



Crew members aboard the humanitarian migrant rescue ship Sea-Watch 5 perform a rescue drill yesterday, as the vessel heads toward the search and rescue zone in the central Mediterranean Sea.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Childhood buried in trash

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million children in Bangladesh are engaged in hazardous work. Conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with support from the International Labour Organization, the survey found that out of 39.9 million children aged five to seventeen, 3.54 million are economically active. Of them, 1.76 million are involved in child labour.

The BSS also notes that many of the working children contribute as primary earners in their homes. Despite working long hours in harsh conditions, they are consistently paid less than adults.

Dr Hanif, a professor of nephrology at Anwer Khan Modern Medical College Hospital, warned of serious health risks.

Child labour in waste handling is not only a rights violation; it is a public health hazard. They often suffer cuts from sharp, contaminated objects, risking hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, and chronic infections. Many face poor nutrition, respiratory issues, and skin diseases."

He added that prolonged exposure to foul odours may dull their sense of smell. In extreme cases, a lack of medical care can lead to antibiotic resistance.

Wahida Banu, executive director of Parajeyo Bangladesh, pointed to the policy vacuum. "Bangladesh adopted a national child labour policy in 2010, but there is still no standalone law to eliminate it. The government's action plan has stalled. Unless child labour is prioritised politically and budgeted accordingly, we will continue to fall short."

She stressed that poverty is not the only driver. "Many families push children into work because they don't see short-term benefits from school. But if the state invested in quality education, joyful learning, and targeted support through social safety nets or small enterprise funds, families might choose school over labour."

Amal Krishna Mondal, additional secretary at the labour ministry, said, "There is still a serious lack of awareness around child labour. Many employers exploit children for cheap labour, and families push them into work for short-term relief."

"Our ministry is running several projects, but poverty remains a powerful driver. This is not a problem that can be solved overnight. It requires time, commitment, and collective action."

lives."

He said more than 1,500 people were killed and at least 30,000 were injured in the uprising, while hundreds suffered life-altering injuries.

The BNP leader said the sacrifices of these brave people have united the nation against fascism. "Never again will Bangladesh allow dictatorship to rise. Democracy will be protected, and no one will be allowed to turn the country into a subservient state again."

He also called for unity among all political parties. "Different parties may have different views and goals. That's the beauty of democracy. But disagreements must not allow extremism or dictatorship to return."

are still missing."

He accused the Awami fascist regime of destroying key state institutions like the judiciary and the Election Commission, rigging elections and undermining the constitution.

Blaming the Hasina regime for ruining the economy, the BNP leader said, "Banks were looted and nearly Tk 28 lakh crore was siphoned off abroad from the country."

Praising the people's courage in the July uprising, Tarique said, "People from all walks of life -- students, workers, farmers, journalists, women, even mothers -- joined the streets to fight for democracy. Helicopters were used to shoot at protesters. Many children and young people lost their

Never again will Bangladesh allow

regular part of life.

"During the movement against this fascism, which lasted for more than 15 years, Tarique said lakhs of leaders and activists from BNP and other pro-democracy parties were made to suffer by turning the country into hell."

"Due to hundreds of false cases, lakhs of opposition leaders and supporters were forced to leave their homes. Many even lost their family ties."

Tarique also said secret detention centres, known as 'Aynagar', were built to silence dissent. "Many people were locked up in dark rooms for years. Some, like former MP Ilias Ali and commissioner Chowdhury Alam,

Aug 5 events caught Delhi off guard: BBC

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shock after the vandalism of the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in Dhaka.

Besides, majority of staffers at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, along with their family members, had been flown out on commercial flights to Kolkata or Delhi.

According to BBC Bangla, in the days before August 5, the army chiefs of Bangladesh and India, General Walker-Uz-Zaman and General Upendra Dwivedi, had been in "constant communication."

While the deployment of Indian troops on Bangladeshi soil was never under consideration, the report stated that Delhi had conveyed its willingness to provide all other support.

The report noted that shortly after noon on August 5, two successive phone calls from Dhaka were received in New Delhi, an incident later confirmed in parliament by Jaishankar.

The first call came from the office of Hasina, who spoke directly.

Although Jaishankar did not reveal the identity of who was on the other end, BBC Bangla noted that as per the protocol, communication generally occurs between the heads of governments in such a situation.

By then, India learnt that Hasina had decided to resign after a meeting with the country's security forces.

In the call to Delhi, she requested temporary refuge in India, and the request was immediately granted.

