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**Metropolitan**

## **Domestic violence responsible for death of highest number of women**

*Speakers tell seminar*

Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for brightening the image of police to encourage the victims of domestic violence to seek help from police.

The seminar titled 'The Role of Police in Preventing Domestic Violence' was also told that it is not maternal mortality, rather domestic violence that claims the highest number of lives of women.

Addressing the seminar, UNFPA Representative to Bangladesh Arthur Erken said 60 per cent women in the country are tortured either sexually or physically or both. He added that 1,884 women fell victim to dowry related violence between 2001 and 2007.

"Still police means a frightening factor to women. So the image of the police needs to be brightened," Adviser for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Rasheda K Choudhury told the seminar held at a city hotel.

She said police have success stories in small pockets, which need to be highlighted for brightening its image. She added that police can also take help from different women organisations.

Rasheda mentioned of an incident in Sylhet where police did not record a case when a victim of eve teasing went to the police station. But when she called the deputy commissioner, within two hours police went to her residence to record the case.

The adviser wondered why police do wait for an order from the high-ups.

"Police need to function as an organisation for brightening its image," she added.

Former adviser ASM Shahjahan said only reform in police will not do, the existing criminal justice system also needs to be reformed.

He requested the home secretary to take immediate steps to enact the draft Police Ordinance 2008, which is now at the Home Ministry.

Home Secretary Abdul Karim said once the Police Ordinance 2008 is enacted police will be in a better place to check domestic violence.

Barrister Sara Hossain presented the keynote speech on the occasion while Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad and Additional Inspector General of Police NBK Tripura also spoke.