# METROPOLITAN

## Maternal deaths remain high despite international efforts

### 5.2 lakh women die a year globally

BSS, Dhaka

Each year more than 525,000 women die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. In addition, over 50 million experience pregnancy-related complications, 15 million of which lead to longterm illness or disability, according to a PANOS report.

single greatest cause of premature death and disability among women of reproductive age in the developing world. Today maternal deaths are second only to deaths from AIDS.

The tragedy is that almost every one of these deaths is avoidable. Failures to address the needs of pregnant women are a social injustice of huge proportions.

Institute (London) on 'Birth rights: New approaches to safe motherhood, highlights the fact that since 1987, when an International Safe Motherhood Initiative was adopted, there has been little evidence of significant reductions in

the number of women dying glob-

factors that contribute to these

Many countries have practices report. enshrined in law and culture, which inhibit women's chances of surviving pregnancy and childbirth. Early marriage, for example, For years, this has been the can lead to childbearing before physical development is complete. Lack of access to safe, legal abortion and advice is another exam-

The report goes on to point out another reason for maternal deaths is that maternity facilities are under-resourced. According to a study of 49 developing countries. almost half of maternity services the Caribbean and 1 in 140 in would not be able to carry out one South America. A new report from the Panos or more of the life-saving procedures they are meant to offer.

what actually happens to many women when they give birth.

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

BANANI, DHAKA-1213.

PRAY FOR THE DEPARTED SOUL

THE 2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF LATE

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**FAMILY MEMBERS** 

national Safe Motherhood Initiative is a 75 per cent reduction in The report cities a number of deaths from 1990 levels by 2015. "This target is achievable," says Judy Mirsky, the author of the

> "But governments must be prepared to implement the necessary changes in their laws and policies and to improve maternity services for all women."

Across regions, lifetime risks of maternal death vary from a low of 1 in 4,000 in Northern Europe to a high of 1 in 16 in sub-Saharan Africa and 1 in 12 in East and West

In South-east Asia, the lifetime risk of death is 1 in 55, 1 in 75 in

The World Bank has estimated that the financial cost of basic In addition, there is a gap be- maternal and new-born health tween what scientific evidence has 'services is, on average, three US shown to be best practice, and dollar per person per year in developing countries, while maternal health services alone could cost as The current target of the Inter- little as two US dollar per person.



President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury offering munajat after laying the foundation for reconstruction of Dhanmondi Eidgah Jame Mosque in the city yesterday.

## Mosques can contribute to social advancement: President

Foundation for expansion of Dhanmondi Eidgah mosque laid

BSS, Dhaka

President Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said the mosques could contribute to social advancement side by side its basic role as religious centres.

Prof Chowdhury said this as chief guest at the foundation laying ceremony of a six-storey building of Dhanmondi Eidgah Jame Mosque.

The new mosque with around 11,000 person capacity will be constructed at the east side of the historic Dhanmondi Eidgah Maidan, on 7.04 bighas of land. The Eidgah was established during the reign of Mughal Emperor Shahjahan by his son Shuja in 1640.

The reconstruction of 75,796 square feet mosque having a floor for women devotees, basement car parking, library and other facilities will cost about Tk 12 crore. It will be completed in five years.

The money will come from people's donation and discretionary fund of the president, a member of the mosque committee said.

Prof Chowdhury, who offered Juma prayers at the existing mosque on the site, assured of providing financial supports from his discretionary fund. He said as per the teachings of the Islam, Muslims have to be liberal towards other religious communities.

Prof Chowdhury strongly the occasion.

pleaded for setting up a library in each of the modern mosques in the country and said a room for physicians should also be kept in the mosques to provide free treatment to the poor. He also suggested keeping in-

formation technology (IT) facilities in the mosques.

Advocate Mahbubuddin Ahmed, MP, spoke on the occasion as special guest while former secretary and president of the mosque committee A M Ahsan Ullah presided.

Among others, Ward Commissioner Abul Khair Bablu and General Secretary of the mosque committee K A Bhuiyan spoke on

### Dhaka Int'l Film Festival begins Jan 20

With a renewed pledge to promote movement for alternative movies, the 7th Dhaka International Film Festival begins in the city on January 20, says a press release.

The Dhaka festival will feature screening of over 100 famous films - both contemporary and retrospective - at its main venue, the Public Library Auditorium, two other auditoriums and five cinema halls in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

The countries that have already confirmed their participation in the festival are Iran, India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Egypt, Rwanda, France, Germany, Switzerland, Croatia, Latvia, Hungary, Russia, Brazil, Argentina and Uru-

There will be a set of competitions in the festival organised by Rainbow film society, which celebrates its silver jubilee this year.

As part of the festival, a good number of local films will be screened and films on genocide, inclusive of Bangladesh's War of Elberation, will add a special dimension.

Three seminars will highlight criticism of films, vulgarism and bad culture in movies, Asian films, television and film institutes.

"We hope, ladies and gentlemen will return to watch the world class movies and decent local films," festival director Ahmed Mujtaba Jamal said while exchanging opinion with the journalists on Thursday.

