

# 12,000 women die a year due to maternity complications

Says health adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 12,000 women, mostly from the poor segment of people, die every year due to maternity complications, including deliveries at home, said Health and Family Welfare Adviser Major General (ret'd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman yesterday.

"Only one in ten births takes place at a health facility and only few more are attended by medically trained personnel," he said at the inaugural session of NGO Service Delivery Programme (NSDP) Conference 2007.

The USAID-funded NSDP and Grameenphone organised the conference at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Maternal mortality rate, which is now 3.2 per one thousand live births, could be significantly reduced by improving nutrition of female children and adolescents, providing skilled attendance at delivery and timely referral in case of complication, the adviser said while speaking as the chief guest.

Dr Rahman said the government in collaboration with the World Bank, Unicef and United Nations Population Fund launched a pilot programme to ensure high quality maternal health care services.

Although Bangladesh has achieved a significant reduction in under-five mortality from 133 per one thousand in the early 90's to 88 per one thousand in early 2004, it was still ranked 7th among the 42 countries contributing to 90 percent of all childhood deaths worldwide, he noted.

To address the issue of reduction in fertility further, he said "Efforts are needed to shift planning use patterns towards more effective, longer lasting and lower cost clinical and permanent methods."

The NGOs should make a significant effort to support the government's promotional efforts to popularise the use of permanent and long-term methods of family planning, he noted.

At the conference, which was organised at the end of five-year programme of NSDP, USAID Acting Mission Director Roger D Carlson

said under NSDP there are 31 NGOs at 318 urban and rural clinics, 8,200 satellite clinics, and 6,000 homes of community volunteers that managed high quality services in 61 districts of the country.

The programme has provided health services including family planning and reproductive health care and maternal and child health care in catchment areas of 20 million people, he said, adding that 58 percent of married couples now use contraceptives compared to 8 percent in the 1970's.

Former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, Zafarullah Chowdhury of Gonoshasthya Kendra, Dhaka University Professor Abul Barakat, Ehsan Ul Fatah, secretary to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Prof Dr Khondaker Shefyetullah, acting director general of the directorate of health services, Abdul Mannan, director general of the director general of family planning, Dr Henry Forster, chair of board of directors of Pathfinder International HQ, Dr Robert J Timmons, chief of party of

