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Ensuring Reproductive Rights

Adolescents should be handled with patience

The Daily Star -UNFPA roundtable in Rajshahi told

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Parents, teachers and social leaders should carefully listen to adolescents and handle them with patience to ensure their reproductive right to delay marriage and the right to refuse unwanted sexual advances, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

Many incidents of sexual abuse, child marriage and unwanted pregnancy can be checked, if the young generation and their families have sound knowledge on adolescents' reproductive health and related government and non-government services, added the speakers at the roundtable organised by The Daily Star with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at Rajshahi city's Hotel Warisan.

UNFPA National Programme Officer Muhammad Munir Hussain said violation of human rights often starts with girls stepping into their adolescence. They are coerced into unwanted sex or marriage, putting them at the risk of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and dangerous childbirth.

Rajshahi acting mayor Nizam-ul Azim, who was the chief guest, urged well-off families to support poor families so that child marriages, which take place due to insolvency and insecurity, can be prevented.

Chief Executive of Journalism Training & Research Initiative of Brac University Jamil Ahmed moderated the roundtable titled "Sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and youth." Over 50 government officials from Rajshahi district administration, health officials, doctors, university teachers, students, marriage registrars and NGO activists attended the roundtable.