Festival committee adviser Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, members Saiful Islam Chowdhury, Rashed Rhine and Md. Abul Hossain were also present on the occasion.

### Singapore urged to allow more Bangladeshi remittance houses

BSS, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M. Singapore, vesterday urged the visit. authorities to allow operation of more Bangladeshi remittance houses to enable Bangladeshi workers to remit money home through official channels.

During a meeting with his Singaporean counterpart Lim Hong Kiang, Saifur Rahman said Bangladesh is deprived of a huge amount of valuable foreign currency because of the illegal transfer of money through hundi in the absence of adequate facilities in using proper channel.

Rahman also urged the Singaporean authorities to punish those to transfer money instead of the authorised banking channel and Bangladesh nationals to work in two countries.

the Agrani Exchange and other remittance houses.

The finance minister arrived at Saifur Rahman, now on a visit to Singapore yesterday on a four-day

Nearly 60,000 Bangladeshi workers are now employed in Singapore.

The Singaporean finance minister responded favourably to his Bangladesh counterpart's request, saying that his government too wanted remittance through proper

He instantly directed the MAS authorities to issue employment passes needed for Agrani Exchange and assured Rahman of issuing more passes for other remittance houses.

Saifur Rahman said Dhakawho use illegal hundi as a means Singapore ties have always been good. He also stressed on further strengthening economic and issue employment passes for commercial relations between the

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repair and maintain satisfactory / optimum operation of the textile machinery / compressors. . Computer knowledge is a must . Proficient in English . Age: Below 30

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#### Global confce on water begins Jan 13

BSS, Dhaka

A five-day 'Global conference on water, indigenous knowledge and practice: Role of media' begins in the city on January 13 to focus on Myanmar. the governance and management

of water resources. The World Water Forum of Journalists (WWFJ) in collaboration with Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) is organising the conference to formulate a media strategy for optimum use of water and food security, WWFJ secretary general and FEJB chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury told newsmen yester-

nalists and activists from home and abroad will take part in the police press release said. conference, he said.

#### Myanmar envoy hosts reception

UNB, Dhaka

Myanmar Ambassador U Ohn Thwin vesterday hosted a reception at his residence on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of Independence Day of the Union of

Ministers, politicians, diplomats, journalists, academics and high civil and military officials attended the reception.

#### 13 firearms recovered

BSS, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,130 people and recovered 13 firearms, 21 bullets and 23 explosives from different Over 100 water experts, jour- parts of the country in the last 24 hours ending at 6 am vesterday, a

The arrested included five ter-Water Resources Minister L K rorists. Of the firearms, three each Siddiqui is expected to inaugurate were recovered from Dhaka and the conference at CIRDAP audito- Munshiganj while the remaining seven from different districts.

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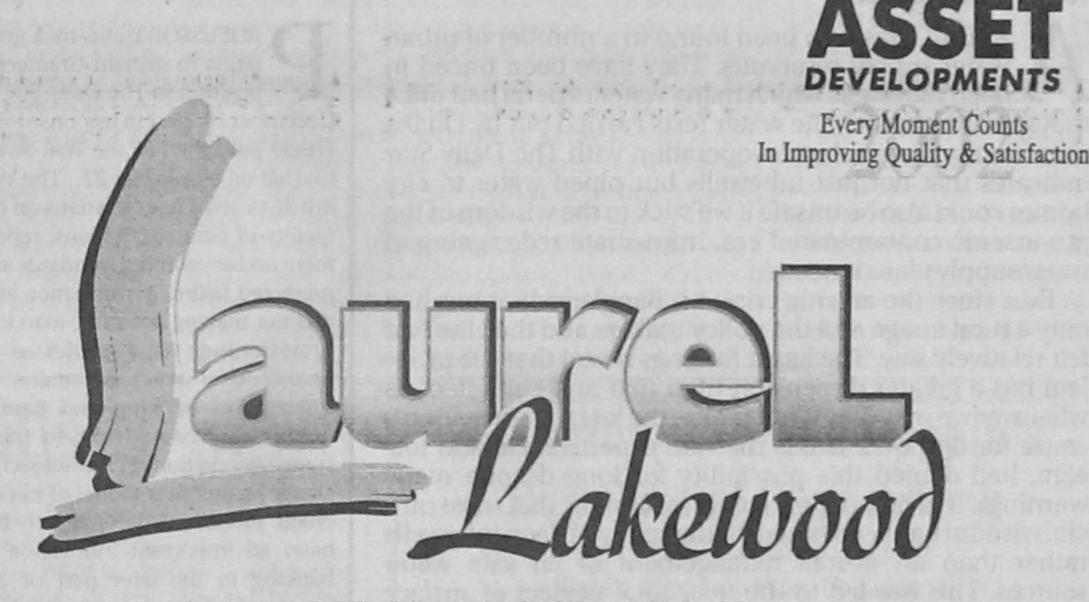
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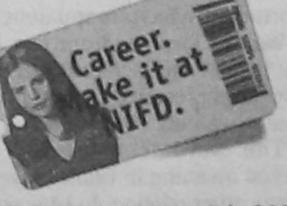
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