

## Enact law to protect rights of domestic helps

Rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the government to enact a law to protect the rights and security of people working as domestic helps saying they are very unprotected and denigrated in the society.

Mentioning that the domestic

helps are excluded in the Labour Law 2006, the speakers also called on the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to incorporate them in the law to ensure their rights.

The press conference was organised ahead of the May Day by the Domestic Workers Rights Network-Bangladesh (DWRN), a

group of 22 non-government organisations, at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium.

The speakers stressed the need for formulating a code of conduct titled 'Ensuring rights and welfare of domestic helps' until the relevant law is enacted.

Speaking at the press conference BNP Joint Secretary General

Nazrul Islam Khan, who is also the executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said law is essential for stopping violence against domestic workers.

Referring a BILS study based on reports published in different dailies from 2001 to 2008, Nazrul said a total of 305 domestic workers died due to violence during this period.

So alongside law, social movement is also needed to eliminate violence against domestic workers, he added.

Laying emphasis on the enactment of law, Rokeya Rafique, executive director of Karmojibi Nari, said it would not only ensure their legal protection but also enhance the responsibility of the householders towards domestic workers.

Farida Yeasmin, deputy director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), said the government should cooperate to run the cases of domestic helps as most of the victims cannot bear the expenses due to poverty.

While presenting the keynote paper Bangladesh Trade Union (BTU) President Dr Wajedul Islam suggested recommendations including forming a wage board for domestic workers.

He said over 20 lakh people working as domestic help in the country and of them around 80 percent are women and children.

Advocate Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, and Abu Taher, director of Surovi, also spoke at the conference.

### Barisal medical college reopens tomorrow

UNB, Barisal

Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College (SBMC) reopens tomorrow after a 10-day forced closure following a factional clash of the ruling party's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Campus sources said all dormitories of the medical college would be reopened today for the students who have valid ID cards.

Meanwhile, the college authorities held a meeting with the city corporation mayor and law enforcers and discussed measures to ensure security of the students on the campus.

The medical college was closed for an indefinite period on April 17 following a clash between two groups of BCL activists on the campus that left four students injured.

A five-member investigation committee formed earlier to probe the incident is expected to submit its report after the reopening of the college.



Ministers, senior party leaders and high officials receive Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the airport in the city yesterday on her return from Saudi Arabia. (Story on page 1)

### DU Career Club launched

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University Career Club and its website -- www.ducareerclub.org -- was launched at the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhawan auditorium yesterday.

State Minister for Science and ICT Architect Yeafesh Osman attended the launching ceremony as chief guest while DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique presided over the ceremony, said a press release.

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