

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SOUTH ASIA

Saarc convention should broaden the definition

CITY CORRESPONDENT

South Asian nations must ensure effective implementation of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Convention to address human trafficking in a comprehensive manner, said NGO leaders of Center for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) on Sunday.

It is a fervent demand of civil society organisations that the Saarc secretariat and national governments ensure effective implementation of the convention to successfully tackle the danger, they said at a press briefing at the CWCS office.

The CWCS arranged the briefing to share a 'lobby document' compiled with recommendations made at a number of regional consultations in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka organised in the past year by India-based South Asia Network Against Trafficking (SANAT).

SANAT aims to create a regional level lobby group comprising key stakeholders and opinion makers engaged in advocacy for effective

implementation of the Saarc Convention on human trafficking.

Governments of all the Saarc member countries have ratified the convention.

"A major challenge in today's context to tackle the problem is how to demarcate between migration and trafficking," said Prof. Ishrat Shamim, president of CWCS.

Traffickers often pose as prospective bridegrooms, allure unsuspecting young women and take them out of country as legally wedded wives finally for trafficking, she said, where situations are such that even law enforcers hands are tied.

But the Saarc convention on trafficking defines trafficking from a very narrow perspective of just prostitution, said Prof. Shamim in her presentation at a regional consultation on the Saarc Convention in Kathmandu recently.

In addition to prostitution, women and children are also trafficked as forced labour, domestic servants, camel jockeys and for organ implantation, she said.

The convention also lacks in clarifying the recipient country's

accountability in rescue, rehabilitation, repatriation and reintegration of trafficked persons.

Prof. Shamim said that Bangladesh still has not formulated a national policy on migration nor it has ever arranged any parliamentary discussion on the issue.

Terminology of trafficked persons as complex, she said: "Repatriation mechanism must be simple."

Bilateral agreement on repatriation of trafficked persons among the Saarc countries must go beyond political consideration with options open to handle the issue at any time, said Prof. Latifa Akanda, advisor to CWCS.

They identified wars, natural disasters, and poverty, kidnapping and break-up in family tie as factors responsible for human trafficking globally.

The nature of present-day human trafficking requires strong regional approach coupled with national network to deal with the issue, civil society organisations resolved in the lobby document that came out of the regional consultations.

Due to geographical proximity and relatively porous borders, trafficking women and girls is easy between Bangladesh and India, and Nepal and India.

Bangladesh has 21 bordering districts through which trafficking occur randomly.

Women and girls from Bangladesh are trafficked to India, Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Boys are trafficked from Bangladesh to the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait and are forced to labour as camel jockeys and beggars, according to the document.

Both India and Pakistan are source, transit and destination countries for trafficked women, girls and children including Bangladeshis, for sexual and labour exploitation, Prof. Shamim said.

