

DUCSU polls: Student groups struggle to finalise panels

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Nomination window closes today



As Dhaka University prepares to hold the Ducsus election after a six-year hiatus, student organisations are still struggling to finalise their panels even as the deadline for collecting nominations draws to a close.

Today is the last date for collecting nomination papers, according to the Ducsus Election Commission.

However, most student groups remain locked in discussions over their panel members for contesting the 28 posts of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union.

Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student organisation, said they are planning to appeal for an extension of the deadline, as confusion lingers within the organisation, with no clear direction in place for its DU unit.

Many senior leaders from as far back as the 2008-09 session still want to contest, taking advantage of the amended Ducusu constitution that removed the age limit for candidates.

JCD sources said the issue was discussed in several meetings with BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman and senior JCD leaders, but no decision has yet been made.

Among the names under consideration for the top two positions are Md Abidul Islam Khan, joint general secretary of JCD DU unit (2015-16 session), and Shaikh Tanvir Baree Hamim, convener of Jashim Uddin Hall unit.

Nahiduzzaman Shipon, general secretary of JCD DU unit, said, "We are yet to finalise anything over the election panel, but leaders and activists have been advised to collect nomination forms for now if they are eligible."

Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Songshod, formed by a faction of student leaders from the anti-discrimination movement, has finalised its candidates for the top two posts but is still undecided on others, including the post of assistant general secretary.

Abdul Kader, convener of its DU unit, will contest for vice president while Central Convener Abu Baker Mojumder will run for general secretary.

Debates continue over the AGS post, with Zahid Ahsan, Tahmid Al Muddassir Chowdhury, and Hasib Al Islam under discussion.

"We wanted to bring someone from outside our organisation for the position. If that does not happen, someone among them will be finalised," Kader said.

The left-leaning Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote, an alliance of seven student organisations including Chhatra Union (Tamjid-Shimul), Chhatra Front (Marxist), Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, Gonotantrik Chhatra Council, Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Chhatra Federation, and Biplobi Chhatra Jubo Andolon, is also working on a panel.

Talks are ongoing about including three more leftist bodies: Chhatra Union (Mahir-Bahauddin), Chhatra Front (BASAD), and BCL (Jasad).

Though the panel is not yet finalised, names being considered for the top three positions include Meghmallar Bosu of Chhatra Union, Jabir Ahmed Jubel of Chhatra Moitree, and Muzammel Haque of Chhatra Front.

"Organisations under Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote are confirmed to make a coalition, but we are also in talks with other leftist groups regarding their inclusion," Jubel told The Daily Star.

An independent panel is in progress, led by Umama Fatema, former spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination. She is set to contest for vice president, with DU Journalists' Association President Mohiuddin Muzahid Mahi as her panel's general secretary candidate.

Nominations for other posts are yet to be confirmed.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir, which resumed open politics on campus last year after more than three decades, is also forming a panel.

According to sources, Shibir is considering including female and minority representatives in its panel. Abu Sadik Kayem, former DU unit president, is being discussed for the vice president post, while current president SM Farhad may run for general secretary.

Shibir panel members will collect nomination papers on the deadline day today, said Farhad.

According to Ducsu Election Commission, 125 nomination papers have been collected in the last six days, of which 19 are for vice president, 2 for general secretary, 5 for assistant general secretary, 44 for secretary positions, and 55 for member positions.