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Friday December 1, 2006

Stop violence against girls and women

By MARTIN VENGADESAN

Photo by SIA HONG KIAU

IT is time for men and boys to take a stand against violence directed at women.

In making this call, Men's Action Network against Violence (Man.V) co-ordinator David Anthony said violence against women was the "most pervasive yet least recognised" human rights violation in the world.

"Violence is glorified in our society, and it is time for men to put a stop to this.



(From left) Reshmonu, Vick Teo, Victor Lee and Silas Michael of rock band Evenstarr sign their pledge to raise awareness of violence against women.

"They should come forward and sign the pledge and wear a white ribbon promising never to condone or commit violence toward women," he said at the launch of the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) at 1 Utama recently.

United Nations resident coordinator Dr Richard Leete noted that more than one-third of women suffered physical violence at the hands of their male partners at some point in their lives.

Violence against women, he added, could take the form of emotional abuse or preventing girls from attending school.

The WRC was launched in Canada following the mass slaying of 14 female students at a polytechnic in Montreal on Dec 6, 1989.

After the tragedy, lecturer Michael Kaufman and two of his friends initiated a campaign in which men wore white ribbons to register their opposition to violence against women.

The WRC has since grown into a movement active in over 30 countries.

The launching ceremony was marked by exuberant performances by Reshmonu, Vick Teo, Sarawakian rock act Evenstarr and dancers from the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan.

The event was organised by Man.V in conjunction with the All Women's Action Society (Awam).

Awam president Judith Loh-Koh was pleased with the commitment to ending gender violence shown by the largely male audience.

"We are all here because we believe it is not enough to be observers. We must actively end this injustice," she said.

Reshmonu said he believed the campaign was a worthy cause.

"We all have women in our life, and there is no excuse for committing violence against them," he noted.

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