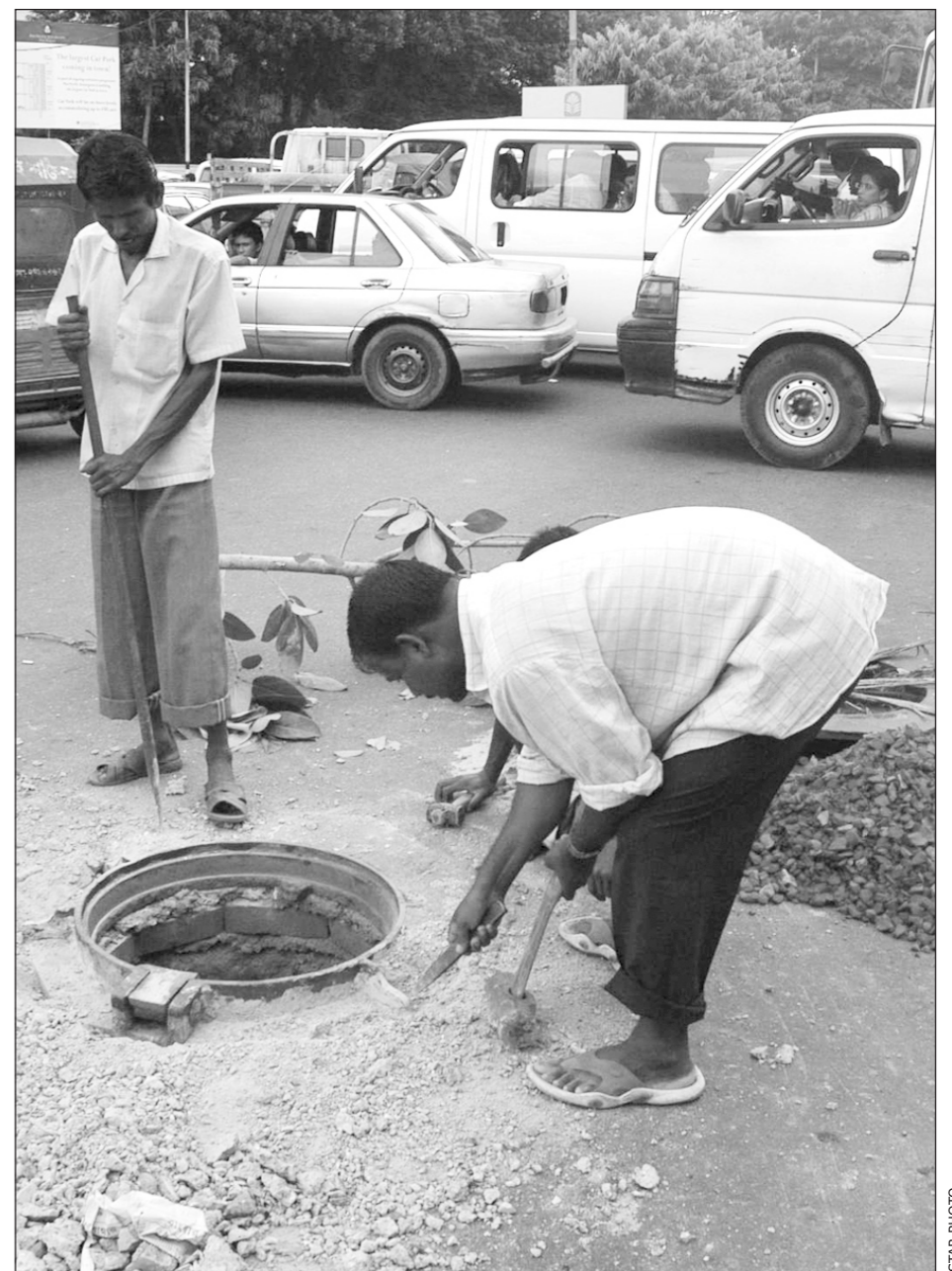
Nepal is a source country from where girls and women are trafficked to India as commercial sex workers, for domestic servitude and forced labour.

Sri Lanka is another source country of women and children trafficked to the Middle East, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea for coerced labour and sexual exploitation.

Civil society organisations and stakeholders at the regional consultations held in the above-mentioned four countries came up with a set of recommendations for effective implementations of the Saarc convention.

The recommendations include widening of the scope of Saarc Convention beyond prostitution, inclusion of at least two representatives from those who are working against trafficking in the Saarc Task Force to monitor the implementation of the convention, fund allocation by national governments to combat the threat and to set up a separate department at each government to work on trafficking.

The lobbyists also recommended annual regional conference at the Saarc secretariat to share experiences on progress of the convention implementation, developing country specific database and cross-border mechanism for repatriation, sharing information among all the stakeholder and appointing a rapporteur for progress report on the convention.



Workers repairing a manhole cover by blocking the road at the intersection between Sonargaon Hotel and Karwan Bazar at peak hour yesterday afternoon causing severe traffic jam.

STAR PHOTO

LOCAL HANDLOOM FAIR 2006

Sarīs sell like hot cakes; other items in demand too



IMRUL HASAN

Aiming at increasing the popularity of local handloom

products among city dwellers, a month-long fair titled "Deshiyo Tantbastra Mela 2006" organised by the Bangladesh Handloom Board began in the city last week.

Textile and Jute Minister Shajahan Siraj inaugurated the fair showcasing products from 110 handloom organisations from Rajshahi, Pabna, Dhaka,

Jamalpur, Khulna, Rangamati, Comilla, Tangail, Sylhet and Bogra participating.

The items on display include Mirpur Benarasi, Jamdani of Rugganj, Tangail handloom saris, Monipuri saris of Sylhet, Khodder of Comilla and other traditional handloom products, with saris being the item that attracts the large crowds everyday.

"The fair is giving me an opportunity to choose from variety of high quality saris and other items priced very reasonably than those sold at the various shopping malls in the city," said Tania Zaman, a housewife from Mirpur 10.

Abul Kalam Azad, a private service holder expressed his content at the reasonable prices.

"The middlemen and the wholesalers earn a large profit from handloom products at shopping malls," he said.

"Fairs of such nature will boost the manufacturers to produce and promote this industry," Azad added.

"Last month, I bought a fatua from a designer shop for Tk 750. I

am getting one made of same material for Tk 250 only here," said Rajib Hussain, a bank marketing systems.

