

PREGNANCY-RELATED COMPLICATIONS

12000 mothers die, 2 lakh face long-term ailments a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 12000 mothers die and about two lakh others face long-term ailments due to pregnancy-related complications every year in the country, said the speakers at a programme yesterday.

They said lack of awareness, financial problems, indecision and reluctance to go to hospital are mainly responsible for large number of maternal mortality.

They laid emphasis on safe motherhood and active role of husbands and mothers-in-law to help reduce maternal death and complications during pregnancy.

The programme styled as 'Role of family in ensuring safe mother-

hood and nutritious food supplement to pregnant mothers' was held at Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium in the city to mark the International Safe Motherhood Day 2007.

Nari Maitree, in association with Second Urban Primary Health Care Project (UPHCP-II), Partnership Area (PA)-6, and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) organised the programme where some pregnant mothers, their husbands and mothers-in-law were also present.

Masuda Begum, project manager of UPHCP-II, said around six lakh mothers die due to pregnancy-related problems across the world and half of them occurred in

South Asian countries.

Quoting a World Health Organisation (WHO) survey, she said 53 per cent of married women of Dhaka have the experience of physical torture and sexual harassment by their husbands, and this proves that women are also subjected to torture by their husbands during pregnancy.

Masuda said 10 per cent of pregnant women have faced physical torture at least once during pregnancy and 12 per cent of 80 per cent women who faced torture during pregnancy said torture during pregnancy was more dangerous than pre-pregnancy period.

She said proper care of pregnant women, helping them in house-

hold works, regular check up, and ensuring delivery by trained persons can reduce the maternal mortality.

Rafiqus Islam of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), said 87 per cent delivery cases take place at homes, where people are not trained and experienced enough, exposing pregnant women to various complications that sometimes lead to disabilities.

He said early marriage and conception, lack of nutritious foods, physical and mental torture by husbands and mothers-in-law, and indecision are the main impediments to safe motherhood.

Rafiqus said the husbands have immense responsibility in taking proper care of their pregnant wives and ensuring their safe delivery.

Jamal A Naser Chowdhury, project director of UPHCP-II, said whenever a mother conceives she needs extra care and mental support.

"All of us should perform our duties with sincerity so that we can ensure safe motherhood," he added.

Daulatunnesa, president of Nari Maitree, said safe motherhood is a basic human rights of women which should be ensured by the family and the state as safe motherhood can give a healthy next generation.

She also appealed to all to help stop violence against women especially during the pregnancy period.

On this occasion, Naser Chowdhury gave away cartons of nutritious biscuits to pregnant women.

Sirajul Haider, deputy project director of UPHCP-II, Kamruzzaman M Ali and Programme officer of PIU DCC were present at the programme.



Students of the University of Asia Pacific pose with President Iajuddin Ahmed and other guests at the second convocation of the university at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Prepare yourselves as productive members of society

President asks students

UNB, Dhaka

In the wake of degradation of social and moral values, President Iajuddin Ahmed asked the student community to prepare themselves as ethical human beings and a productive force in society.

It's an imperative for them in order to serve the nation and the mankind as a whole, he said while addressing the 2nd convocation of the University of Asia Pacific in the city yesterday.

"Let us all put in the practice: Ask not what your country can do for you rather ask what you can do for your country," he told the audience.

Agriculture Adviser Dr CS Karim,

Vice-chancellor Prof Dr Abdul Matin Patwari and chairman and members of the UAP Foundation were among others present at the function.

Former chairman of PSC Engineer SM Al-Husainy delivered the convocation speech.

Terming the students as the future architects and helmsmen, the president expressed his confidence that the graduated students are now fully prepared to shoulder the responsibility that would be given by the nation.

"Remember, you are fortunate enough that you have been able to reach this stage with the patronage and support of society. So, it is you

turn to acknowledge these debts," Iajuddin made a reminder for the students.

He also said universities should impart contemporary knowledge in consonance with up-to-date curricula and moral values, which would help ensure quality education and develop intellect and morality in society.

The president said Plato, the earliest great thinker of education, stated that education would be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, and music and art.

His thinking was that the educated people could act as guardians, care for the less able and ensure

social justice.

"The thinking of Plato is still important for society," Iajuddin said, adding that university education, therefore, should include in its curricula arts and humanity along with science and technology to make the students well-informed and competent.

"Keeping it in mind, I believe, universities, both private and public, would come forward in this regard so that the hopes and aspirations of the people can be achieved."

Iajuddin said he would ask the University Grants Commission (UGC) to look after the whole matter for the well-being of the nation.

HASINA'S 'INVOLVEMENT' IN PALTAN KILLINGS
Court seeks probe report by July 1

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked the investigation officer (IO) to submit the probe report on involvement of former prime minister and Awami League (AL) Chief Sheikh Hasina and 45 others with the last year's Paltan killings by July 1.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza issued the order as the IO did not submit the report yesterday.

Earlier on April 23, the same court fixed yesterday for submission of the report after suspending the operation of the arrest warrants

issued on the previous day against Hasina and two others.

Seven people were killed in a fierce clash between activists of AL-led 14-party alliance and Jamaat-e-Islami in Paltan area on October 28.

