

# CU gears up for student union polls after 35yrs

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Chittagong University is abuzz with excitement as student organisations are preparing for the long-awaited Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) and hall union elections scheduled for October 12.

The campus has taken on a festive look as nomination form distribution started yesterday.

The disused student union building is being renovated as organisations negotiate alliances and campaign activities gain momentum.

Alongside several platforms, including July uprising leaders, a number of independents are also contesting.

Many among the electorate -- with 27,634 eligible voters -- say they want candidates to safeguard the rights of general students rather than serve partisan interests.

Journalism student Roxy said candidates must truly serve students' interests, adding, "I will vote for whoever proves most sincere."

The likely modes of participation this year include single-party panels, independent panels, coalition panels, and individuals.

Independent and coalition slates are attracting the most attention, as both unaffiliated students and organisations are in talks to field joint panels.

The CU unit of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad has already announced it will run independently under the panel name "Cucusu for Rapid Change".

Roman Rahman, the organisation's member secretary and a candidate for vice president (VP), said, "We are considering an independent panel, although we remain open to alliances if necessary. Our main goal is to protect students' rights..."

Islami Chhatra Andolan is expected to contest under "Shocheton Shikkharthi Parishad", while Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) has confirmed its intention to run by itself.

Several cultural and social groups are said to be in talks for joining forces to form an independent slate. Among the names under discussion are Mahfuzur Rahman for VP and Rashid Dinar for GS.

Chhatra Shibir is reportedly working on a coalition panel that may include female candidates, July uprising activists, religious minorities, and members of indigenous communities. However, their VP candidate has not yet been finalised.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal is also exploring the possibility of running together with five organisations from the Democratic Students' Alliance and Chhatra Majlis.

Sajjad Hossain Hridoy, organising secretary of JCD CU Unit, said the organisation favours a joint panel due to Shibir's dominance on campus.

"Talks are ongoing with left-leaning groups and BGCS. That is why we have yet to finalise our VP candidate," he added.

This year, candidates must pass dope tests or face disqualification. Campaigning will start after the final candidate list is announced and continue until a day before polling. It is allowed from 10:00am to 9:00pm. Rules ban class disruptions, interference with exams, and participation of outsiders.

Chief Election Commissioner Prof Moniruddin said no candidate or supporter will be allowed to distribute voter slips within 100 metres of polling centres on election day.

Violations may result in fines of up to Tk 20,000, cancellation of candidature, expulsion, or legal action, he added.

As per the schedule, nomination forms have to be submitted between September 15 and 17. These forms will be further scrutinised on September 18, followed by a publication of a preliminary candidate list on September 21.

The deadline for withdrawal is September 23 at 3:30pm and the final list will be announced on September 25. Polling will be held on October 12 from 9:00am to 4:00pm.