

DAWN

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Breastfeeding day observed

By Our Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: A spate of public awareness programmes, seminars and walks marked the commemoration of the World Breastfeeding Week throughout Pakistan on Wednesday.

This year's theme is: "The first hour-save the million babies" highlighting the need to protect, promote and support the health and well-being of mothers and babies, through breastfeeding.

Speaking at a press conference, executive coordinator The Network for Consumer Protection Dr Talib Lashari said here on

Wednesday that breastfeeding was the ideal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development.

In Pakistan, quoting recent studies he said, out of 1,000 live births, 78 infants die before reaching their first birthday and 94 children die before reaching to their fifth birthday.

Dr Lashari said that non-breastfed children have higher risk of urinary tract infections, illnesses and even non-infectious diseases like insulin dependent diabetes melitus. As per international laws, baby formula

milk cannot be promoted unethically in a way that it would undermine the importance of mother's milk for a baby, he added.

The Protection of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Ordinance 2002 protects the right of an infant to have mother's milk since first hour of birth. However, there are many hurdles in implementation of the ordinance, he remarked.

Dr Lashari stressed that exclusive breastfeeding should be given top priority in health policy and planning within the health sector of Pakistan.