

Pakistan is the riskiest country for newborns

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in a report released on Tuesday singled out Pakistan as the riskiest country for newborns, saying that out of every 1,000 children born in Pakistan, 46 die at birth.

"We don't need front-line medical doctors. We have plenty of them. We need skilled midwives," said Ghazna Khalid, an obstetrician in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She said nearly 80% of the deaths could be prevented if skilled birth attendants are present.

The report said that after Pakistan, the Central African Republic is the next riskiest country for newborns, and Afghanistan is the third.

"Babies born in Japan, Iceland and Singapore have the best chance at survival, while newborns in Pakistan, the Central African Republic and Afghanistan face the worst odds", it said, noting that "more than 80 percent of all newborn deaths are caused by three preventable and treatable conditions".

The three are premature births, complications such as lack of oxygen at birth and neonatal infections.

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