

81pc girls fall victim to eve teasing: Study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The issue of eve teasing should be addressed seriously as it affects not only a girl personally but also leads to social violence, increase the rate of girls' dropout from schools and colleges and threatens women empowerment, speakers at a workshop said yesterday.

They also stressed the need for raising awareness to put an end to eve teasing.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organised the dissemination workshop titled 'Eve Teasing: The Social Menace' at Cirdap auditorium following a study conducted on 1000 girls and women in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Khulna and Cox's Bazar.

While presenting the research findings, Nazmun Zaman of BNWLA said that from 2006 to June 2008, a total of 12 girls committed suicide and eve teasing worked as a factor either directly or indirectly behind the incidents.

As many as 81.3 percent respondents throughout the country said that they have been teased at one point of their lives. The percentage

is high among age group 10-18, according to the study.

Some 87 percent girl of age group 10-18 said that they have been teased which is 82.5 percent among the age group 18-30.

Some 74.1 percent respondents said that the delinquent teenage boys, local hoodlums, even rickshaw pullers, bus drivers, street vendors, traffic police and often bosses or supervisors or colleagues of the working women tease them by uttering indecent comments.

Eve teasing also takes place in the form of singing songs, staring lustfully, whistling, pinching, chasing, doing vulgar movement and teasing through cell phones also.

Disrespect towards women, unemployment, sky culture, women's lack of courage, negative role of police, political influence and corporate culture were also identified as causes behind eve teasing.

Justice Mohammad Tafazzul Islam, BNWLA Executive Director Salma Ali, Principal of Viharunissa Noon School and College Rokeya Begum and Principal of Azimpur Girls' School and College Hosne Ara Begum were present.



President Iajuddin Ahmed approves the national budget for 2008-09 and also signs the Appropriation (Supplement) Ordinance 2008 and Appropriation Ordinance 2008 at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday, while Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam looks on.

Climate change fallout

FROM PAGE 1

memories of the super cyclones Sidr and Nargis are still fresh in public mind. Sudden floods in Delhi and Bombay had wrought havoc on the cities; droughts of last year wrecked many Bangladeshi farmers' back. The paradisaic beaches of Maldives are receding with waves inching forward. Maize output in Nepal is dropping consistently and its Terai floodplains are facing frequent flooding as ice on the Himalayas is melting fast.

The future is even scarier. Professor James Hansen, the director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, whose climate calculations have proved to be more accurate than anybody else's, believes the melting of the Greenland ice cap being picked up by his satellites today, now, suggests a 25-metre rise in sea levels this century. This would drown Bangladesh entirely along many of its Saarc neighbours.

The IPCC third assessment report made a concrete case that the climate is changing because of greenhouse gases, but it was quickly dismissed by a group of US scientists who said this was a hoax.

But after the fourth report of IPCC, the UN secretary general called a meeting on climate change in September 2007. It was then univocally agreed that the temperature has increased by 0.8 degree Celsius in a decade that has also raised the sea level by 4cm.

The Saarc nations could as well take China along to discuss the climate issue as the giant dragon also faces challenges that are commonly shared by its South Asian neighbours. The Tibetan plateau spawns the great river systems of China, South-East and South Asia the Yangzi and Yellow Rivers, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Mekong and the Salween. These rivers fed by the Himalayan glaciers support some 1.3 billion people and create a maze of ecological wonders.

But the glaciers are melting fast and China predicts that by 2050 the ice on the Himalayan side of China

will disappear by a quarter since 1950. Professor Syed Iqbal Hasnain, a leading Indian glaciologist, predicts that the Himalayan glaciers will be gone in 20-30 years because of climate change as well as the Asian Brown Cloud -- the 3km-thick fog of pollution that has gathered over north India because of emission from power plants and cooking ovens. And that would make many of the great rivers including the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus run dry by 2035. Only seasonal rain will bring them to life. The westerly winds of winter that blow rain-clouds over Pakistan have already been disrupted.

Yet the Asian countries most responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases -- China and India -- are slow to take mitigation measures. Both countries are in hot debates with the US and the EU over emission control measures, saying that they need to develop fast probably on par or at greater than their 11 percent and 9 percent growth rates to face the climate change impacts. India says, to some extent justifiably, its people have the same right to wealth as anyone. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change also recognizes that economic development and poverty eradication are the overriding priorities for the developing countries to face the impending disaster. India, known for being hawkish on any emission control move, has made a tactical 'non-commitment' in the last G8 summit by saying that its carbon emission per head would never exceed that of the developed countries.

India also has green technologies. Its Suzlon Energy has emerged as one of the world's five biggest makers of wind turbines from a mere textile company. India's solar yield is also bigger than any country except America. China is the top money maker out of rich-world polluters; it has already bagged \$5.4 billion or 73 percent of the total Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) fund. CDM is a

scheme whereby companies in rich countries outsource their obligation to cut carbon emissions by sponsoring carbon-cutting schemes in poor countries such as plantation.

As the Saarc nations are meeting in Dhaka with a new reality and challenges, Dr Ainun Nishat, country representative of IUCN, feels that the Saarc region can work closely on three of the four aspects of the Bali Declaration -- adaptation, financing and transfer of technology -- while the other aspect -- mitigation -- is largely an issue of the developed countries.

"The Saarc countries can form a climate group for adaptation strategy," he said. "Saarc is a region of 1.5 billion people with a wide range of poor people who have less adaptive capacity."

Similarly, Saarc can take a common stance on funding adaptive technologies especially community-based approaches.

