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## Women's fears running high

### Poll shows little confidence in government's efforts to protect women's rights

STAFF WRITER AND CNA

As Taiwan marked International Women's Day yesterday with a string of ceremonies and speeches around the island, an opinion poll revealed an embarrassing lack of faith in the government's attempts to promote and protect women's rights.

The islandwide telephone survey conducted by the private Modern Women's Foundation found 53 percent of respondents dissatisfied with the overall domestic safety environment and the government's relevant policies. Only 32 percent gave the government their approval.

Among various problems, 78.2 percent said they feel most unsafe when taking taxis; 76.6 percent are most worried about "Peeping Toms" at hostels, department stores or in public restrooms.

Almost 60 percent said they also worry about safety on city buses, at the workplace and in other public areas.

Nearly 44.5 percent said they are concerned about domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment, and 13.3 percent said they knew of at least one relative or friend who had been the victim of rape, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

Survey results also showed that 31.2 percent of the respondents are satisfied with the government's efforts to protect women's job opportunities, but 47.3 percent give it a thumbs-down.

Knowledge of the government's efforts to protect women's safety was abysmally low, the survey showed, with 48 percent unaware that a sex-crime prevention and control law has been enacted. Worse yet, 73.7 percent did not know that all city and county governments around the island have set up sex-crime prevention and



control centers.

Pan Wei-kang, a KMT legislator who concurrently serves as chairwoman of the Modern Women's Foundation, said the government should launch an islandwide publicity campaign disclosing details of the sex-crime prevention and control law and the functions of sex-crime prevention centers.

As nearly 90 percent of the respondents support the enactment of an anti-domestic violence bill, Pan said, she will push for the passage of the bill during

the current legislative session.

The opinion poll was conducted islandwide with 1,097 female residents aged 13 and over.

Meanwhile, President Lee Teng-hui was among a host of political leaders who gave speeches around the island yesterday to mark International Women's Day.

Saying that women have served "as a cornerstone of Taiwan's progress and stability over the past decades," Lee told a crowd in Chiayi that many Cabinet posts, including the positions of interior

minister and finance minister, are especially suitable for women. "The government will recruit more talented, competent women for public service in the future," he said.

The president went on to say that despite Taiwan's phenomenal economic development, society has shown alarming signs of disorder, including rising crime rates and workplace accidents caused by human error.

"All these problems are rooted in the hearts and minds of our people," the



HENRY TAN

ABOVE: A young woman looks surprised while browsing through pictures of naked men at an alternative celebration of International Women's Day. See "Women's Day only for 'nice girls'" on Page 2.

LEFT: Reports in local media concerning a high school girl's suicide case last year hinted that she had killed herself because of feelings she had for her two friends. "Queer 'n Class," a homosexual organization, says that being gay is as natural as "being a fish in water" and two of its members dressed up as fish yesterday to illustrate their point.

president pointed out, adding that addressing these issues require a spiritual reform and the revitalization of family values.

See Editorial on Page 6.