

Poverty cause of women, children trafficking

Says CWCS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recent study identifies poverty as the major cause behind trafficking of women and children in the country.

Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) conducted the study in 38 districts identifying Jessore and Satkhira as the most frequently used land routes for trafficking with 64 percent of the victims being females aged between 13 and 17 years.

Jessore, Satkhira, Mymensingh and Dhaka are the major source areas, while there are as many as 20 transit districts bordering India used for trafficking women and children, the study mentions.

Sharing the study at Brac Centre yesterday Prof Ishrat Shamim, president of CWCS said, poverty caused by natural and man-made disasters is one of the key factors behind the rise of trafficking. Both external and internal trafficking are presently at large.

Apart from poverty other reasons that increase vulnerability of women

and children include, child marriage and domestic violence, she said.

Promises of better jobs, marriage, deception through love affair, legal or illegal migration channels, selling of young women by step-parents, relatives or husbands and kidnapping are the main modes of procuring victims for trafficking.

The victims are then traded for prostitution, domestic work, forced marriage, pornography, sex tourism and organ trade. Forced labour is also becoming a prominent factor these days, she added.

The victims run the risk of various health-related problems including unwanted pregnancy, drug addiction, vulnerability to STDs and HIV/AIDS, the study mentions.

The ones experiencing different forms of physical brutality are also susceptible to psychological trauma, mental disorder or depression leading to suicide.

Addressing the launching ceremony, Dr. Shirin Sharmin

Chowdhury, state minister for Women and Children's Affairs said, the government has planned to review existing laws related to trafficking to suit them to the current situation. Regional and international cooperation is vital, as no country can combat trafficking single-handedly, she mentioned.

Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) said, Bangladesh signed and ratified many conventions that provide guidelines on rescue and repatriation. However, those guidelines were not incorporated into the laws of the country, she observed.

Among others, Shireen Hasan, executive director of CWCS, Olatz Landa, co-ordinator Asia Unit, ANESVAD Foundation, Dr. Ubaidur Rob, country director, Population Council, and N B K Tripura, NDC, Additional Inspector General, Bangladesh Police also spoke.



Ministry of Environment and Forests takes out a colourful procession from Shahbag in the city yesterday marking the World Tiger Day.



TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan speaks at a press conference organised to present a survey report at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Ain O Salish Kendra Executive Director Sultana Kamal and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. (Story on Page 16)

Husband kills wife over trifling matter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A quarrel between 19-year-old housewife Konika Akhter and her husband Ali Hossain over a trifling matter led to her killing at their Khilgaon home on Monday, disclosed detained Saudi expatriate Ali Hossain.

Ali Hossain, who was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel at South Keraniganj on Wednesday night, told Rab that they woke up late in the night as their one-year-old child was crying.

They locked into quarrel over pacifying the child and at one stage Konika slapped him on the face, he said, adding that it enraged him and he pressed her throat with both of his hands for minutes, which caused her death.

The victim Konika Akhter,

wife of Ali Hossain, 35, lived on the ground floor of a five-storey building at Goran in the city's Khilgaon area. She was found dead in her bedroom around 11:30am on Monday.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Mohammad Jahangir Alam told The Daily Star that following the incident Ali left his child with his mother-in-law and fled to his relative's house at South Keraniganj.

Ali told reporters that during his stay in Saudi Arabia, he sent money to his wife but she could not give him the correct account of her expenditure.

He added Konika was involved with some youths but he did not mention any name.

Rab sources said they were verifying the information.

9 promoted to secretaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine additional secretaries, serving as acting secretary in different ministries and directorates, were promoted to secretaries yesterday.

All the nine secretaries have been appointed at the Ministry of Establishment as Office on Special Duty (OSD) until appointment on their new jobs.

Those who have been promoted are: Mohammad Shahab Ullah, member of general commission, Fazle Kabir, director planning of Bangladesh Civil Service Administration

Academy, Khandaker Mohammad Asaduzzaman, acting secretary of defence ministry, Barun Dev Mitra, acting secretary of food department, Uzzal Bikash Dutta, acting secretary of the liberation war affairs ministry, Mosharruf Hossain Bhuiyan, acting secretary of the bridges division, Mohammad Golam Hossain, acting secretary of the commerce ministry, Mohammad Shafiqur Rahman Patwari, acting secretary of the bank and financial institutes department and Begum Riti Ibrahim, acting secretary of the statistics department.

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Domestic help sues employer for torturing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage domestic help filed a case with Mohammadpur police station in the city on Wednesday night against her employer accusing the woman of torturing the girl with a hot spoon at Mohammaadia Housing.

Domestic help Tahmina Akhter, 14, in her case statement alleged that her employer Sharmina Rahman alias Happy, wife of Deputy Secretary Rashedul Islam of Environment and Forest Ministry, used to torture her, police said.

Tahmina was admitted yesterday to the One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) at Dhaka Medical College with several burn injuries in her back, coordinator of OSCC Dr Bilkis Begum told The Daily Star.

Tahmina told The Daily Star that at any failure, Sharmina used to torture her with a hot spoon.

She was tortured in this way for the last time on July 27 night due to a fault in adding more salt to curry, she added.

Locals took her to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) when the locals noticed several burn

injuries in her body as she came out of the house to dispose of the kitchen garbage on Wednesday noon, she said. Later, the Rab men took her to the Mohammadpur police station where she filed the case, Tahmina added.

She said police took her to burn unit of DMCH from where she was shifted to the OSCC.

Denying the allegation of torture, Sharmina's husband Rashedul said Tahmina has fled from the house with Tk 6000.

Sub-Inspector Monirul Islam yesterday said Tahmina came to the police station with the help of locals and Rab personnel.

He said she filed the case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act against Sharmina, a teacher of Mohammadpur Central University College at Mohammadpur.

Police said they raided the house of Sharmina but could not arrest her.

Tahmina, daughter of Mohammad Taslim hailed from Kurigram, joined the house of Rashedul around eight months ago.

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FIFTH AMENDMENT Call to implement SC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) yesterday hailed the Supreme Court's verdict that declared the Fifth Amendment of the constitution illegal said a press release.

CPB organised a discussion at National Press Club with the party President Manjurul Ahsan Khan in the chair.

CPB and BSD called upon the government to implement the verdict as early as possible and run the country imbued with the spirit of liberation war.

The SC released the full text (184 pages) of its judgment on Tuesday, around six months after it upheld the

High Court verdict declaring the Fifth Amendment illegal.

"The parliament now should take steps to ensure the rights of indigenous people, increase of women seats and vote," they said.

They also stressed speeding up the trial of war criminals as it is connected to the revival of the spirit of liberation war.

In a statement, BSD General Secretary Khalequzzaman hoped that the revision of the constitution by the all-party parliamentary committee would be impartial.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed and CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim spoke at the meeting.