

# METROPOLITAN

## Notification of breastfeeding law sought

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD, July 21: The National Alliance for Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding on Tuesday urged expediting the process of notification of rules and regulations of the Breastfeeding Ordinance 2002.

Finalising its strategies for the upcoming breastfeeding week the meeting was informed that initiation of breastfeeding was 92 per cent but percentage of exclusive breastfeeding at four to six months is about 30 per cent which needs to be raised as the infants less than two months are six times more prone to infectious diseases if he was not exclusively breastfed.

It was decided to take parliamentarians on board to sensitise them and involve them in the process by formulating parliamentarians' alliance besides the decision of focusing on emergency areas of Mardan, Swabi, Swat together with other areas where the internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been accommodated.

Waqar Ahmed, executive coordinator of The Network, stressed the need for role of civil society in building pressure on government sector to notify the rules and regulation of the ordinance.

He said global breastfeeding week was aimed at informing mothers, breastfeeding advocates, communities, health professionals, governments, aid agencies, donors, and the media how they could support breastfeeding before

and during an emergency.

Sheeba Afghani, communication specialist of Unicef, said the civil society should keep an eye on the violations of the ordinance. She said the week was aimed at mobilising action and promoting networking and collaboration between those with breastfeeding management skills and involved in emergency response.

During emergencies, unsolicited or uncontrolled donations of breast-milk substitutes may undermine breastfeeding and should be avoided, added Ms Afghani.

Dr Siham Sikander from Human Development Research Foundation said low literacy rate, lack of awareness, cultural practices, psychological distress undermining capacity and ineffective implementation of the ordinance were the main causes of low rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

Yaqoob Manzar Qureshi, health education adviser, nutrition wing, Ministry of Health, said the mobilisation of lady health workers for the promotion of breastfeeding was crucial as they were the delivery agent at the household level.

He said law on breastfeeding was pending with the Ministry of Law and implementation phase would be addressed after the approval.

The breastfeeding week is observed every year from August 1 to 7 in more than 120 countries to encourage breastfeeding and improve the health of babies around the world.