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Children Forced into Prostitution

EU project aims to rescue 1,000

Staff Correspondent

A European Union-funded project aims to rescue in the next four years at least 1,000 children forced into prostitution and provide them shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, education, psychosocial counselling and skills training in Dhaka and Tangail.

“Our failure is that we cannot afford to help all victims,” said Mahmudul Kabir, country director of Terre des Hommes Netherlands Bangladesh, yesterday while sharing objectives of the project, “Combating Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CCSEC)”.

“But we will work with some other NGOs that work with children in other districts,” he told the inauguration in the capital's Cirdap auditorium, adding that children, especially girls, fall victim to sexual exploitation over the internet and cellphones.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands Bangladesh, Social and Economic Enhancement Programme, Society for Social Services, and Breaking the Silence will address the issue under this project, he said.

Jatiya Sangsad Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah launched the project's website, www.ccsectdhn.org, as the chief guest, saying the activities should be spread to all districts. “It is not possible for the government alone to eliminate any problem. It is very important to ensure community involvement to create awareness on stopping sexual exploitation of children,” he said.

He also urged ministries concerned to count through a survey the number of children working as domestic helps and living on the streets, all in order to take measures for their protection.

Addressing as the special guest, Mario Ronconi, head of the cooperation unit, EU in Bangladesh, said training law enforcers to efficiently curb the crime was essential.

CCSEC official Chowdhury Md Tayub Tazammul Rana gave a presentation while lawmaker Showkat Ali Badsha, also chairperson of Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights; and Women & Children Affairs Additional Secretary Bikash Kishore Das also spoke.

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