



Participants at a roundtable titled 'Climate-smart Entrepreneurship: Pathways for Youth-led Change', organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

It's a national CRISIS

Rights groups express alarm over surge in child rape cases; urge urgent govt action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Calling the sharp rise in child sexual abuse across Bangladesh a "national crisis", rights groups have urged the government to take urgent and coordinated action.

They expressed deep concern over the situation following new data from rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), which shows that cases of child rape increased by nearly 75 percent in the first seven months of 2025 compared to the same period last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen law enforcement, ensure accountability

Complete probes within 15 days, trials within 90

Establish child-friendly courts, legal procedures

Formulate national child protection strategy

Strengthen services like Helpline 1098 and Child Protection Units

Launch awareness campaigns to fight stigma, promote abuse reporting

Enforce zero tolerance for harassment in schools, madrasas

Alarmed by the surge, three child rights organisations -- Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Save the Children in Bangladesh, and Plan International Bangladesh -- made the call in a joint statement yesterday.

They made several recommendations, which include strengthening law enforcement and accountability, creating a child sensitive justice system, promoting prevention and protection in communities, ensuring

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Dhaka city getting semi-automatic traffic signals

Pilot programme covering 7 out of 22 intersections starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

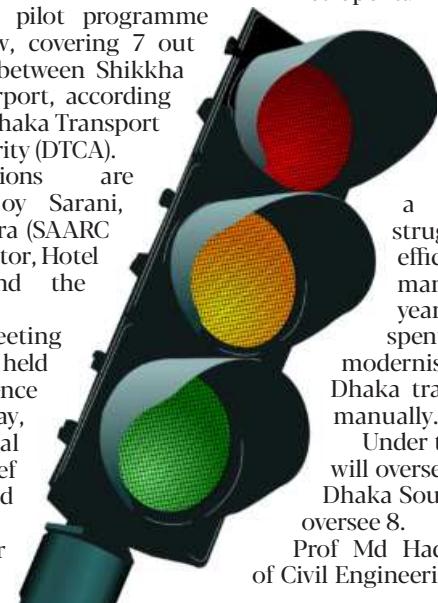
After missing previous deadlines, the government is finally preparing to launch seven semi-automatic traffic signals on a pilot basis to help habituate commuters with traffic signal systems.

A two week-long pilot programme will begin tomorrow, covering 7 out of 22 intersections between Shikhab Bhaban and the Airport, according to an official at the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA).

The intersections are Jahangir Gate, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Saarc Foara (SAARC Fountain), Banglamotor, Hotel Intercontinental and the Chief Advisers office.

A preparatory meeting on the project was held at the DTCA conference room yesterday, chaired by the Special Assistant to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

The broader project involves



traffic signals at 22 intersections -- stretching from the High Court to the Airport -- coordinated by DTCA, funded by Dhaka North and South City Corporations, and technically implemented by Buet. The pilot phase will be managed by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

The system will cost between Tk 10 crore and Tk 12 crore, according to officials at Dhaka North City Corporation.

The move follows a two decade-long struggle to implement an efficient system of traffic management. Over the years, the authorities spent over Tk 119 crore on modernising the equipment, but Dhaka traffic is mostly managed manually.

Under the new initiative, DNCC will oversee 14 intersections, while Dhaka South City Corporation will oversee 8.

Prof Md Hadizuzzaman, department of Civil Engineering at Buet, said the new

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SUNBATH IN STYLE

Crocodiles rest atop one another while soaking in the sun at one of the country's largest breeding centres in Naikongchhari, Bandarban. Established in 2000 on a 15-acre farm, the centre exports crocodile skin and has also become a tourist attraction. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

Cucusu polls set for Oct 12 after 35 years

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University authorities yesterday announced the election schedule for the Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) and hall councils, marking the first such polls in 35 years.

The election will take place on October 12, 2025.

Cucusu Chief Election Commissioner Prof Monir Uddin made the announcement at the Social Sciences Faculty auditorium.

Prof AKM Ariful Haque Siddique, member secretary of the election committee, said a draft code of conduct will be published on the university's website within a day or two following the university's existing constitution.

According to the schedule, the draft voter list will be published on September 1, with objections accepted until September 4. The final list will be out on September 11. Nomination papers will be distributed and submitted between September 14 and 17, followed by evaluation on September 18. The primary list of candidates will be published on September 21, while nominations can be withdrawn until September 23.

The final list will be announced on September 25, and voting will be held on October 12.

A total of 25,752 students across 14 halls, one hostel, and 54 departments are eligible to vote.

Transport, safety to shape non-resident votes in Ducsu polls

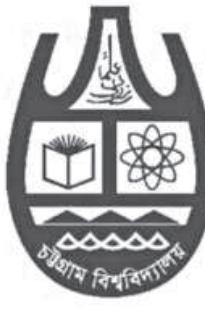
MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Non-residential students of Dhaka University are likely to play a significant role in the upcoming central student union polls, as they make up a significant portion of the electorate.

According to DU authorities, 40 percent of 39,775 voters, live off campus and will have to travel from their residences to cast ballots.

Their challenges, however, differ from those of dormitory students. Unable to regularly interact with candidates, they are generally less politically active.

Some demands include tackling high accommodation costs, inadequate transport, and ensuring safety for female students commuting long distances.



With non-residents scattered across Dhaka, candidates able to reach and mobilise them will hold an advantage in the election, students said.

Nirjhor Das, a fourth-year economics student, said no candidate had approached him directly. "Most are talking about sweeping changes... but I hope their promises translate into reality. The

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KARNAPHULI TUNNEL ACC sues Obaidul Quader for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against former road transport and bridges minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, along with three former top officials of the Bangladesh Bridge Authority, over alleged corruption and irregularities in the Karnaphuli Tunnel project.

ACC Director General Akhter Hossain confirmed the filing, saying that the case was lodged under Section 19(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, and Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

The other accused are former secretary and executive director of the Bridge Authority Khandaker Anwarul Islam, former chief engineer Kabir Ahmed, and former director and permanent

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PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM 3 witnesses testify in three cases against Hasina, Tulip

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three prosecution witnesses yesterday testified in three graft cases against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq.

The witnesses are Rajuk officials Mahbubar Rahman, Ashim Shil and Ullas Chowdhury.

Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court 4 in Dhaka recorded their statements, said ACC Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam.

Hasina and Tulip have been made the common accused in the three cases.

After recording statements, the court also set September 4 for next hearings in three cases.

On August 13, the complainants of three cases --

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