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**Recruit more
Bangladeshi
workers for
mega projects****Asif Nazrul urges
Saudi Arabia**

BSS, Dhaka

Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul has called upon Saudi Arabia to recruit more skilled manpower from Bangladesh to implement mega projects such as arrangements of World Expo 2030 and FIFA World Cup 2034.

"Recruit more skilled Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia to implement the mega projects," he said.

He made the appeal in a bilateral meeting with Dr Abdullah Nasser Abuthnain, vice minister of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development

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Firefighters rescue people trapped in a shopping mall on Bailey Road after a fire broke out at the Capital Siraj Centre around 6:47pm yesterday. Eight fire engines went to the spot and doused the blaze at 8:38pm. A total of 18 people, including 2 children and 9 women, were rescued. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

**EC to stay away
from political
controversies
Says CEC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said the Election Commission will refrain from any activity that may lead to political controversy.

"The EC will not engage in any political controversies. All decisions are made collectively by the commission - no individual acts alone," he said during a views-exchange meeting with election officials from the Mymensingh region at the Mymensingh City Corporation auditorium.

He reaffirmed the commission's commitment to holding the upcoming national election in a free, fair and neutral manner, adding, "There will be no scope for casting votes at night this time."

Asked about the swearing-in of Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Ishraque Hossain, Nasir said the matter falls under the jurisdiction

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**Kalabagan OC,
two SIs suspended
over vandalism,
extortion**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge and two sub-inspectors of Kalabagan Police Station have been suspended for allegedly breaking into a residence at night, threatening false charges, vandalising property, and demanding Tk one crore in extortion while posing as Detective Branch officials.

The officials are OC Moktar Hossain and SIs Belal and Mannan, said police.

The incident took place around 1:30am on April 29 at the home of Abdul Wadud, an exotic bird breeder and owner of a mini zoo, on Sonargaon Road in the capital's Hatirpool area, Tariq Latif, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's New Market Zone, told The Daily Star.

"Following a complaint by Wadud, a member of Bangabandhu Parishad, DMP headquarters formed a probe committee. Initially, the OC and the two SIs were withdrawn and attached to the Ramna Division. Later, all three were suspended," he said.

Further action will follow based on the investigation's findings, he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Wadud said the police officers came with a group of political activists who demanded extortion and threatened to implicate him in fabricated cases.

He urged the authorities to conduct a fair and impartial investigation.

**‘Journalism must be
freed of bad apples’****Info adviser says govt to probe media licences
issued under AL regime**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam yesterday said the government will investigate all media organisations that received licences during the Awami League regime.

"Media outlets were set up to promote narratives supporting extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture in the last 15 years," said Alam.

He made the remarks at an event titled "Killings and Torture of Journalists During the Fascist Regime", organised by the Bangladesh Journalists Welfare Trust at the Department of Films and Publications auditorium.

"We will investigate when and how such outlets got licences and how the media stood against the people and contributed to producing yellow journalism," he said.

"If you want good quality journalism that maintains

professionalism, you must separate the bad apples from the good," Alam added.

He went on to say, "I

of acknowledging the people's uprising, they call it a 'regime change'... This is the Indian narrative."

If such practices continue, it won't be the government but the people and victims' families who will confront them, he added.

Alam also said popular outlets will receive more government benefits based on their circulation.

He stressed that the government does not want journalists to write in its favour.

Alam said the information ministry has gotten information on 266 journalists who have been prosecuted in recent times.

He said the ministry will assess whether the cases were filed to harass journalists. "If they find proof of harassment, the cases will be scrapped," he added.

Family members of

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The ministry will assess whether the cases were filed to harass journalists. If they find proof of harassment, the cases will be scrapped.

MAHFUJ ALAM

am astonished that a few newspapers do not use the phrase 'July mass uprising', choosing the term 'July movement' instead. Instead

**Transparency, citizen-
first approach key to
civil service reform****Speakers tell workshop**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's civil service must undergo bold and strategic reforms to remain relevant in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world, speakers said at a high-level consultation workshop yesterday.

Transparency, accountability, and a citizen-first approach have emerged as key principles for

Now is a unique window for reform. With multiple reform commissions in place, including one on public administration, we can build a professional, citizen-first civil service.

