling to misinformation.

She emphasised the need for establishing cross-border collaboration among women journalists in the Indo-Pacific region as a tool for combating the harassment of women journalists in the work place.

Susan Kreifels, Media Programs Manager, East West Center, argued that combating misinformation was not a one-time exercise and required long-term effort and investment. She cited various reports indicating loss of people's trust in media on account of misinformation and stressed the need to call out and prosecute actors who bombard society with misleading information.



FREE AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA - THE CORNERSTONE OF A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY' Int'l media workshop for women journo of Indo-pacific region

Farhan Nazim

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Wasfia Nazreen returns home after creating history

Women's Own Report

Wasfia Nazreen, the first Bangladeshi to have summited the notorious K2 - the world's second highest and most dangerous mountain - has just landed in her motherland. A Bangladeshi Airforce flight departing from Lhasa, Nepal, had carried the 38-year-old mountaineer home on August 17. She became one of the 40 women or so in history since 1954 to have scaled the most dangerous mountain on the planet. This expedition was solely sponsored by Swiss Limited.

Shortly after her arrival, a press briefing was held at the Sheraton (Dhaka), where Wasfia shared enthralling snippets of her two-week expedition to the Karakoram. This is the first time Pakistani authorities have granted a mountaineering and trekking permit to any Bangladeshi.



adventures on the planet who has made it in the summit of K2 and back in one go. Many world-mountain mountaineers come back years after years and still haven't made it. I want to especially thank my sponsor Swiss Limited for helping me in my mission and everybody else who has supported me "said a delighted Wasfia at the press briefing.

Being among the Karakoram Range, the 8,611-meters-high mountain K2 is known to be technically much more difficult than Mount Everest for mountaineers to climb. Extremely hostile, almost pyromaniac-like responses and unpredictable weather conditions at the "Savage Mountain" have allowed only some 400 climbers to set foot at its peak, many of whom didn't survive on the way down. Wasfia Nazreen scaled K2 on July 22, 2022, along with her team, which consisted of some of the world's most acclaimed mountaineers, based on the "North 14 Peaks

Summer hair care

Women's Own Desk

Keep your hair happy and healthy all summer long using these natural, chemical-free methods.

Natural hair rules in the summer! Now is the season to let go of perfect, sleek hair and embrace that loose, natural look. Learn how to protect your hair from the heat, sun, and humidity without turning it into an endless battle.

Cover up

Use a scarf or hat to cover your head when you're out in the sun. Not only does this provide extra



UV protection, but most of those are chemical-laden, conventional shampoos that I'd recommend avoiding. One quick way to add some protection is to run your hands lightly through your hair after applying sunscreen to your body.

Try a hot oil treatment

Coconut, olive, and avocado oils are good at penetrating the hair shaft. Shampoo hair as usual, then work in oil from ends to roots. Rinse, then condition as usual. Your hair should feel moisturized afterward, but not greasy.

Use a wide-tooth comb instead of a brush

Head-pulling anything through your hair when it's wet, since your hair is most susceptible to breakage. Wide-tooth combs are most gentle for untangling hair, as brushes can pull and tear when they snag strands.

scalp to dissolve excess oil.

Conditioners

Rinse with apple cider vinegar diluted in water for a quick natural conditioner. Use some coconut oil to smooth, de-frizz, and moisturize your locks after washing. The oil will give some shine, and, if you have wavy hair, create natural, air-dried curls. Try a natural deep conditioning treatment once a week to get that extra bit of moisture into your hair.

No more swimmer's hair

If you're a blond who turns green after a dip in the pool, try rinsing out your hair with 1/4 cup apple-cider vinegar and 2 cups water to get rid of discoloration and dandruff. It also helps to get your hair wet before entering the water because then it won't absorb as much chlorine.

Add some sunscreen

There are shampoos that contain



Freelancing training a way to make underprivileged women skilled

Women's Own Report

Online freelancing training can have a significant positive impact on the employment and income of underprivileged women, finds a study by IFDC Institute of Governance and Development (IGD). However, access to freelancing may be hindered by steep competition in the online marketplace, residual loss of confidence, and time constraints in learning and building their portfolio due to household responsibilities.

Findings from the study were disseminated at a workshop held on August 3 at IFDC Center for Institutions, the work-



shop brought together government officials, trainers and implementers to discuss the ways forward to develop an inclusive and sustainable ecosystem for women freelancers in Bangladesh.

The mixed-panels study evaluated the impact of a freelancing training program conducted by GolderTrust Bangladesh (GTB), targeted at women aged between 18 to 25 years. The program, titled "Women's Skills Development for Freelancing Women in Online Marketplaces", aims to develop 1,000



young underprivileged women into freelancers by providing them free training on different ICT-related skills and building their confidence through post-training technical mentorship and career advising support.

Women who received the training had a 28 per cent higher employment rate, and a 51 per cent increase in monthly income from both freelancing and non-freelancing sources, compared to women in the control group who did not receive the training. However, constraints such as lack of family support, access to digital devices and connectivity, language barriers, and lack of time

drove many women to drop out of the training programmes.

Dr. Binon Maiti, Executive Director of IGDC and "Youth ambassador for women freelancers in Bangladesh, we're addressing it with urgency, you must learn online."

Lopita Haq, Research Fellow, IGDC said, "We have to work the pros and cons before involving women in online freelancing in Bangladesh."



documentary Migrant Trust Shree, Migma David Sharpe, and Sumaiya Shikha. The country's leading pharmaceutical and animal health product company recently limited support for Wasfia as her Sole Sponsor throughout the historic ascent on the planet. I was in the team, which consisted of some of the strongest mountaineers on the planet. I want to thank everyone who has helped me and called for me - although I have gotten hit by media several times, we got help on several occasions this was the toughest mountain I have ever climbed. K2, locally known as Chogori, the "King of Mountains", time to fall you ever second. We are also one of the very few mountaineers in the world's second highest and most dangerous mountain on the planet. "14 Peaks

