

# Launch social movement, enforce law strictly to curb 'eve teasing'

## Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday underscored the need to launch a social movement and raise awareness to stop 'eve teasing'.

They also called for strict enforcement of laws and changes in the mindset of youths in order to prevent such harassment of girls.

They also called on the media to help conduct a vigorous campaign against eve teasing, which resulted in the death of a number of girls like Simi, Rumi and Trisha.

The family has also an immense role to play in resisting the social crime, they added.

Academics, legal experts, students, journalists, cultural activists and NGO workers took part in the roundtable titled 'Eve teasing: Won't the girls get rid of it?' organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) and the daily Prothom Alo at the newspaper's office in the city.

Presenting a paper, Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of BNWLA, said the number of women facing various forms of violence is increasing day by day and that eve teasing has become an everyday phenomenon in the country.

Schoolgirls are facing such harassment everyday but could not register their protest against it, she said, adding that as a result, they are forced to leave schools and face early marriage and finally they opt for suicide.

With the availability of new technologies, the act of teasing has got a new dimension, as the perpetrators of such crimes now send indecent SMS texts and indecent photographs to the victims on their cellphones, she added.



Dr Enamul Haque speaks at a roundtable at the daily Prothom Alo office in the city yesterday. On his right is Advocate Salma Ali and on his left are Anwara Syeda Haque and Sara Zaker.

Salma also said the act of teasing girls is a violation of women's right to freedom and movement.

Dr Mahbuba Nasreen, professor of sociology department, Dhaka University, said eve teasing degrades a girl or woman.

Not only the illiterate or lower class people, but also educated people such as the students of schools, colleges and universities commit such a social crime, she said, adding that patriarchal attitude to women are mainly responsible for it.

Kamrul Hasan Munna, brother of Rumi, a victim of eve teasing, who finally committed suicide, said cooperation of all is a must to resist such crimes.

The law enforcing agencies and the lawyers should remain honest while dealing such cases, Kamrul, an engineer by profession, said, adding that the culprits should be

given death penalty to deter others.

Apart from legal action, social cooperation is also necessary to curb such crimes, said Additional Inspector General of Police Mahfuzul Haque.

He suggested strict enforcement of the existing laws to stop it.

DU students Nafisa Tanzen and Umme Bushra Fatema Sultana narrated how they were harassed through mobile phones and Internet.

They said the teasers use indecent languages in SMS text and use vulgar words on the Internet.

Rubaba Dowla Matin, head of Brands of Grameenphone, said eve teasing exists everywhere and a girl does not know where to go or who to contact after being a victim of such crimes.

Technology has constructive and destructive sides and it depends on users, she said, adding

that if a customer complains to them, they warn the user who annoys others.

Psychologist Anwara Syeda Haque said the family has an immense responsibility to teach children social and moral values and equality.

The root of the problem is very deep and it should be addressed at family level, she added.

Munni Saha, chief news operation of ATN Bangla, suggested introducing a hotline in the media so that anyone can call soon after any such incident.

Dr Enamul Haque, member of law commission, Abdul Qaiyum, joint editor of Prothom Alo, cultural personality Sara Zaker, Zinat Afroz of Plan Bangladesh, Masud Ali of Incidin Bangladesh, Shabnaz Zaherin of Unicef and advocate Fahima Nasrin also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Sumona Sharmin, assistant editor of the Prothom Alo.

# Two die in warehouse fire in Ctg

Loss of property worth over Tk 1 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons were burnt to death when a fire ripped through a shoe warehouse at Reazuddin Bazar in Chittagong early yesterday.

One of the victims was identified as Nizamuddin, 26. The other man in his 30s could not be unidentified.

Fire brigade estimated the loss to be more than Tk 1 lakh.

Fire brigade sources said the fire started from an electric short circuit at the storehouse of one Islam Saudagar on the second floor of Reazuddin Bazar's Gazi Tower, opposite to Municipal Model High School, at around 3:00am, burning the two men to death.

The flames also gutted a huge quantity of shoes and raw materials stored in the warehouse.

Four fire brigade units managed to douse the fire at around 3:45am.



Visitors admire the paintings of children at an exhibition at Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city yesterday. Shishu Academy and Thai embassy jointly organised the exhibition on the occasion of the 80th birth anniversary of Thai king and the two decades of Thai-Bangladesh relationship.



Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui unveils the cover of a book titled "Chaitrapaban O Digantarekha" at Poet Sufia Kamal auditorium of National Museum in the city yesterday. On his right are writer of the book Masud Ahmed and journalist Ataus Samad and on his left is Dr Karunamoy Goswami.