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## Never again will Bangladesh allow dictatorship to rise Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the people of Bangladesh will enjoy August 5 as a public holiday every year, celebrating what he called the end of fascist rule in Bangladesh.

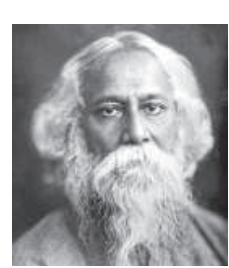
"Exactly one year ago from today, on this day in 2024, fascist [Hasina] fled the country. The nation was freed from the grip of a monster. For the freedom-loving, democracy-loving people, this day is one of joys and victories. The interim government has declared this day as July Mass Uprising Day. From now on, people will enjoy this day every year as a public holiday."

The BNP leader made the remarks in a video message posted on Facebook yesterday, marking the first anniversary of the July uprising.

"A fugitive autocrat had established a reign of terror in 21st-century Bangladesh, where enforced disappearances, killings, abductions, attacks, false cases, torture and oppression became common and a

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Tagore's 84th death anniv today



STAR REPORT

Today is the 84th death anniversary of Biswakabi Rabindranath Tagore.

According to the Gregorian calendar, Rabindranath died at the age of 80 on August 7 in 1941. But his death anniversary is observed in Bangladesh on Sraban 22 of the Bangla calendar.

The youngest of 13 surviving children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, Rabindranath was born on the 25th of the Bangla month of Baishakh 1268 (May 7, 1861) at the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta.

The "Bard of Bengal" composed over 2,000 songs, which created a separate genre known as

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## Childhood buried in trash

An alarming number of minors are working in waste management

TANGILA TASnim

For the past decade, 18-year-old Raza has been wading through garbage to help his family survive.

Working at the Secondary Transfer Station (STS) in Ward-10, covering Arambagh, Fakirapool, and the Ideal School area, of Dhaka South City Corporation, he never attended school, having begun collecting and transferring waste when he was just eight.

"My father died long ago. I had to take up work to support my family... That's why I never got the chance to study," he told The Daily Star.

Robin, 18, from the Rayerbazar slums in Mohammadpur, splits his time between two STS sites in Wards 17 and 15, which cover Kalabagan and Dhamondi. He dropped out in fifth grade, forced to choose work over education.

"I wanted to continue studying, but my family couldn't afford it. If I had a chance, I'd complete my education."

His mother, preferring anonymity, said, "I'm ill and don't have the means to pay for his education. My Robin works hard to support us and buy my medicine."

The Daily Star found children working in almost all STS facilities visited across Dhaka. STS is where solid waste is temporarily stored before being moved to landfills.

At five locations, at least a dozen minors were found on duty, most without proper safety gear.

At the Kalabagan STS (Ward 17), shift

in-charge Jahangir Alam admitted to employing children.

"This site has about 20 to 30 child workers. Most are from the Rayerbazar slums. They work hard but earn very little."

They typically earn Tk 33 to 35 per

Child population (aged 5-17) in Bangladesh: 39.964 million

3.537 million of them economically active

1.776 million involved in child labour

1.068 million engaged in hazardous work

DATA SOURCE: BBS

hour, sometimes even less.

However, not all officials were forthcoming.

Mozammel, the shift supervisor at Ward-27's STS, covering East and West Razabazar, Indira Road, Farmgate, Monipuripara, the parliament area, and Sech Bhaban, denied the presence of underage workers.

"We don't hire children. I know they should be in school. If they come looking for work, I try to help them with money."

Yet during the visit, this correspondent found at least two underage boys sorting

waste at that very site.

Similar conditions were observed at the Paribagh, Shantinagar, and Wari STS facilities.

Many of the children working have migrated from outside Dhaka, like 13-year-old Shadhin, from Mymensingh's Sherpur, who works at the Ward-10 STS for Tk 6,000 a month. "I send some of the money home and keep the rest to buy food," he told this correspondent.

According to DSCC, there are currently 66 STS units under its jurisdiction, with approximately 5,000 workers engaged in waste collection and transfer. DNCC oversees 53 STS units with around 220 workers officially recruited. However, there is no official data on child workers, as they are informally employed.

Many STS operations are privately managed, and children often enter this hazardous work without contracts, legal protection, or recognition.

Sajjad Mahmud Sohel, director of operations in Ward-15 (Dhamondi), also acknowledged this reality. "In some cases, if a worker's parent falls ill or is absent, their children come in their place. Others are from families who simply cannot afford to educate them. These are poor families. While irregular, it does happen."