Fair participants are happy with the response from visitors and customers. They said the daily average sales stand at Tk 10 lakh.

"We are getting a huge response from the people and have sold quite a lot. We are expecting the sales to be doubled by the 15th day of the fair," said Aminul Islam, Bengal Textile manager.

"We are selling 20 to 30 saris on average everyday. It is a good sign for our business," said Goura Babu Singha, Manipuri Handicrafts.

According to stallholders, saris sell between Tk 300 and Tk 25,000 each depending on make and quality. A lungi sells at Tk 150 to Tk 250, baby garments at Tk 100 to Tk 500 and shirts between Tk 200 and Tk 350 at the fair.

Abdul Gani Miah, president of the organising committee said that local weavers and entrepreneurs in the handloom

fabric sector have been deprived of fair prices of their products because of weak and poor marketing systems.

"Middlemen and wholesalers are taking the advantage of this weakness and making a fortune for themselves," he said adding that a government project under which a training centre for the overall development of the sector will be set up.

Miah further added that development of the sector would help reduce poverty and unemployment.

According to the Handloom Board, Bangladesh has a large number of handlooms producing different various products.

The local handloom fabric industry, at present, is contributing about 40 percent of the domestic demand. It plays a great role to the national economy bringing in more than Tk 1,000 crore, with almost 15 lakh people related to the industry.

The fair is open for all from 10 am to 10.30 pm daily.



healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

Hospitals

Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam 9336611, 7411660
BARDEM 8616641-50
Cholera Hospital (ICDDR) 8811751-60
CMH (Dhaka) 9870011
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital 8628612-6
Holy Family Red Crescent 8311721-5
Islamia Eye Hospital 9119315, 8112156
Lion Eye Hospital 9129127
Medinova Medical Services 8620353-4
Mirpur General Hospital (Pvt) Ltd 9007873, 8015444
Mitford Hospital 7319002-6
National Heart Foundation Hospital 8014914, 8010491, 8021399
Orthopedic Hospital 9112150

Salimullah Medical College Hospital 7319002-6
Samorita Hospital 9131901
Shahid Suhrawardi Hospital 9122560-78, 9112086, 8114856, 9130800
Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119

Clinics

Akand Clinic 8015855, 8022581
Aroggaya Niketan 9333730
BAVS Maternity 8016413-4
Dhaka Monorog Clinic 9005050
Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992
Ibn Sina Clinic 8119513
Jahanara Clinic (Pvt) Ltd 8912929
Judi Maternity 9113322
Paltan Poly Clinic 9557385
Retina Eye Center (Clinic) 9884588, 9884566
Shishu Bekash Clinic 9351625

The Eye Clinic 9333238

Blood Bank

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9

Eye Bank

Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040

Ambulances For

Dead Body

Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
 Elephant Road-Friday
 Bishal Center-Friday
 Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
 Polwell Market-Friday
 BCS Computer City-Friday
 Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
 Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
 Stadium Market-Friday
 Bangabazar Market-Friday
 National Museum-Thursaday
 Ahsan Manzil-Thursaday.
 New Market-Tuesday
 Gausia Market-Tuesday
 Mouchak Market-Sunday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Eastern Plaza-Sunday
 Farmview Super Market-Sunday
 Muktiyudha Jadughar-Sunday
 Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
 Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

Passenger's Complain

01711-000990, 01711-000991, 01711-000992, DMP-999, 2627.
Cab Salida Ltd. 9344477, 01711-620888, 01711-610405
Cosmo Cab Ltd. 9112959, 8127191,
Nitol Cab Co. Ltd. 8125285, 01711-621953
JBS Cab Ltd. 0191-364575
Coal Cab Ltd 8130485, 01711-826731
Limujin Cab Ltd. 9318351, 9337204
Multi-Cab Ltd. 9666502, 9570740
Nihon Taxi Cab Ltd. 8624742,
 8624741
Orion Taxi Cab Ltd. 934727, 9347277, 01711-155144
Reliance Cab Ltd. 9339563-4
RMS Cab Ltd. 8118536
Shatarupa Taxi Cab Ltd. 731083, 01711-458740
Tinni Cab Ltd. 9662009, 01711-645257
Telex Cab Ltd. 7202201
Aliif Cab Co. Ltd. 0191-357838, 83116948
Cab One Ltd. 9563054 Ext.-3077, 3178
United Cab Ltd. 7510166, 01711-

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express
Mahanagar Prabhathi
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyantika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Upakul Express
Agnibeena Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 6:40 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 1:55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 10:55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 6:40 am
 Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:15 pm
 Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am
 Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The American Center- 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4