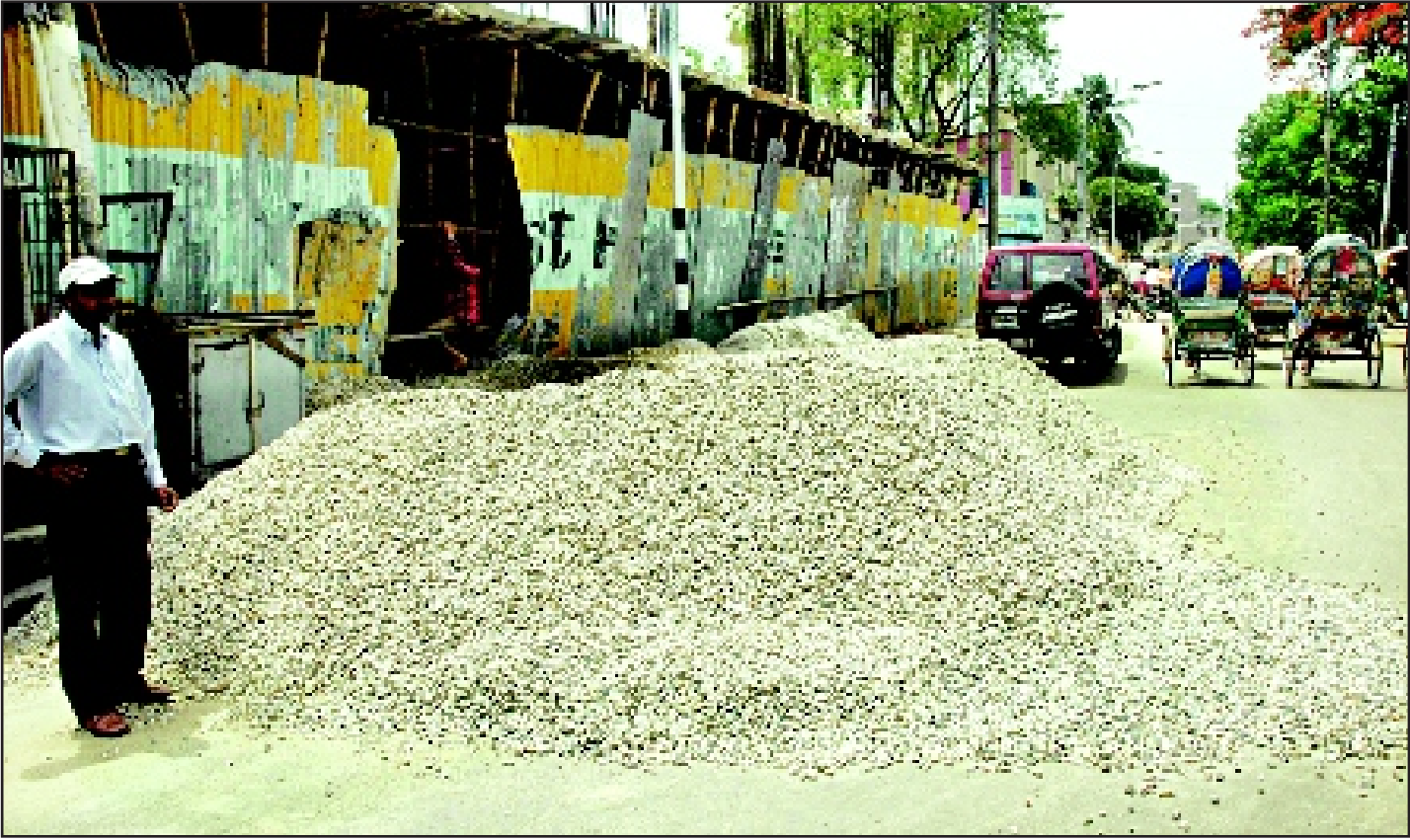
NSDP, Kafil HS Mueyed of Grameenphone, Sheri-Nouane of USAID, Prof Dr MS Akbar and Dr Mahbubur Rahman also spoke at the programme.

Meanwhile, at a roundtable on improving NGO sustainability and serving the poor as part of the conference, the speakers suggested enhancement of public-private partnership and corporate responsibilities to ensure that the poorest of the poor come under quality health services.

They urged the government to ensure accountability of the doctors in the public healthcare centres.

The roundtable was organised jointly by the daily Prothom Alo and NSDP and moderated by Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Qaiyum.

At another seminar in the afternoon, the speakers emphasised long-term training for the health providers to ensure quality services for safe motherhood. They also called for equipping clinics with more logistic supports to address obstetric complications.



Construction materials occupy a part of a road at Bakshi Bazar in the city, causing suffering to pedestrians as well as passengers. The picture was taken yesterday.

## Cirdap ministerial meeting in Manila on May 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day ministerial level meeting of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap) will be held on May 31 in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

The highest policy body meeting at ministerial level will be held following the Cirdap executive committee meeting on May 28-29. A regional policy dialogue will also be held on May 30 before the ministerial meeting.

The ministerial meeting will be attended by ministers and secretaries of Rural Development and relevant ministries from the 14 member countries of Cirdap, established in 1979 aiming to bring development to the rural people of the area.

Eduardo R Ermita, executive secretary of the government of

Philippines, will inaugurate the meeting.

This was informed at a press conference at the Cirdap headquarters in the city's Topkhana Road yesterday.

Experts and researchers from member countries will discuss various issues, mainly rural development issues in the two-day highest policy body meeting of Cirdap.

"We are in the crossroad of prosperity and poverty," said Dr Durga P Paudyal, director general, Cirdap at the press conference, adding, "We have enough resources but at the same time we have vast amount of poor people."

"Experts and researchers from member countries of Cirdap will sit together under the same roof to discuss how to bring develop to the poor people," he hoped.

The regional policy dialogue, the second such efforts of Cirdap, will be attended by policy experts, academicians and representatives from UN and other donor organisations and NGOs in addition to the delegates of the member countries

of Cirdap.

