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JU gears up for first Jucsu polls in 33yrs

SAKIB AHMED

As the long-anticipated Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) elections gets closer, student organisations have stepped up preparations with panel discussions, nomination collection, and possible alliances.

The election is scheduled for September 11. The Election Commission began distributing nomination forms for Jucsu and hall elections on August 18. According to the schedule, forms can be collected until 2:00pm on August 21 and must be submitted by 4:00pm the same day.

So far, 328 students have collected nomination forms -- 87 for Jucsu and 241 for hall unions, said Election Commission Member Secretary Prof AKM Rashidul Alam.

A total of 25 posts will be contested in the Jucsu election, including six reserved seats for women. The total number of voters is 11,919.

Although the official campaign will begin on August 29, student bodies are already preparing and discussing panels.

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Md Masum Rana, a visually impaired student at Dhaka University, is seen at the Senate Building yesterday after collecting a nomination form for contesting in the Ducusu election scheduled for September 9.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DUCSU ELECTION JCD yet to finalise panel

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

With just hours left to submit nomination papers, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal has yet to announce its panel for the Ducusu election, due to internal issues.

According to JCD insiders, senior leaders have held multiple meetings to resolve the issues, as it faces stiff competition from the newly formed Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS), Islami Chhatra Shibir, and several independent panels.

Today is the last day for submitting nominations. Yesterday was the last day for collecting nominations for the Dhaka University Central Student Council (Ducusu) polls.

On Monday night, the university authorities extended the deadline by a day, sparking criticism.

This correspondent spoke to at least seven 10 central and DU unit JCD leaders to understand the reasons behind the delay, but none agreed to go on record.

JCD sources say the delay might have been caused by debates over whether to reward senior leaders or field younger candidates who can connect better with current students.

According to the amended Ducusu constitution, the age limit for candidates has not been fixed. Yet most candidates being considered for top positions are from the 2015-16 session onwards.

JCD insiders said many leaders from the 2009-10 session and earlier, who remained loyal during the

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PREVENTING PROJECT DELAYS Govt to make guideline for next govt

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government by December will prepare a guideline for the next government to eliminate delays and irregularities in project implementation.

At a high-profile meeting at the Secretariat yesterday, all secretaries were instructed to submit recommendations to the planning ministry on the types of irregularities and problems faced in project planning, formulation and implementation, along with proposals for resolving them.

The meeting, co-chaired by Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud and Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, was held at the Cabinet Division and attended by almost all advisers, the chief adviser's special assistants, and secretaries. The discussion ran from 10:00am to around 2:00pm.

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, Wahiduddin told the Daily Star last night that the government wants to leave behind a set of "practical, project-focused guidelines" based on experience for the next administration. "The planning ministry will coordinate this process by gathering inputs from all ministries and divisions," he added.

The meeting also decided to investigate delays and irregularities in several foreign-funded projects.

Where corruption or malpractice is identified, the findings will be shared with the respective development partners, sources said.

Secretaries were asked to collect information on projects with unusually high costs or those launched without proper feasibility studies.

"If irregularities are found in large-scale projects, and development partners had any responsibility in those, the matters will be placed before them," Wahiduddin said. "The assistance provided by development partners is ultimately

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AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday said he hoped Russia's Vladimir Putin would move forward on ending the war in Ukraine, but conceded that the Kremlin leader may not want to make a deal at all, adding this would create a "rough situation" for Putin.

In an interview with the Fox News "Fox & Friends" programme, Trump said he expected that Putin's course of action would become clear in the next couple of weeks. Trump also again ruled out American boots on the ground in Ukraine and gave no specifics about the security guarantees he has previously said Washington could offer Kyiv under any post-war settlement.

"I don't think it's going to be a problem (reaching a peace deal), to be honest with you. I think Putin is tired of it. I think they're all tired of it, but you never know," Trump said.

"We're going to find out about President Putin in the next couple of weeks ... It's possible that he doesn't want to make a deal," said Trump, who has previously threatened more sanctions on Russia and nations that buy its oil if Putin does not make peace.

Ukraine and its European allies have been buoyed by Trump's promise of security guarantees to help end the war during an extraordinary summit on Monday, but face many unanswered questions, including how willing Russia will be to play ball.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was flanked by the leaders of allies, including Germany, France and Britain, at the summit, and his warm rapport with Trump contrasted sharply with their disastrous Oval Office meeting in February.

