

MEXICO CONFERENCE ON POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh yet to achieve goals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a lot of success, Bangladesh has a long way to go in achieving the goals set at the international conference on population and development (ICPD) in Mexico ten years ago, said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

They said there are still gaps in reproductive and sexual health, rights of adolescents, discrimination against girls in nutrition, healthcare, early marriage, pregnancy and childbearing.

"Issues like unsafe abortion, delivery at the hands of untrained attendants and increasing male involvement in reproductive health remain some of the major challenges to be addressed," said Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh.

Under 'Meet the Press' programme at the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) auditorium, she said "Today is a crucial day for us. We have stepped in tenth year of ICPD + 10 and we want to

focus on unmet challenges from this platform. As media plays a vital role in advocacy and information, we would like them to play a key role in advocacy."

Speaking as chief guest, Health Secretary A F M Sarwar Kamal said Bangladesh has made a lot of advances to achieve the goals of ICPD.

"We have formed population, health and nutrition cell in Bangladesh Betar which regularly disseminates messages on reproductive health and rights-related issues including violence against women," he said.

"We have also involved parliamentarians, social and religious leaders in behaviour change communications on reproductive health," he added.

"But longstanding negative attitude towards the role of women in the society, social and religious taboo, low condom use, and user-friendly facilities for adolescents' reproductive needs are the future challenges that we are to meet, the secretary said.

Presenting a paper, Prof Nurun Nabi of population sciences department of Dhaka University said change of behaviour is not an easy task. Twenty years ago, parents believed that having a menstruating daughter at home is a curse. So they arranged early marriage.

After years of advocacy by family planning workers such superstition is now removed, he added.

An outline of a 20-year-long programme on population and development was also discussed at the conference.

Organised by Health and Environment Journalist Forum, Bangladesh (HEJFB), the press conference was also addressed by Nurul Ameen, UNFPA Assistant Representative, Fazlur Rahman, director general of family planning, Dilwara Begum, additional director general of health and Prof Nashid Kamal of Independent University.

Youth arrested with arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was held with a US-made revolver and ammunition after a shootout with police in the city yesterday.

Mohammad Shawkat Hossain, 26, a resident of Sattar Mollar slum at Mirpur-12, was arrested when he was returning from Banani in a

three-wheeler at around 4:30pm.

As a team of Kafrul police intercepted the vehicle at a check post at Mirpur-14, he got off from the vehicle and tried to flee the scene firing a round at the police team.

The police also fired back while chasing him.

Shawkat took refuge inside a nearby army quarters from where

he was arrested.

After beating him in the scene police took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for first aid at 7:30pm.

Shawkat, son of Fazlul Hoque Khan of Madaripur, claimed himself as a bus conductor and told news-men at DMCH that one Raja deposited the arms to him.

RABBANI KILLING

Another held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested another suspect in the killing of Commodore Golam Rabbani, Managing Director of Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ).

The arrestee was identified as Md. Selim, 40.