Anwarul Iqbal, adviser to ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, and the chairperson of Cirdap governing council will lead the Bangladesh delegation.



Health and Family Welfare Adviser Major General (ret'd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman speaks at the inaugural session of NGO Service Delivery Programme (NSDP) Conference 2007 at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. USAID-funded NSDP and Grameenphone organised the conference.

## 50 FORTUNE SEEKERS CHEATED 3 manpower agency officials arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three managing partners of a manpower agency with forged visas and fake passports from Motijheel in the city on Tuesday, says a Rab press release yesterday.

Following allegations made by the cheated fortune seekers, a team of Rab-3 arrested Babul Rana, Gias Uddin and Idris Miah, three managing partners of a manpower agency named "Al ZamZam International" from their agency office at Dilkusha at 1:00pm.

According to the press release, the arrestees have taken a total of Tk 1.34 crore from 50 job seekers since 2004 promising them to send Fiji.

Of the three, Rana took all the money of which Tk 85 lakh were given to Alim Khan, an expatriate in Fiji who reportedly gave them visa from Fiji.

Rana has gone to Fiji ten times spending Tk 20 lakh and deposited foreign currency worth Tk 85 lakh in a bank in Fiji illegally.

1,365 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,365 people on various charges across the country in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drives, they also recovered 12 firearms, four other weapons, one cocktail and 32 rounds of bullet, said an official handout.

The press release said Rana has also been harassing the fortune seekers by issuing fake bank cheques to them when they demanded payback of their money.

## Nari Samaj protests Jalil's statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammitila Nari Samaj yesterday protested the statement of Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil opposing the Election Commission's proposal that women should account for 33 percent of members of the executive committee of any registered political party.

The AL leader's statement that it is not possible to implement the proposal is tantamount to showing utter indifference to the demands of women, said Farida Akhtar and Dr Naila Khan, coordinators of the Nari Samaj, a combined women's organisation, in a statement.

"They [Jalil and his party] have deployed women on the streets during the movement, but they do not want to induct women into the executive committee," they said, adding that his statement would create obstacles to the participation of women in politics.

The Nari Samaj leaders also demanded withdrawal of his statement.

## ETV not included in list as writ pending in HC

UNB, Dhaka

Private TV channel ETV has not been included in the list of the 12 approved local TV channels as a writ petition is pending in the High Court over its transmission, the Information Ministry said in a clarification yesterday.

The clarification came a day after the government published a list of 12 local and 29 foreign TV channels allowing them to broadcast programmes in the country and prohibiting the downlink of any other TV channels.

## Poultry marketing cooperative assoc supplying dead chickens to hotels

### Allege former assoc leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former leaders of the city's largest poultry marketing co-operative association yesterday alleged that its current committee has been supplying some 200 to 300 dead chickens to hotels and restaurants in the capital at a cheaperrate daily.

Some leaders of the present committee of Mahanagar Hans-Murgi Bazarjatkaran Samabay Samity Ltd (Metropolitan Poultry Product Marketing Cooperative Association) have been involved in such practice for the last eight months, said M Shamsuddin, former vice-president of the association, at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium.

"The Co-operative Association supplies around 50,000 chickens daily. Of them, 200 to 300 chickens die due to various reasons, including extreme heat. But the current committee sells these dead chickens to hotels and restaurants at a cheaper price," he said.

"We, the former committee of the Association, protested such act several times, but to no avail. The current committee also unleashed a criminal gang on us when we tried to protest their activities," said M Nurul Amin, founder-general secretary of the association.

Fazlul Haq Mida, former president of the association, said they have already informed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Dhaka District Co-operative Association and Teigaon Police Station of the incident.

Abdul Qaiyum, a member of the current executive committee, who was present at the press conference, also said that some leaders of the current committee are involved in selling dead chickens.

When contacted, Association President Mostafa Babul dismissed the allegations as baseless.



M Shamsuddin, former vice-president of Mahanagar Hans-Murgi Bazarjatkaran Samabay Samity Ltd, addresses a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium in the city yesterday.