

## 'Form task force to implement Saarc Convention on Trafficking'

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A task force should be formed immediately to implement the Saarc Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

They urged the officials of

Bangladesh government to raise the issue in the Saarc summit going to be held in New Delhi to combat the trafficking.

The speakers said the issue should be discussed at least on the sidelines of the summit as it is now an international issue.

They also stressed the need for coordinated initiative at regional

level as it is not possible to combat trafficking for a country alone.

If a task force is formed, then slowly the flaw in defining the trafficking could be amended, they added.

The press conference was organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and Action Against

Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC) in Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the city.

It is the time to implement the Saarc convention which was ratified by all the seven member countries during the last summit in Dhaka, said BNWLA Executive Director and ATSEC Chairperson Advocate Salma Ali.

The convention emphasised the formation of a task force on priority basis, protocol for rescue operation and smooth repatriation system, operation of mutual legal assistance within the member countries and bilateral as well as multi-dimensional dialogues and action plan on standard care and support for the survivors of trafficking.

Still now a huge number of trafficked victims are staying in the jails or shelter homes in abroad while the criminals are at large as the legal process is very complex, the speakers said, adding that any bilateral agreement could be applied easily if the task force is formulated.

## 60 houses gutted in N'ganj

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

started at around 9:45 am at one of the tin-roofed houses owned by two brothers -- Shamsuddin and Abdul Motaleb. The blaze soon engulfed the houses that were mostly rented by garment workers.

Fire fighters brought the fire under control after struggling for about an hour and a half.

Fire service sources suspect that a stove might have sparked off the fire.

Sixty houses were burned down in a devastating fire that broke out in West Masdar area in Narayanganj yesterday.

Ten people were also injured trying to extinguish the fire that also rendered 50 families homeless.

According to witnesses, the fire