M Siraz Uddin Miah

Principal secretary to the chief adviser

building a modern, responsive, and future-ready civil service, they also said.

Jointly organised by UNDP Bangladesh and the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) under the Chief Adviser's Office, with support from the

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**Woman dies as scarf
gets caught in wheel**

UNB, Dhaka

A 23-year-old woman died after her scarf got entangled in the wheel of a battery-run autorickshaw at Aftabnagar in the capital yesterday.

The deceased is Azrat Sadiya, wife of Toukir Ahmed of Kishoreganj.

The accident occurred around 11:30am at the Aftabnagar intersection while she was on her way to the Aftabnagar passport office from her Boubazar residence.

Witnesses said her scarf got stuck in the vehicle's wheel, causing it to tighten around her neck.

She was rushed to the emergency department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead at 12:30pm.

**ATTACK ON HASNAT
54 held, attempt to
murder case filed**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur



A case has been filed over the attack on Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (South) of NCP, in Gazipur's Chandana intersection on Sunday.

Bason Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Shaheen Khan told The Daily Star that a complainant named Khandaker Al Amin filed an attempt to murder case with the police station yesterday against 43 named accused and more than a hundred unidentified accused.

Meanwhile, Gazipur Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner Rabiul Hasan said a drive was launched by several police teams to identify and arrest the culprits immediately after the

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**Govt to build 'July Memorial'
at Osmani Udyan**

HELEMUL ALAM

The government is set to construct a July Memorial Monument at Osmani Udyan in Dhaka to commemorate the July uprising.

According to a Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) official, the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) adviser visited Osmani Udyan on November 19 last year and expressed the government's intent to build the memorial.

DSCC will implement the project, which will be fully funded by the government.

As per the approved design, the centrepiece of the memorial will be a 90-foot-high bronze pillar, featuring engraved names of the July martyrs, built on a

**Proposed design for the 'July Memorial'.**

circular platform. Surrounding the base will be semi-circular sculptures depicting key moments

from the British era, 1952 Language Movement, 1971 Liberation War, and the 2024 uprising.

At the park's entrance, there will be a gate shaped like numbers

"24", symbolising last year's event. The site will also feature pedestrian walkways, an epitaph listing the martyrs' names, and extensive landscaping.

Dr Md Zillur Rahman, chief executive officer of DSCC, said, "There are many monuments in various parks across Dhaka, but Osmani Udyan has none. That's why we chose this location."

He said due to its proximity to the secretariat, city corporation, and other key institutions, Osmani Udyan is an ideal spot to draw public attention to the memorial.

A DSCC official confirmed that the monument's design has been finalised, and a tender has been issued, scheduled to be opened on May 18.

"We'll need about two weeks to complete the evaluation, and construction will start shortly afterward," he said.

The project is expected to be completed within six months, from June to December, though efforts will be made to finish it earlier, he added.

Meanwhile, the broader modernisation of Osmani Udyan, originally set for completion in 2018, has faced repeated delays. The project stalled for nearly two years after

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**Policy overhaul needed
to protect farmers,
farmland, environment****Speakers tell conference**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to pass the Agricultural Land Protection Act within the next two months, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Water Resources ministries.

She made the remarks while speaking at the "Agriculture, Food Security and Biodiversity Conference 2025", organised by Bonik Barta at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

Rizwana said the law would include measures to protect farmers and regulate the use of farmland. "Despite years of discussion, no effective action has been taken," she said, adding that the agriculture ministry is now working on drafting a clear policy for farmer protection.

"The state must protect people, the environment, and agriculture. But often, development comes at the cost of the environment. We need to change this mindset. Private actors must also

contribute," she said.

She stressed the importance of food safety, saying food quality is as important as quantity. "Most of our land yields two to three crops annually. We must not import

Our biggest asset is fertile land. But if we destroy soil fertility and micro-organisms, where will we farm? In the sky? We must recognise our limits – limited land and a dense population. Planning must reflect this reality to protect our land and water.

Prof Anu Muhammad

Eminent Economist

rejected technologies or put profits above farmers' well-being."

Rizwana also said 150 acres of eucalyptus trees in the Madhupur Sal forest would be replaced with native Sal

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