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**8TH ANNIV OF ROHINGYA INFLUX
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 CCNF Member Secretary Jahangir Alam.

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

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**Dar, Khaleda
discuss ways
to normalise
relations**

STAR REPORT

Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar visited BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan residence yesterday evening to enquire about her health.

He arrived there around 7:00pm, said BNP media cell member Shyrul Kabir Khan.

Zahid later told reporters that Khaleda and Dar discussed normalising relations between the two countries in the interest of their peoples. They also spoke about working together in the international arena.

The discussion also touched on Bangladesh's move towards an improved political climate, which everyone praised, he said.

Earlier in the afternoon, the Pakistan FM visited ailing Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman at his residence. According to a Jamaat press release, Dar wished him a speedy recovery.

Shafiqur expressed gratitude for the courtesy visit, which the statement said was held in a warm and cordial atmosphere.



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

**'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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**Empower youth to
shape tomorrow
Speakers tell launch of IGCF**

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 IGCF 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 IGCF, 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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**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. Alarming, 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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**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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**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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**Cucusu polls schedule
likely by Thursday**

CU CORRESPONDENT

The schedule for the long-awaited Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) 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."

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**Rucusu nomination form
distribution begins**

RU CORRESPONDENT

After weeks of uncertainty, the distribution of nomination forms for Rucusu 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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