

# RUCSU polls: students hint at 'political interference' behind slow progress

Treasurer says election not possible in June



**After assuming the role of vice chancellor at Rajshahi University last September, Prof Saleh Hasan Naqib in February announced plans to hold the long-awaited Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (RUCSU) election in June.**

However, RUCSU Treasurer Setaur Rahman recently said that the election can not be held in June, citing the election commission's failure to hold meetings.



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He described the previously announced roadmap as a draft, not a final schedule. Incomplete lists from residential halls and the absence of appointed election officers have delayed progress, he said. However, he added that the commission will meet soon and remains hopeful the election will be held with a slightly altered timeline.

The university administration released an election roadmap on February 27. According to the roadmap, the final voter list was scheduled for publication on May 13, and voting was to be held in

the third or fourth week of June.

However, the failure to publish the voter list on time has raised concern among students. They say the administration's slow progress suggests possible "hidden interference" or an attempt to serve the agenda of a political party. They claim the administration is failing to adhere to the roadmap, comparing the situation to "a camel with a crooked back," implying disorder and lack of coordination. While not all members of the administration are blamed, students believe the administration as a whole must take responsibility.

Despite delays, students believe there is still enough time to hold the election in June if the administration is sincere.

Salahuddin Ammar, former coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination, said, "The vice chancellor keeps making promises, but to date, the election commission members haven't even had a single meeting."

He added that the administration is directionless and uncoordinated, with commission members and hall provosts showing indifference. Even when directives come from the VC, they fail to respond, leading to uncertainty over the election.

Al Shahriya Shuvo, secretary of the Student Rights Council, accused the administration of serving specific interests. "Since the announcement of the election, the administration has failed to follow any part of the roadmap. If everything has to be achieved through protests, that's unfortunate," he said.

He emphasised that while students and organisations want RUCSU to happen, a few political parties may not, due to internal failures. "The administration should prioritise student interests over political agendas," he said, adding that if the current administration fails to hold the election, it may remain impossible under any future partisan government.

Mehedi Sajeeb, president and former coordinator of the Student Rights Association, echoed concerns over invisible interference. "They haven't even published the draft voter list yet," he said. Still, he believes the election could be held on time if the administration is willing.

Sultan Ahmed Rahi, convener of RU JCD, said students have been deprived of RUCSU for a long time. "We want the election to happen soon, and it must be fair and inclusive, without any restrictions on voting or candidacy," he said. He emphasised removing extremists hiding behind politics and blamed the administration's weakness for the delay.

Chief Election Commissioner Amzad Hossain said commission members are currently outside Rajshahi and are scheduled to meet next Tuesday. Vice Chancellor Prof Saleh Hasan Naqib said it has been difficult to bring all seven commissioners together. A previous meeting scheduled for May 5 was cancelled due to UGC and PSC commitments of teachers.

Asked whether the election will be held in June, he said only the commission can answer that. "We have handed them a roadmap. They will work according to that and proceed toward setting the election schedule," he said.

According to the roadmap, RUCSU regulations and code of conduct were to be finalised by April 13, draft voter list by April 28, objections by April 30, final list by May 13, nomination papers distributed by May 15, submissions by May 19, scrutiny by May 20, preliminary candidate list by May 22, withdrawal deadline by May 25, final candidate list by May 27, and voting in the third or fourth week of June.