The report noted that a second call was made. The Bangladeshi Air Force called the commander of Indian Air Force in New Delhi. It was a request for clearance to land a military aircraft carrying Hasina at a designated Indian

airbase.

The request was approved without delay, according to BBC Bangla.

BBC Bangla reported that the Bangladesh Army requested India to send an aircraft to take Hasina from Dhaka but India's political and military leadership maintained that if Hasina were to go to India, she would need to use a Bangladeshi aircraft or helicopter.

Delhi indicated that, in the case of a helicopter, she could be flown to a nearby location such as Kolkata or Agartala. It was also conveyed that once a mode of transport had been finalised, Bangladesh's military would be required to formally request landing clearance.

Accordingly, Bangladesh Air Force prepared a C 130 military transport aircraft to carry Hasina and her entourage.

The report said when India formally granted permission for Hasina to enter the country on the afternoon of August 5, it assumed that she would have a stopover en route to a third country.

This prompted Indian authorities to instruct the Bangladesh Air Force's C130 transport aircraft to stay overnight at Hindon airbase.

Sources at the Indian home ministry told BBC that Hasina would be heading to the UK.

The report added that through its High Commission in Delhi, the British government, led by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, informed the Indian authorities that it was not in a position to receive Hasina then.

Since the evening of August 5, 2024, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval took on the role of Hasina's unofficial guardian in India.

The report stated that whenever India extends refuge to a high profile political figure from abroad, its security agencies typically conduct a series of structured debriefing sessions.

A similar protocol was followed over six decades ago for the Dalai Lama, and, according to BBC Bangla, comparable sessions have reportedly been held for Hasina, some of them personally led by Doval.

Schedule for polls

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the election timeframe in his address to the nation yesterday.

Masud said, "We are ready to hold the election. We will announce the schedule 50 to 60 days prior to the election day. Based on that, the schedule may be announced in December."

Tagore's 84th death anniv today

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"Rabindra Sangeet".

He also wrote eight novels, 84 short stories and numerous poems in his prolific literary career that spanned over almost seven decades.

Gitanjali, Gora and Ghare Baire are his best-known works.

Rabindranath became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.

His compositions were chosen by two countries as national anthems: Bangladesh's "Amar Shonar Bangla" and India's "Jana Gana Mana".

Lanka parliament sacks disgraced police chief

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's parliament yesterday voted overwhelmingly to dismiss Police Chief Deshabandu Tennakoon for misconduct and criminal behaviour, making him the island's first inspector-general to be impeached.

Tennakoon, 54, was removed less than two years after his controversial appointment, with a disciplinary committee finding him unfit to lead its 85,000 strong law enforcement body.

Tennakoon was appointed in November 2023 by then president Ranil Wickremesinghe, despite the Supreme Court having previously ruled that he had tortured a suspect in custody by rubbing menthol balm on his genitals.

Public Security Minister Ananda

Wijepala told parliament yesterday that Tennakoon should never have been put in the top job, given that he faced 40 court cases for abuse of power.

"He is the most disgraced police chief in the history of our country," Wijepala said.

Parliament backed a resolution by Speaker Jagath Wickramaratne to impeach Tennakoon, following a disciplinary hearing led by a Supreme Court judge and two others.

"I am pleased to inform that the motion to impeach Deshabandu Tennakoon has been approved with 177 votes in favour, and none against," Wickramaratne said.

Members of the main opposition SJB party also voted to remove the

police chief.

Shortly after his appointment to head the force, Tennakoon was accused of authorising a botched raid in December 2023 that led to a gun battle between rival police units in the coastal resort town of Weligama, resulting in the death of an officer.

A disciplinary inquiry found that Tennakoon had "spearheaded the questionable, illegal act of shooting".

The Supreme Court suspended him in July 2024 pending the outcome of a separate case.

In March, the state prosecutor told a court that Tennakoon was operating a paramilitary hit squad to carry out illegal activities and was unfit to serve, even at the lowest rank in the police force.

India hits back

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million tonnes.

The United States, the statement said, continues to import Russian uranium hexafluoride for use in its nuclear power industry, palladium, fertilisers and chemicals. It did not give a source for the export information.

The US embassy and the EU's delegation in New Delhi did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Both the United States and EU have sharply scaled back their trade ties with Russia since it launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In 2021, Russia was the EU's fifth largest trading partner, with goods exchange worth 258 billion euros, according to the EU executive European Commission.

