

'60pc women victims of sexual, physical violence'



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Staff Correspondent

Inspector general of police Nur Mohammad and UNFPA representative Arthur Erken on Tuesday gave contradictory information on violence against women in Bangladesh.

Referring to a recent study, Erken claimed that 60 per cent of the women suffered from sexual or physical violence or both in Bangladesh while the IGP said 50-60 per cent violence came down in Khulna.

'Much of that violence is perpetrated by partners or family members which is a gross deprivation of basic human rights and leads to a loss of dignity and erosion of family life,' Erken told a conference on 'role of police in preventing domestic violence' at a city hotel.

He said data revealed an extreme grim situation of domestic violence against women in Bangladesh. Nur Mohammad said despite limitations, the police were trying their best to bring down the rate of domestic violence.

'Domestic violence has reduced by 50-60 per cent in Khulna following the campaigns carried out by NGOs along with stakeholders,' he told the function, organised by police reforms programme to mark International Women's Day. He said once home was safer place for women.

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- Media News
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- Editorial
- Weather
- Features
- Events
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'But we should question ourselves why women aren't safe at home now.' About allegations raised by Sara Hossain that the police don't cooperate and play their due role while victims go to them, the IGP said they weren't sparing cops for their misdeeds.

About Sara's allegations that the police seemed reluctant and tried to convince victims to resolve the matter at family level, Nur Mohammad said, 'Settlement is applied worldwide which was once an effective tool in Bangladesh to deal with many family crises. But nobody now obey orders of the elders.'

Sara presented a keynote paper on the topic, highlighting various dimensions of domestic violence, why victims don't seek police help and justice, shortcomings of police and existing legal system and status of proposed law to prevent domestic violence. Former police boss ASM Shahjahan said women weren't in so much vulnerable condition stated by most speakers in the conference. He stressed the need for formulating a new police act to help cops to curb offences.

'We also need reforms to criminal justice system to combat domestic violence.' Women and children affairs adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury said domestic violence had become a big issue in the country but not the maternal mortality. 'Women seek help when they no longer tolerate violence.'

The police will have to change their mindset towards the people and to be a friendly force, the adviser said, putting emphasis on collecting hard evidences properly so that the victims could get justice. Home secretary Abdul Karim, primary and mass education secretary Begum Rokeya Sultana and additional inspector general of police NBK Tripura also spoke on the occasion.

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