"Bangladesh had proposed at the Bali conference setting up of an adaptation research centre and Saarc can take initiative in this regard. Bangladesh with its experience in adaptability can lead in this field," Nishat said. "Similarly, India is benefited by CDM and its experience can be used by other Saarc countries to access this fund."

India with its higher knowledge of cleaner and renewable technology can also help Saarc members to make better use of CDM.

Climate change impacts should be researched collaboratively and issues like migration of plants should be looked into on a wider regional basis. Agriculture is another issue where Saarc can have collective research initiative for new varieties as all the nations of the region will face problems in food production because of climate change.

"There can as well be a regional food bank to help each others in times of crisis such as the one happening now," Nishat said. The way India helped Bangladesh buy its food grains is a bright example of such collaboration."

Bijoy TV graft case

FROM PAGE 16

The apex court also fixed July 16 for hearing the government's leave to appeal against the High Court (HC) order staying the proceedings of the case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Kotwali Police Station in Chittagong on May 27 last year against ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Intiaz Hossain and City Corporation's Chief Engineer Mokhter on charge of launching Bijoy TV without prior government permission.

The charge sheet was submitted on November 22 last year in which it was alleged that the trio drew Tk 1.78 crore from the corporation fund in four phases and used Tk 1,69,67,960 from that amount in the name of launching the private channel.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Intiaz Hossain jointly filed a petition with the High Court for quashing the case against them. Upon this petition, the HC on January 17 this year stayed for three months the proceedings of the case and also issued a rule upon the deputy commissioner of Chittagong to explain why the proceedings of the

case should not be quashed.

On February 10, following a stay petition filed by the government, the Appellate Division stayed the HC order for a week and asked the government to file a regular leave to appeal with this court during this time.

As per the Appellate Division order, the government has filed a regular leave to appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC order.

Chittagong Divisional Special Judge SM Solaiman on June 26 started deposition of witnesses in this case.

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Intiaz Hossain yesterday filed an application with the SC to stay the trial proceedings of the case.

After hearing this application, the chamber judge of the Appellate Division stayed the proceedings of the case.

Barrister M Amir-ul Islam and advocate Abdul Baset Majumder assisted by advocate AKM Foyez and advocate Hari Sadhan Deb Brahman appeared for Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Intiaz Hossain. With advocate Md Zahid Islam stood for the government.



Former secretary Kafil Uddin Mahmood launches a commemorative book on late ASMO Subhan, former managing director of Duncan Brothers Ltd and a patron of art and culture, at a ceremony at the National Museum auditorium in the city on Sunday. Ramendu Majumder, Ann Burghard, Millie Subhan, Monsur Ahmed Chowdhuri and MA Azim edited the book titled 'Abu Subhan Smarak Grantho: A celebration of life'.

BTV's autonomy stays trapped

FROM PAGE 1

The sub-committee held a meeting in BTV complex on Saturday where former DGs of the state-run TV channel and top officials of private TV channels were present.

"That is nothing but a ploy for making the process lengthy in the name of holding meetings," said a news producer of BTV adding, "There was no need for forming the sub-committee."

He said none, excepting some people in BTV, is in favour of granting the autonomy.

The draft proposal prepared by the information ministry regarding BTV's autonomy was recently sent back by the council of advisers, directing the ministry to bring some amendments to it.

A source in BTV told The Daily Star that the draft was prepared in such a way that it would not be accepted in the cabinet.

After the present government had taken the initiative last year to grant BTV autonomy, a group of bureaucrats opposed the idea saying the country has a number of private TV channels over which the government has no control.

"They convinced the authorities that at least one state-run TV channel should be there," a source in BTV said.

Information Secretary Osman Jamil is however hopeful that BTV

will get both functional and financial autonomy, turning it into a standard professional TV channel.

"The draft proposed a limited autonomy. The cabinet sent it back as the government is committed to granting full autonomy," he told The Daily Star last week.

Although BTV is a profit making body, no effective step has yet been taken to free it from the pernicious control of various government quarters.

Ministers, lawmakers and bureaucrats used BTV in the past for their own gains turning it into the most unpopular channel in the country, although it reaches almost 99 percent of the population due to its terrestrial facility. After the military backed caretaker government assumed power, an intelligence agency started using BTV for pushing its favoured news and programmes in various ways.

The information ministry sources said initially the government wanted to grant autonomy to both BTV and Bangladesh Betar, but for reasons unknown Betar was later dropped. "Betar will be included again," a ministry official however said.

In May last year, former law and information adviser Mainul Hossain announced that the interim government will grant autonomy to BTV and Betar. He then said a

governing body with statutory power comprised of experienced persons from various sections of the society will administer the two media outlets.

Earlier on July 17, 2001 two acts were enacted in this regard which have remained shelved so far.

There was also a committee to implement the initiative, but it failed to make any headway.

The government however still seems to be working to grant full autonomy to BTV through bringing necessary amendments to the proposal and by adding new provisions to the acts.

Both of the major political parties, BNP and Awami League (AL) which ruled the country alternately since 1991, pledged to grant autonomy to Bangladesh Betar and BTV before elections, but none of them kept their promises after coming to power.

Both the parties and their recent predecessor, military ruler HM Ershad, used the state-run media unabashedly as the mouthpiece for their governments, without any regard to even a semblance of neutrality.

Granting autonomy to Betar and BTV was also one of the main promises in the joint declaration announced on November 19, 1990 by three political alliances, after the fall of Ershad regime.

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