

Voting begins for Jucusu election after 33 years

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Photo: Palash Khan

Voting for the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucusu) and hall unions began across 21 residential halls -- 11 for men and 10 for women -- this morning, the first in 33 years.

The students started to cast their ballots at 9:00am amid tight security. Voting will continue till 5:00pm.



Student polling officials are seen meticulously checking and organizing ballots during the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucu) election at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall. Photo: Palash Khan

Dhaka District Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime), Arafat Islam, said that a large number of law enforcement personnel have been deployed to ensure a peaceful Jucu election. Around 2,000 police personnel are working both in plain clothes and uniforms.

Nearly 12,000 registered voters are expected to cast ballots for 40 positions each -- 25 in Jucu and 15 in their respective hall unions. A total of 177 candidates -- 132 male and 45 female -- are vying for posts in the central body, while 443 are running for 215 posts in the 21 hall unions.

Among the 11,919 registered voters, 6,102 are men and 5,817 are women.



Eager students queue patiently to cast their votes during the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucusu) election this morning. Photo: Palash Khan

An analysis shows almost 60 percent of hall posts are either uncontested or vacant. Of the 315 hall positions, 131 are uncontested and 68 remain vacant. In Begum Sufia Kamal Hall and Nawab Faizunnesa Hall, all candidates were elected unopposed, leaving no hall union polls there. In Sufia Kamal, 10 posts went uncontested while five are vacant, whereas in Faizunnesa, six posts went uncontested and nine remain vacant.

Among male dormitories, Kazi Nazrul Islam Hall has the highest number of voters with 994, followed by Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Hall (954) and Hall No-21 (752). Among female halls, Bir Pratik Taramon Bibi Hall tops the list with 983 voters, followed by Rokeya Hall (957) and Fazilatunnesa Hall (808).

This year's general secretary (GS) race has drawn eight candidates. Lone female contender Tanzila Hossain Boishakhi gained momentum after rival Syeda Ananna Fariya withdrew two days ago, calling for unity among those committed to gender equality, the spirit of the Liberation War, and the 2024 student uprising.

Other GS candidates are Majharul Islam of the Shibir-backed Shomonnito Shikkharthi Jote, Touhid Mohammad Siam of the Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad-backed Shikkharthi Oikkya Forum, Sharan Ahsan of Shomprotir Oikkya, and independent Shakil Ali.

For the vice president post, 10 candidates are in the fray, including Abdur Rashid Jitu, an independent and former Chhatra League activist who rose to prominence during last year's July uprising; Arifuzzaman of the Gonotantrik-backed panel; Sheikh Sadi Hasan of the JCD-backed panel; and Mahfuz Islam Megh, an independent theatre activist and former coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. Each played distinct roles in the uprising and now lead separate panels.

Other central positions — including assistant general secretaries, cultural, sports, IT, social service, and executive posts — also feature multiple contenders.

A total of 224 booths have been set up across the halls, with one returning officer in each hall. Sixty-seven polling agents and 67 assistant polling officers — all teachers — have been assigned to supervise the process. Voting has been taking place through ballot-marking under CCTV surveillance.

Authorities have taken extensive security measures to ensure a festive atmosphere. More than 1,500 law enforcers, including plainclothes officers, have been deployed. Seven platoons of BGB and five platoons of Ansar have been stationed, with additional security personnel posted at all 12 campus gates.

The Jucusu polls are being held after 33 years, the last one having taken place in 1992. Following last year's student-led July uprising, the revival of student union elections was among the key demands. Jahangirnagar becomes the second public university to hold the polls, after Dhaka University held its Ducusu election on September 9.