

# Over 1,200 women killed in name of honour in 2004: adviser

*Human Rights*

By Our Staff Reporter

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ISLAMABAD, Jan 6: As many as 1,250 women were killed in the name of honour in the year of 2004, Prime Minister's Adviser on Women Development Nilofar Bakhtiar said here on Thursday.

She was speaking as chief guest at the investiture ceremony of the student council, Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/4.

"This shows the sorry state of affairs womenfolk of the country are undergoing at present. To make matters worse, murderers are roaming free here and there, which reflects the gravity of the problem," the adviser said.

However, she hoped that with the pas-

sage of the honour killing bill by the parliament, which has also been signed by the president, the condition of women would improve considerably.

Under the bill, honour killing has been declared a crime against the state with a maximum punishment of death penalty or life imprisonment.

Similarly, Swara and Wani customs, under which disputes were settled by handing over women, have also been declared a punishable act with the maximum of 10 years imprisonment, she said.

About Hudood Ordinances, the adviser said the government was set to discuss these laws in detail to determine

whether they should be repealed or amended.

"I am not saying that the Hudood Ordinances will be repealed or amended. The decision to this effect will be taken with consensus," Ms Bakhtiar said.

Besides this, women are suffering from absolute poverty, mismatch and early marriages, acid throwing, stove burning and increasing maternal mortality rates. These are the issues which do not need legislation but awareness within women about their rights, the adviser added.

On the brighter side, the country has 33 per cent women representation in the

local governments, reservation of women seats in the National Assembly and Senate, an initiative which had already delivered results in the form of women friendly legislation.

"Above all, we have seven women in the federal cabinet which in itself is a great achievement for us (women)," she added.

Talking to students, Ms Bakhtiar said: "You are the tomorrow of the country and have to play an active role for women rights (50 per cent of the population)."

She congratulated the officer-bearers of the student council, and said since you have been given a responsibility, you

should try your level best to shoulder your given duties.

Speaking on the occasion, Director-General of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Brig (retired) Maqsoodul Hasan also asked the students to keep high standards, "be it your studies or council's activities".

Sana Javed, Saniya Javed and Isha Hanif were elected president, vice-president and secretary of college's student council for the year 2005, respectively.

Ms Bakhtiar also administered oath to office-bearers of separate student councils for senior and junior sections, and morning and evening shifts.