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8TH ANNIV OF ROHINGYA INFUX Cox's Bazar can't bear further pressure: speakers



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Local and national organisations, along with humanitarian actors, have called for a clear roadmap for Rohingya repatriation, warning that Cox's Bazar cannot bear further pressure as Bangladesh marks the eighth anniversary of the Rohingya influx.

The appeal came at a webinar on "Rohingya crisis and sustainable solution" organised by COAST Foundation and the Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum (CCNF) yesterday.

The event was moderated by COAST Director Mustafa Kamal Akand and CCF Member Secretary Jahangir Alam.

Speakers included refugee expert Gawhar Nayeem Wara, Whykong Union Parishad Chairman Noor Ahmad Anwari, Advocate Saki A Kawser, Palongkhali Union's Mojaffar Ahmed, journalist Imam Khair, Save the Cox's Bazar Chairman Taufiq Belal, AGRAJATRA's Mohammad Helal Uddin, and NGO Platform representatives Amir Hossen and Sukarna Abdullah.

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Freeze 191 bank accounts of Summit Group chair
HC upholds lower court order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld a lower court order that directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to freeze 191 bank accounts of Mohammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, and his family in connection with corruption allegations against them.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Debashish Roy Chowdhury rejected a petition for default, filed challenging the legality of the lower court order.

The lower court directive will remain in force following the HC order, ACC's lawyer Md Mahmudul Arefin Swapani told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Karishma Jahan, one of the counsels for the petitioners, told this correspondent, "The order of 'rejected for default' came about due to the unfortunate absence of the advocate in court at the

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Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar visits BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan residence yesterday to enquire about her health. PHOTO COURTESY BNP

Child rape cases rise nearly 75% in 7 months

Shows ASK data; experts call for stronger laws, protection

NILIMA JAHAN

Child rape cases in Bangladesh have surged by nearly 75 percent in the first seven months of 2025 compared to the same period last year, according to data from Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK).

An analysis of ASK data shows that 306 girls were raped between January and July this year, up from 175 in the same period of 2024. This already surpasses the total of 234 cases reported in the whole of last year.

The ages of the victims make the figures even more harrowing. Forty-nine were toddlers aged between 0 and 6, 94 were between 7 and 12, and 103 were teenagers. In 60 cases, the ages were not specified.

The highest numbers were recorded in March and April this year, with 106 and 64 cases

respectively, compared to 29 and 24 in the same months of 2024.

Cases were filed in 251 incidents, leaving 55 children without justice. During the same period, 129 girls

306 girls raped from Jan to July 2025; up from 175 in same period 2024

Surpasses 234 cases reported in entire 2024

251 Cases filed leaving 55 children without justice

129 girls subjected to attempted rape

49 girls sexually harassed by stalkers; 22 by teachers

were subjected to attempted rape. Of these, 35 were aged between 0 and 6, 53 between 7 and 12, and 12 were teenagers, while in 29 cases

the ages were not specified. Case filings were even lower, with only 85 incidents leading to legal action.

Thirty boys were raped in the first seven months of this year – one aged between 0 and 6, 17 aged 7 to 12, and one between 13 and 18. In 11 cases, ages were not disclosed.

Only 20 of these incidents led to case filings, while three boys were subjected to attempted rape. Alarmingly, the number of male child rape cases in seven months has nearly matched the total of 36 reported in 2024.

Children also faced other forms of harassment. Forty-nine girls were reportedly sexually harassed by stalkers, while 22 were harassed by teachers, raising serious concerns about safety in educational institutions.

Supreme Court lawyer Ayesha

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Empower youth to shape tomorrow Speakers tell launch of IGF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday said the youth have the potential to question the status quo and bring about positive changes in today's interconnected world.

They were speaking at an event, marking the launch of the Institute for Global Cooperation Foundation (IGCF), a youth-based research organisation, at a city hotel.



IGCF has been launched under the theme: "Youth power lies not just in numbers, but in ideas, ideals and their relentless desire to build a better tomorrow."

The IGF was launched under the theme: "Youth power lies not just in numbers, but in ideas, ideals and their relentless desire to build a better tomorrow."

Shama Obaed, executive director of IGF, highlighted the role of youth in shaping Bangladesh. "In this process of change, they themselves have also transformed," she said.

"It is our responsibility to support and empower the youth of today, to provide them with the tools, education, and opportunities they need to succeed. By investing

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'Now it's our turn' mindset fuelling abuse of power: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While reforms are publicly touted, an ongoing culture of dominance, illegal occupation, and extortion resulting from "power abuse" by certain political parties is undermining public aspirations to build a democratic "New Bangladesh", said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday.

In a media statement, the anti-graft watchdog said since the "fall of authoritarianism" a worrying pattern of power abuse by some political party leaders and activists with a mindset of "now it's our turn" has manifested in widespread factionalism, extortion, illegal occupation, plundering of state resources, "trading" over lawsuits, arrests, bail, party tags, and violence over spreading party influence.

TIB termed this an "ominous sign" for the envisioned political settlement in "New Bangladesh" and noted that now is the time for political parties to self-reflect on establishing internal democratic practices, ethics, and accountable political conduct.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said over the last year, following the fall of the authoritarian regime, the actions of some leaders and activists of the country's most influential political parties have emerged as a reflection of the multifaceted misuse of power and self-serving practices that characterised the fallen regime.

He said in some instances, direct actions or even mutual collusion among power-seeking and

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Woman, child killed before being dumped into the Buriganga: police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The woman and child, whose bodies were recovered from the Buriganga along with two others on Saturday, were strangled before being dumped in the river, police said yesterday.

A murder case has been filed with Sadarghat River Police Station against unnamed persons, said Sohag Rana, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The body of the child was found floating near Mirerbagh Cold Storage around 12:30pm yesterday. About an hour later, the body of the woman, aged around 25, was recovered from the same spot.

"We suspect the woman was the mother of the child," the OC said.

Besides, another murder case was filed with Keraniganj Model Police Station over the recovery of the bodies of two people whose hands were tied together, said Monirul Haque Dablu, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The two bodies – a woman aged around 30 and

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CUCSU polls schedule likely by Thursday

CU CORRESPONDENT

The schedule for the long-awaited Chittagong University Central Students' Union (CUCSU) polls is likely to be announced by Thursday.

"Preparations are almost complete. We are ready to announce the polls schedule by Thursday. Very soon, students will know the exact date of the election," said Pro-Vice Chancellor (administration) Prof Kamal Uddin.

Prof AKM Ariful Haque Siddique, member secretary of the election conducting committee, said, "The draft of the electoral code of conduct has already been prepared. The schedule may be declared by the end of this week."

JnU students lock admin building, demand polls

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University students yesterday locked the administrative building to press home their demands for the Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUCSU) polls.

They also staged a sit-in around noon in front of the vice-chancellor's office.

Protesters said they had been pressing the administration for more than a year for the polls, but repeated delays had stalled the process.

"We demanded a special syndicate to realise our demands, but that did not happen. So, we will stay at the VC building until the demands are met," said AKM Rakib, president of the JnU unit Students' Rights Council.

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RUCSU nomination form distribution begins

RU CORRESPONDENT

After weeks of uncertainty, the distribution of nomination forms for RUCSU and hall union elections have begun, following the withdrawal of work abstention by employees that delayed the process.

According to the schedule, forms were to be distributed from 10:00am yesterday, but activities were delayed and the form collection began around 1:15pm.

The first form was collected by Sajibur Rahman, a student of Islamic History and Culture, who will contest the assistant general secretary (AGS) post as an independent candidate.

Later, Nisha Akter from the Bangla department became the first

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