"If our inspectors find underage workers, we ask them to leave. We believe they should get education, but we cannot financially support them all."

According to the 2022 National Child Labour Survey, approximately 1,068

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Schedule for polls likely in December Says Election Commissioner Masud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' remarks on the election date and issuing a letter to the Election Commission in this regard, an election commissioner last night said the EC is prepared to hold the national parliamentary election in February and the schedule could be announced in December.

Speaking to The Daily Star around 9:00pm, Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmehan Masud said, "We are prepared to hold the 13th national parliamentary election in the first half of February, before the upcoming Ramadan."

His comments came as an immediate reaction to the chief adviser's announcement regarding

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



Wearing only a pair of gumboots for protection, a minor boy working at the Halishahar Landfill in Chattogram city. The lack of safety gear exposes the child to a host of health risks.

PHOTO: FILE/RAJIB RAIHAN

'Waiting to see the Bangladesh my son died for'  
Says Abu Sayed's mother

UNB, Dhaka



As the nation observed the first anniversary of the July uprising yesterday, the family of slain student Abu Sayed remained cloaked in quiet resilience -- still grieving, yet hopeful that his ultimate sacrifice will not go in vain.

His mother Manwara Begum and father Mokbul Hossain stood motionless beside their son's grave in Rangpur's Pirganj with their eyes brimming with tears.

"I'm waiting to see that Bangladesh my son sacrificed his life for -- a country where fascism never rises again, and there is no longer discrimination, violence or bloodshed," Manwara said.

"There's an ache in our hearts that words can't describe. We carry this grief in silence," she said.

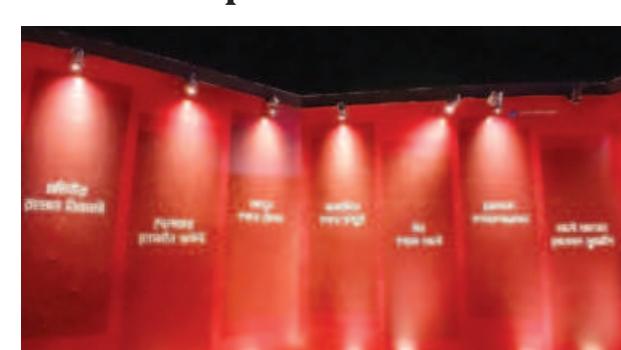
The killing of protester Sayed in police firing during the quota reform protests on July 16 last year fuelled the anti-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## SHIBIR'S EXHIBITION AT DU

## War criminals' photos removed after backlash

Student protesters call it an 'affront to spirit of Liberation War'



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Photos of convicted war criminals were removed from an exhibition organised by Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir at Dhaka University yesterday, following protests from students who called the display "an affront to the spirit of the Liberation War."

The university's proctorial team, led by Assistant Proctor and Associate Professor Rafiqul Islam, took down the images and took them to the proctor's office.

The action came after members of the Democratic Student Alliance, a coalition of left-leaning student organisations, and a group of general students protested upon seeing the photographs at the exhibition, which was being held in observance of the July uprising anniversary.

Protesters shouted slogans such as "Amar Mati, Amar Ma, Razakarer Hobe Na" (My land, my mother will never be

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## India hits back at Trump's threat

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's ruling party and main opposition yesterday condemned a threat by US President Donald Trump to raise tariffs on goods from India over its Russian oil purchases, in a show of political unity as a trade rift deepens with Washington.

Trump had already in July announced 25 percent tariffs on Indian imports, and US officials have cited a range of geopolitical issues standing in the way of a US-India trade accord.

Manish Tewari, a member of parliament and leader of the opposition Congress, said Trump's "disparaging remarks hurt the dignity and self-respect of Indians".

"The time has come to call out this constant bullying and hectoring," he added.

BJP Vice President Baijayant Jay Panda quoted Henry Kissinger - the most powerful US diplomat of the Cold War era - in a post on X: "To be an enemy of America can be dangerous, but to be a friend is fatal."

India's foreign ministry said the country was being unfairly singled out over its purchases of Russian oil, and highlighted continued trade between Moscow and both the United States and the European Union, despite the war in Ukraine.

"It is revealing that the very nations criticising India are themselves indulging in trade with Russia," it said in a statement issued late on Monday. "It is unjustified to single out India," the ministry said.

It said the EU conducted 67.5 billion euros (\$78.02 billion) in trade with Russia in 2024, including record imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) reaching 16.5

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6