



Police launch anti-trafficking unit

Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh police on Tuesday launched an investigation unit under the Criminal Investigation Department aiming at combating human trafficking.

'The wing will deal with cases of human trafficking to ensure effective investigations and interception of trafficking in human beings', said the home affairs adviser, Retired Major general Abdul Matin, after launching the unit at a function at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the city.

'Human trafficking is another form of modern slavery. It is a crime which not only violates the dignity of an individual but also infringes on human rights,' he said, adding that about 90 per cent trafficked women are engaged in forced prostitution.

The adviser said an organised network had been engaged in this misdeed over the years.

Street children are the prime target for trafficking, the adviser said, adding that boy children were destined for the Middle East as camel jockeys while the girls ended up in the brothels of India, Pakistan and the Middle East.

To combat trafficking, the unit will focus on areas including development of national strategy to prevent human trafficking, building policing capacity to analyze trafficking networks and operations, improving investigative capacity and prosecution, promotion of effective victim support mechanisms and building community-police partnership.

Although the exact scale of human trafficking is unknown in Bangladesh, stakeholders agree on the gravity of the offence and the necessity to treat it as a crime for preventing it, said the adviser. The Police Reform Programme has supported the police in setting up of the unit.

In 2005 the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP and the Department for International Development launched the first phase of the PRP that aimed at improving the efficiency of the Bangladesh police by helping it in the areas of investigations, police operations, prosecutions, human resource management and training.

Human trafficking has reached epidemic proportions over the past decade with a global annual market of about \$42.5 billion.

Home affairs secretary Abdul Karim, inspector general of police Nur Mohammad, additional IGP NBK Tripura and head of the anti-trafficking investigation unit MA Jalil spoke, among others, at the function.

A music video and two documentaries were also launched on the occasion.