

RUCSU ELECTION: Campus wears festive look as polls day nears

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With only two days left before the long-awaited Rajshahi University student union elections, the campus wore a festive look on Monday as candidates and their supporters made a final push to woo voters.

Election candidates carried out door-to-door campaigns throughout the day, trying to reach as many voters as possible before the official campaign period ends at midnight past today with voting to be held on October 16.

Unlike the previous days, when campaigners moved in large groups, most candidates were seen meeting voters individually or in pairs to cover more ground and personally convey their messages ahead of the campaign deadline.

Academic buildings, dormitories, cafeterias and campus hangouts remained abuzz as candidates exchanged greetings, distributed leaflets, and sought votes from fellow students.

According to the Rajshahi University Central Student Union election code of conduct, candidates can campaign daily from 10:00am to 10:00pm until 24 hours before polling.

The campaign has also gone digital this year, with candidates and panels releasing short promotional videos on social media platforms to attract voters, particularly among first-year students.

Candidates from Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed Sammilita Shikharthi Oikyo panel, the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed Oikyoboddho Notun Projonmo panel, left-leaning RUCSU for Radical Change panel and other panels, and several independents, campaigned across the campus on the day.

Students also expressed enthusiasm about witnessing the historic election after 35 years.

Samia Siddiqui Rimi, a student of mass communication and journalism, 'We are lucky to experience this historic election on our campus.'

Sammilita Shikharthi Oikyo panel general secretary candidate Fahim Reza said, 'For many, this will be their first experience of voting.'

Sheikh Nur Uddin Abir, vice-president candidate from the Oikyoboddho Notun Projonmo panel, said, 'Students appreciate our inclusive platform, especially the first-year students, who can vote this time for our earlier movement to include them in the voter list.'

Meanwhile, the university administration has tightened campus security, deploying about 30 police officers at strategic points and setting up checkpoints at the main gates.

University officials said that around 2,000 police personnel in uniform and plainclothes would be deployed on election day, while other law enforcement agencies will also assist, if required.

A total of 247 candidates will contest for the 23 RUCSU posts, Another 597 candidates are contesting in 17 residential hall union elections, while 58 candidates are vying for five senate representative positions.

Of the 28,901 registered voters, 17,596 are male, and 11,305 are female.