Election shines a path forward

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domestic and international investors have remained on the sidelines, waiting for a signal of political predictability. While the interim administration has managed to contain inflation and protect foreign exchange reserves, only the promise of a stable, elected government can truly unlock Bangladesh's economic potential.

Of course, an election alone does not resolve all the challenges, nor does it guarantee the execution of the monumental tasks that lie ahead. It does, however, create a new opportunity to rebuild trust in core institutions, from the judiciary to the bureaucracy. This is essential, as the interim period presided over by Yunus has itself been fraught with difficulties.

The abuse of the legal system and

politically motivated arrests are the key concerns.

Despite these challenges, Yunus, an essential leader for a time of crisis, has provided a crucial anchor in the country's tumultuous journey. In the chaotic power vacuum a year ago, he was perhaps the only figure who could have stepped into the breach. His unparalleled international prestige as a Nobel laureate made him a symbol of hope and neutrality.

As Bangladesh looks toward the polls, the focus for all political actors must be to ensure this opportunity is not wasted. The goal is not merely to hold an election, but to conduct one that is "fair, peaceful, and festive," as Yunus promised, and cements the foundation for a reformed, resilient, and democratic Bangladesh.

Waiting to see the Bangladesh

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discrimination student movement. It ultimately turned into a mass uprising and led to the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime on August 5.

"My son's sacrifice brought a new kind of independence to Bangladesh," Manwara said.

"I want that no other mother has to lose her child like I did. If I can die

seeing that Bangladesh he dreamt of, it will bring me peace."

She said people frequently visit their home to learn about her son's bravery.

"Morning turns to evening, and visitors still come. But in the crowd, I feel a terrible emptiness. I live every moment with this grief. Who can fill this void?" she asked.

War criminals' photos removed

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Pakistan's collaborators", "Ekattore Bangla e Razakarer Sthaan Nai" (There's no place for collaborators in 71's Bangla), "Shoirachar Aar Razakar, Mile Mishe Ekakar" (Autocrats and collaborators have blended into one).

Speaking to reporters, Assistant Proctor Rafiqul said, "A group of our students raised objections regarding the exhibition. After speaking to Shibir leaders, we removed the photos with their cooperation."

Mazharul Islam, a leader of Chhatra Shibir at DU, acknowledged the university's request and said, "We organised the programme with the university authorities' permission to celebrate the July anniversary. Now,

to maintain overall discipline, the authority requested us to take down the photos. We gave our consent for the sake of discipline."

The incident sparked strong reactions among progressive student bodies.

Organisations including the Bangladesh Student Union, the Democratic Student Council, and the Socialist Student Front condemned what they termed a "despicable" attempt to rehabilitate anti-Liberation War figures on campus.

They raised four demands in this context: immediate removal of all photos of convicted war criminals and cancellation of the event; a public apology from Chhatra Shibir for displaying the

photos; a formal assurance from the university administration that such activities will not be allowed in future; and a public explanation and apology from the university for allowing the exhibition to proceed.

Umama Fatema, former spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), said, "Shibir is trying to assert that it has the space to promote anti-independence figures at TSC, and if questioned, they portray themselves as victims. This is the narrative they are attempting to establish.

"The university administration must be clear about its stance. If any activity on this campus dishonours the Liberation War, students will not accept it."

BNP, other parties hail polls timeline

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announcement would dispel doubts surrounding the election. They urged the government to ensure an environment conducive to holding free and fair polls.

BNP said the chief adviser's announcement would help restore political stability.

"Through this announcement, the doubts many people had about the election are gone," BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters in front of the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

He said the announcement would help create an election oriented environment and expressed hope that the EC would soon declare the schedule.

Urging people to prepare for the election, the BNP leader expressed hope that the polls would be free, fair, neutral, and among the most admired in the world.

On June 13, following a meeting between BNP's acting chairman

Tarique Rahman and Prof Yunus, the government had said the election could be held in mid February.

After the meeting, BNP also called on the interim government to formally inform the Election Commission of the decision to hold the polls in February.

Nagrik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna said, "I am very happy with it [the announcement]. Many people had doubts about the election. A lot of that uncertainty was removed today."

"The tensions among political parties will also ease now," he told this newspaper.

Ganosamhi Andolon welcomed the "reasonable and timely" announcement, saying the time had come to focus on justice, reforms, public safety, and creating a proper election environment.

"Now, the challenge for this government is to hold the upcoming election in a free,