

RUCSU electioneering resumes as RU reopens after 14-day closure

Staff Correspondent . Rajshahi 📅 06 October, 2025, 01:54

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Electioneering in the elections to the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union, hall unions and Senate student representative posts resumed on Sunday as the university's academic and administrative activities restarted following a 14-day suspension.

The university reopened after two weeks of closure caused by student protests, a work abstention by teachers and employees over ward quota and holidays for Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of the Hindus in the country.

The campus saw renewed activities on Sunday as students, teachers and officials returned and joined their regular duties.

Despite intermittent rain, candidates from various panels began campaigning early in the day, distributing leaflets and engaging with students at key points, including the Transport Market, Tukitaki Chattar and academic buildings.

Nafiul Islam Jibon, general secretary candidate from Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed 'Oikkoboddho Notun Projonmo' panel, said that they had resumed their campaign with optimism.

'After a long suspension, the campus is returning to normal. We are reaching out to students and seeing enthusiasm for a participatory election,' he said.

Mehedi Maruf, vice-president candidate from the 'RUCSU for Radical Change' panel, said that although students had returned to campus, many remained unsure whether the election would take place as scheduled for October 16.

Fahim Reza, general secretary candidate from Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed 'Sammilita Shikkharthi Jote', said that the reinstatement of the ward quota for children of university staff and repeated deferrals of the RUCSU election had disrupted the electoral atmosphere and created confusion among students.

'We urge the administration and the election commission to dispel those doubts,' he said.

Samsad Jahan, a women's affairs candidate from the 'Sarbojonin Chhatra Sangsad' panel, said that the candidates were trying to revive the election spirit.

'We want this election to be inclusive and reflective of all student voices,' she said.

Meanwhile, the RUCSU election commission revised the electioneering schedule for candidates.

According to the new schedule, candidates will be able to carry out their campaigning until midnight on October 14.

Earlier on September 18, the university authorities reinstated the ward quota, granting admission privileges to children of teachers, officers and employees under the 'institutional facilities' category. The move sparked immediate student protests.

On September 20, students opposing the reinstatement scuffled with the teachers and staff, leaving several people injured.

Amid protests, the authorities suspended admissions under the ward quota on September 21 and the syndicate later formed two probe committees to investigate the incident.

That night, the Jatiyatabadi Shikkhak Forum announced an indefinite shutdown, demanding reinstatement of the ward quota and exemplary punishment for those allegedly involved in the assault of teachers and officials.

On September 21, officials and employees joined the strike with teachers, paralysing all activities and forcing the RUCSU election commission to defer the long-awaited elections to the RUCSU, hall unions, and Senate student representative to October 16 from September 25.

On January 2, the university, in the face of student protests, abolished the ward quota.

In August, a section of teachers, officers and employees launched a movement demanding reinstatement of the facility, leading the authorities to restore it on September 18.