

# The Daily Star

Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Sunday, January 6, 2008 02:24 PM GMT+06:00

Published On: 2008-01-05

Editorial

Editorial

Editorial

## Making police more pro-women

A commendable step

The idea of making the police force more sensitive to the needs of female victims of crime is not only timely it comes at a time when there is an increase in the level of violence against women in Bangladesh. This is a part of the overall police reform package under the auspices of the UNDP, which one hopes will bring in a qualitative change in the mindset of the police while dealing with women's complaints.

The new arrangement will certainly encourage many female victims of repression, who had so long felt discouraged to go to the police station, take recourse to law and bring the perpetrators to justice. That will, we are sure, in turn help reduce the incidence of violence against women.

One is given to understand that a police reform package is awaiting the green light from the government to come into effect. That will, we would like to hope, once implemented, remove the vestige of the colonial rule that have plagued our police force which was created as an instrument of coercion by the colonial rulers. What we will need for the police to become is more people friendly one that people would not hesitate to accost or seek help from, and one whose presence would engender confidence rather than alarm. That has, unfortunately, not been the case so far.

Thus to see new directives being formulated stipulating gender sensitive guidelines for the police stations to follow, along with setting up of separated police units with women officers to deal with the women victims, is a breath of fresh air. It is also indicative of the changing attitude of the police force, it being now considered more a service provider in whom the needy can seek help and protection without reservations, rather than a coercive arm of the state. An admirable aspect of the new arrangement is that not only will it help taking down the complaint of the women victim with speed and with as little of hassle as possible, from the report available, it will also help as a counseling centre for the victims to help them get over the trauma.

However, making the arrangement efficient will necessitate induction of more female officers in the police force, and that should be one of the priorities of the police high ups when the new police measures are introduced.