But beyond the optics, the path to peace remains deeply uncertain, and Zelensky may be forced to make painful compromises to

- Russia says peace deal must ensure its 'security'
- European leaders mull new sanctions on Putin
- Trump says Putin agrees to meet Zelensky

The guarantees "would be provided by the various European Countries, with a coordination with the United States of America", he said.

The Financial Times said Ukraine had undertaken to buy \$100 billion of US weapons financed by Europe in return for US guarantees for its security.

Zelensky later spoke to reporters about a \$90-billion package, and said Ukraine and its allies would formalise the terms of the security guarantees within 10 days.

Meanwhile, the British government yesterday said European leaders were weighing additional sanctions to ramp up pressure on Putin as part of a broader push to put an end to the war in Ukraine.

The government said the so-called Coalition of the Willing, which met virtually yesterday, had agreed that their planning teams would meet with US counterparts in the coming days to advance plans for security guarantees for Ukraine.

On the other hand, Russia yesterday said that any deal on Ukraine should ensure its own security and that of Russians in Ukraine.

The development came a day after Trump said the Russian leader had agreed to meet Zelensky during a phone call.

But Russia warned that any solution of the war in Ukraine must respect "Russia's security interests", with its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov adding that any meeting between the leaders "must be prepared very thoroughly".

Some parties creating doubts among people about polls
Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka



BNP acting chair Tarique Rahman said yesterday that statements from various political parties have led citizens to have doubts about the election.

"I would like to draw the attention of all leaders of pro-democracy political parties. If the distance grows between democratic forces, it will open the door for the defeated and fugitive fascist groups to return. I sincerely urge all democracy-loving people across the country to stay alert and cautious," he said while virtually addressing a discussion.

Jatiyatabadi Sweekhasebok Dal arranged the programme at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, marking its 45th founding anniversary.

The BNP leader said that holding elections is the only way to resist fascism and restore people's political rights.

"Through the practice of electing public representatives by direct vote, people gain strength in the state and politics. If the people are not strong, the state and the government

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Mediators await Israeli response to new truce offer

At least 31 more killed in Gaza

AFP, Jerusalem

Mediators were awaiting an Israeli response yesterday to a fresh Gaza ceasefire plan, a day after Hamas accepted the proposal and signalled its readiness for a new round of talks aimed at ending nearly two years of war.

Mediator Qatar expressed guarded optimism for the new proposal, noting it was "almost identical" to an earlier version agreed to by Israel.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency reported that 31 people were killed yesterday by Israeli strikes and fire across the territory.

Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP the situation was "very dangerous and unbearable" in the Zeitoun and Sabra neighbourhoods of Gaza City, where he said "artillery shelling continues intermittently".

The two foes have held on-and-off indirect negotiations throughout the war, resulting in two short truces and the releases of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, but they have ultimately failed to broker a lasting ceasefire.

Qatar and Egypt, backed by the United States, have mediated the frequent rounds of shuttle diplomacy.

Egypt said Monday that it and Qatar had sent the new proposal to Israel, adding "the ball is now in its court".

Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari yesterday said that Hamas had given a "very positive response, and it truly was almost identical to what the Israeli side had previously agreed to".

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The Chilmari-Haripur Teesta bridge opens today, fulfilling a decades-long dream of the people of Kurigram's Chilmari and Gaibandha's Sundarganj. The 1,490-metre bridge is the largest among the three bridges over the river and it would reduce distance between Dhaka and Chilmari significantly.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Case filed over stone looting in Jaflong

Replacement for Companiganj UNO changed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A case has been filed over the recent large-scale looting of stones from Jaflong, an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

Monayem Hossain, an officer of the Purbo Jaflong Union Land Office, lodged the case with Gowainghat Police Station on Monday night, accusing 100 to 150 unidentified individuals, said Tofayel Ahmed, officer-in-charge of the station.

According to the case statement, around 40,000 cubic feet of stones were illegally removed from Jaflong during heavy rainfall between 1:00am and 4:00am from August 7 to 9.

No arrests have so far been made, the OC said.

This development comes just days after widespread reports of stone plundering at Sada Pathor in Companiganj upazila, another major tourist attraction in Sylhet.

On Friday, the Bureau of Mineral

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