Workers Party and Jamaat filed separate cases in connection with the same incident with Paltan Police Station the following day.

On April 11, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charges against Hasina, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik

Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu and 42 others for killing five Jamaat-e-Islami activists and injuring several others.

Of them, Roymohon Shil, Omar Faruq and Sumon are now in jail custody.

Forty others including Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, HBM Iqbal and Jahangir Kabir Nanak were earlier granted bail by the High Court.

The IO dropped the names of Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and 14 others from the charge sheet, as he did not find evidence indicating their involvement in the killings.

3 top CDA officials suspended

CU CORRESPONDENT

Three high officials of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) were suspended yesterday on charge of irregularities and negligence in their duties.

The suspended officials are Superintendent Engineer Nur Hossain, Executive Engineer Jasim Uddin Chowdhury and Inspector M Shahrier.

CDA Chairman Shah Md Akhtaruddin ordered their suspension while CDA Magistrate Tahera Ferdous was directed to investigate the matter.

Sources said the suspended officials were found indulging in different irregularities and neglecting their duties while the CDA started their five-phase massive demolition drive in the city on May 24.

According to sources, notice for demolishing any structure has to be served before seven days, but the CDA engineering department served it three days before the drive.

KHULNA-RAJSHAHI ROUTE

New trains from June 1

Two new trains on Khulna-Rajshahi-Khulna route are going to be introduced from June 1, says a press release.

762-Kapotakkho Probbhati will leave Rajshahi at 6:50am and reach Khulna at 1:40pm while 761-Kapotakkho Gudhuly will leave Khulna at 3:00pm and reach Rajshahi at 9:25pm.

The trains will have stoppage at Azimnagar, Ishwardy, Pakshi, Bheramara, Poradaha, Alamdanga, Chuadanga, Darshana Halt, Kotchadpur, Mobarakanj, Jessore and Noapara stations.

The trains will not run on Sundays.

'Private varsities playing important role in providing higher education'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The private universities are playing an important role in providing higher education for students as the public universities could not accommodate the increasing number of students seeking to pursue higher studies, academicians said yesterday.

If the private universities had not provided quality education, a large number of students would have either gone abroad or given up hope for university education, they said at a programme marking the fourth foundation anniversary of the Eastern University, a private institution, at the National Museum auditorium in the city.

They also called on the private universities to give priority to high quality education.

Prof Dr Wakil Ahmed, vice-chancellor of National University, said the private universities have widened the scope of higher education in the country.

"I hope the private universities will maintain the quality of education in the context of present global environment by introducing modern teaching tools and following scientific teaching methodologies and need-based curriculum," he said.

He also criticised the media, saying that several newspapers published reports on corruption of vice-chancellors of several public universities, which were not true.

Dr Hua Du, country director of Bangladesh Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank, said the private universities should use modern teaching aids and meth-

odologies and introduce innovative need-based curriculum to improve the quality of higher education.

"Students of private university are getting jobs easily, as all the private universities offer market-oriented subjects," said Hua Du as the chief guest.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddique, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said quality higher education cannot be ensured without recruitment of

skilled teachers at the universities.

Prof Dr Rahim B Talukdar, vice-chancellor of Eastern University, said about 3200 students have enrolled on different courses in the Eastern University and the number of students is increasing every year.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Hafiz Uddin Khan, writer Imdadul Haque Milon, Eastern University Foundation Chairman Abul Quasem Haider and Vice-Chairmen Anwar

Hossain Chowdhury and Prof ABM Shahidul Islam also spoke.

At the programme, the Eastern University honoured and presented crests to eminent personalities in recognition of their contribution to different fields. They are Prof Zillur Rahman Siddique (education), Imdadul Haq Milon (literature) and Mahfuzur Rahman (electronic media). Besides, social organisation Anjuman Mufidul Islam were also awarded.



Teachers, students and employees of the Institute of Fine Arts place wreaths at the grave of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin in the city yesterday to mark his 31st death anniversary.

Ashraf Jute Mills workers urge govt to pay arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employees of now defunct Ashraf Jute Mills at a press conference yesterday urged the caretaker government to take steps for payment of their arrears that amounts to Tk 71 crore.

Speaking at the press conference at the National Press Club in the city, Md Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan said the then Ershad government sold off the mill to Giridhari Modi who renamed the mill as Uttara Jute Fibers and Industries Ltd in 1990.

In the face of recurring loss of the mill, the government sold it without considering the payment of arrears of its workers who owed the mill Tk 71 crore, he said, adding that the sum was accumulated due to the non-payment of workers' and employees' payments

from 1968 to 1983.

The government handed the mill over to the new authorities with a pledge that it would recruit the former workers and employees on priority basis and also make arrangements for the payment of their arrears, he said. But the workers have not got their arrears yet, he added.

The workers and employees of the mill are suffering much due to non-payment of their arrears, he said.

Mizan, who read out a written statement, said 49 nationalised jute mills were sold and all the mill workers except those of Ashraf Jute Mills got their payments.

Dewan Abul Bashar, Sirajul Islam and others were also present there.