

Police to set up woman, child support centres

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The Bangladesh Police will be opening a Women and Child Support Centre in Rangamati on August 9, the officials said yesterday. Speaking to this newspaper, officials said that the main idea behind it was to make reporting of crimes against women and children more effective.

This will be the country's first Women and Child Support Centre (WCSC) under the ongoing police reforms programme.

Elaborating on the scheme, Additional Inspector General of Police, Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura said, the WCSC's will provide wide-ranging services to victims, including emergency shelter and immediate support, health care, legal and psychological advice, and counselling, and training and capacity building for rehabilitation.

It will also try and re-integrate the victim with the family and community.

The police will also sign Memorandum of Agreement

(MOU) with different NGOs for ensuring integrated services to the women and children, The Additional Inspector General of police told this reporter.

The WCSC's will be manned by trained female police officers, which according to the police official is a ground-breaking strategy for creating an atmosphere which will help in reporting of crime.

He further said, all WCSC staff will be provided with specialised training in order to enhance their capacity to deal with victims and to facilitate a

support network, engaging health care professionals, social workers, lawyers and different NGOs personnel.

The WCSC will provide 24 hours services. Staying here up to five days will be free of cost, Tripura said.

The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will provide counselling support to safeguard the victims legal rights.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Rangamati, Mahmudul Hassan told The Independent that WCSC will help to maintain a stable law order situa-

tion in the locality. Speaking about its special utility in the Chittagong area, SP Rangamati, Mahmudul Hassan admitted that, It was "quite tough for the police to provide support to victims, most of whom are in remote areas." Once the WCSC was established in Rangamati, "we will be able to provide necessary support from our side", the SP added.

Gender Specialist of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Tuku Talukder suggested, "a com-

mittee, comprising civil society members (which) should be formed to monitor the activities of WCSC". This will ensure accountability and transparency, she said.

Niprupa Dewan, member of National Human Rights Commission said this will lead to more cases being filed by the local people.

"Usually people living in the hills do not go to the police station to file case as they have misconceptions about the police department," she added.

