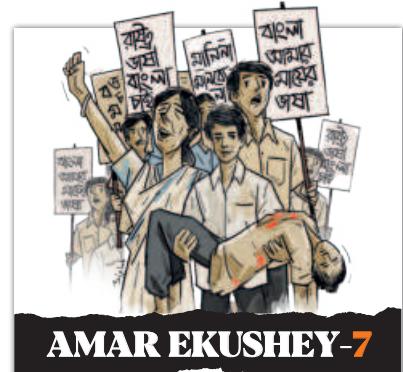


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This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

Kushtia erupts into protest

AHMAD ISTIAK

Public sentiment in Kushtia began to shift in favour of the Language Movement towards the end of 1951.

Local political leaders, including Advocate Abdul Haque, Syed Altaf Ali, and Dr Abul Kashem, alongside

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Visitors at the Bishwo Shahitto Kendro stall of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela at the Suhrawardy Udyana. The bookstall is shaped like a double-decker bus. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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'Don't spiral once again into deadly abuses'

HRW urges Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch yesterday called on Bangladesh to support a UN-backed mechanism that can help secure a democratic future instead of succumbing to a cycle of violence and revenge.

Mentioning the demolition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's house on Dhanmondi 32 by protesters, the international rights group said while anger against the former Awami League government is justified, lawlessness is not.

"Bangladesh, which has a history of political violence, should not spiral once again into deadly abuses," it said in a statement yesterday.

The HRW also mentioned how Sheikh Hasina had to step down after 15 years of repression, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances.

Her government had remained in office

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Govt moves to build road thru Osmani Udyana

Plans to link Phoenix Road with Abdul Gani Road; experts warn of ecological damage

HELEMUL ALAM and BAHARAM KHAN

The government has decided to construct a road, connecting Fulbaria's Phoenix Road to Abdul Gani Road, through the Osmani Udyana, in order to facilitate vehicles heading towards the Secretariat.

The 29-acre public park has remained closed for the last seven years on account of a "modernisation" project.

Urban planning and environment experts have pointed out that the Osmani Udyana, one of Dhaka's largest green spaces, plays a crucial role in maintaining the capital's environmental balance, and the construction of the road will damage the park's ecosystem.

According to sources, the decision came on Tuesday at a public administration ministry meeting, and a team already visited the proposed site yesterday to assess the project's feasibility.

If implemented, several dozen large trees could be felled to make way for the 20-to-25-foot-wide road, which was not included in the park's original design.

A top ministry official said that alongside the road construction project, a 20-storey car park will be built at the site of a government workshop on Abdul Gani Road, near Osmani Memorial Auditorium, to accommodate government vehicles.

"Abdul Gani Road will come under immense pressure once the parking lot is operational..."

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DB picks up Shaon, Saba for questioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police picked up actors Meher Afroz Shaon and Sohana Saba from the capital last night.

Rezaul Karim Mallick, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that Shaon was taken into police custody on allegations of plotting against the state.

She was picked up from Dhamondi and taken to DB headquarters on Minto Road for questioning, according to the DMP's media wing notification around 8:30pm.

Her detention came hours after her village home in Jamalpur was attacked and torched.

A group of protesters set fire to the house belonging to Shaon's father,

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**WINGS OF THE WETLANDS**

A red-naped ibis wandering the Char Bagdanga in Chapainawabganj. A striking medium-sized bird native to South Asia, it is found predominantly in India and parts of Southeast Asia. The red patch on its nape is especially pronounced during breeding season, adding some colour to its otherwise dark appearance. Red-naped ibises are often seen foraging in shallow waters, where they use their long, curved bills to find insects, small amphibians, and other invertebrates. These birds have a strong cultural significance in some areas and are even mentioned in local folklore. Though they have a broader distribution across parts of South Asia, they are considered rare and at risk in Bangladesh, mainly due to habitat loss from agricultural expansion, wetland degradation, and human encroachment. Wetland habitats, which are crucial for the ibis' survival, are increasingly being drained or disturbed, impacting their population in the country.

