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**Safe Childbirth and Motherhood**

**'3,000 midwives to be produced by 2015'**

**Staff Correspondent**

The government would produce 3,000 midwives by 2015 to ensure safe childbirth and motherhood across the country, according to an official. Dr Kazi Mostofa Sarwar, director of the Directorate of Nursing Services, said the midwives will be posted in different upazilas.

He said this while addressing a seminar held on the occasion of the International Day of Midwife at Diploma Engineers Institute, Bangladesh (IDEB) in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Nursing Council (BNC) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) jointly organised it with this year's theme, "The World Needs Midwives More Than Ever." Dr Mostofa said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at a recent UN meeting, stated to produce the midwives for safe delivery and proper ante- and post-natal care. But 60 midwives have been produced so far, he added.

Midwives are an essential workforce in an effectively functioning healthcare system, who can serve a key role in reducing maternal and newborn mortality in Bangladesh, said speakers.

UNFPA representative to Bangladesh, Arthur Erken, said an estimated one mother dies every hour in the country due to pregnancy or delivery related complications.

"This [maternal death] could have been easily prevented by a midwife with the right skills, the right equipment and the right support."

Dr Mostofa said Bangladesh is still struggling to achieve targets on maternal and child mortality under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to MDGs, maternal mortality rate should be reduced to 143 per 100,000 live births and newborn mortality to 31 per 1,000 live births by 2015. Speakers said the nurse midwifery training would continue in the country as it is going on. Alongside a three-year Direct Entry Midwifery Programme would start in 2012 by BNC and Directorate of Nursing Services to boost the services, they added.

BNC Registrar Shuriya Begum presented the keynote paper at the seminar where State Minister for Health, Capt (retd) Mozibur Rahman Fakir, was present as the chief guest. Health Secretary Humayun Kabir, Deputy Secretary (Nursing and Gender Issue) Shahnun Nessa, WHO representative Arun B Thapa, and BNC Deputy Registrar Geetasree Ghosh also spoke.