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Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at the concluding session of a three-day regional conference at Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday. On his right are Justice VS Malimath and Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan and on his left are Prof Rashid-e-Mahbub, Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque and Prodip Agarwal.

## REGIONAL CONFERENCE ENDS 'Establish torture-free, democratic Asia'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day regional conference on 'Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Creating Resources in Asia' ended in the city yesterday with a call for establishing a torture-free, democratic and peaceful Asia.

Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS), Bangladesh and Society for Social Research Art and Culture (SOSRAC), India jointly organised the conference at Hotel Sonargaon.

Eminent jurist and President of Gono Forum Dr Kamal Hossain, Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque, Prodip Agarwal, president, SOSRAC, Prof HK Agarwal, general secretary, SOSRAC, Dr Kamrul Hossein, eminent lawyer and constitution specialist, Prof Abdus Sobhan, president, CRTS, Justice VS Malimath of India, Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan, general secretary, CRTS, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, secretary general, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), and Prof Rashid-e-Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association, also spoke at the concluding day of the conference.

A total of 24 participants from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Cambodia, and The Philippines took part in the conference.

Speakers at the concluding ceremony called for creating massive awareness against all kinds of torture and creating a torture-free world where people can live with dignity, peace, social justice and exercise their rights, without any fear and can contribute effectively to the social development.

They also called for banning

illegal intervention of the law enforcing agencies and to build up a network comprising all human rights organisations, professional groups, women organisations, mass media and political activists to build up a torture-free state.

Dr Kamal Hossain said our constitution and all human rights charters guarantee prohibition of torture, but in reality people are being tortured every now and then in the society.

Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque said it is so unfortunate that law-enforcing agencies think they have the right to torture people in the name of law and order situation.

He said awareness building is one of the key factors to eliminate torture from the society.

Justice VS Malimath in his speech said, "Persons and agencies that have been mandated to keep us safe, are often torturing us instead of ensuring our security and safety."

Dr Kamrul Hasan said torture is a crime under the international law. According to all relevant instruments, it is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

An effective move to mitigate the effects of torture requires the combined efforts of rehabilitation centres, human rights organisations, governments, professional organisations, the media and the individuals, he added.

Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan said, "If we can establish good governance at all levels, we will be able to stop torture in the society."

He also underscored the need for creating social awareness to stop torture.

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