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

Advisory council gives final nod to ICT ordinance

BSS, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday gave final approval to the draft ordinance of International Crimes Tribunals in principle with necessary amendments and subject to vetting by the Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division of the law ministry.

The draft of International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025 has been framed to amend the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 to make it more time befitting.

The approval was given at a meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office with Professor Muhammad Yunus in the chair, said a media release of the Cabinet Division.

The council also approved the draft of Sheikh Russell Rural Development Academy, Rangpur (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025 in principle.

The approval was given to change the name of the institution to Rural Development Academy, Rangpur in line with the name of other

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73% people do not read newspapers

Finds BBS survey on 45,000 households across 64 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers are losing their appeal across the country, with more readers choosing mobile phones as the preferred device for reading news nowadays, according to a study by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

According to its findings released yesterday, 26 percent of respondents said they read newspapers. About 59 percent read news on mobile phones, while 37 percent prefer print newspapers.

Those who don't read newspapers make up 73 percent of the respondents, with 46 percent saying they do not feel it is necessary.

"Overall, people haven't lost trust in the media, but interference from political arena, government and influential persons is seen as a major obstacle to publishing objective news,"

said Md Sayem Hossain, senior information officer of the Media Reforms Commission, in a press release issued yesterday.

The BBS survey, the first of its kind in the country, was conducted across 64 districts, involving the participation of members from 45,000 households aged 10 and above.

Meanwhile, 65 percent of people watch television. Among the 34.58 percent who do not, 53 percent said they don't find it necessary.

During a national disaster or crisis, 35 percent of people first look for updates on news channels on television, followed by 28 percent

who turn to social media, and 24 percent who ask a trustworthy person.

The survey reveals that the people want to see the media independent, impartial, and free from government and political influence.

Of the respondents, 15 percent said mass media in the country is not free at all, while 23 percent said it is partially free, 24 percent said it is largely free, and 17 percent believe it is fully free.

Among the 6,849 respondents who believe mass media is not free at all, most cited political interference as the main reason, followed by government interference and influence by powerful individuals.

Nationally, 67 percent of people expect mass media to be independent, 60 percent expect media neutrality or impartiality, 37 percent want media to be free from political influence, and 32 percent expect mass media to be

free from government influence.

Most people think state-owned Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar should be operated under the stewardship of the government. Over 56 percent of people believe Bangladesh Television should be operated under government control, while 55 percent said the same for Bangladesh Betar.

In the case of radio, 93 percent of respondents said they do not listen to the radio, with 54 percent saying that they do not find it necessary.

If govt fails to act, stability could be at risk
Says BNP about ongoing situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has expressed concern over the country's current situation, saying that stability could be at risk if the government fails to demonstrate its ability to control the emerging challenges.

"If the government cannot effectively manage the ongoing situation, the stability of both the state and the government will face serious threats," the party said in a press release last night.

Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi cautioned in the release that the current situation could lead to the resurgence of defeated fascists alongside extremist, anarchist, and anti-democratic forces, both domestic and foreign.

"The symptoms of such a resurgence are already visible," the press release added.

The BNP urged the interim government to take immediate and decisive action to bring the situation under control.

"Otherwise, anarchic conditions will spread across the country. It is now imperative to visibly demonstrate the role of the state and the government by strictly enforcing law and order," the statement read.

The party also criticised the interim government for its perceived

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Another girls' football match cancelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A girls' football match was cancelled in Rangpur's Taraganj upazila yesterday, just days after one was obstructed in Joypurhat.

The local administration had to impose section 144 around the venue, following protests led by an Islami Andolok leader who opposed the event citing religious grounds.

The match between Joypurhat girls and Rajshahi girls was scheduled to begin at 3:00pm at the Burirhat High School ground in Rangpur as part of an inter-district football tournament.

However, before the match began, Ashraf Ali, president of Islami Andolok Bangladesh's Taraganj unit, publicly called for its cancellation. He also announced a protest rally against the event, leading to a heated confrontation between the organisers and his followers, prompting the local administration to intervene.

The cancellation marks a growing pattern of resistance against women's participation in sports, raising concerns about the future of such

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