

BNP reformists for curbing party chief's power

15-pt proposal seeks no role of Khaleda

SHAKHAWAT LITON and
RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The pro-reform BNP leaders yesterday unveiled a 15-point reform proposal including ones designed to stop Khaleda Zia from continuing in the post of chairperson.

Addressing a press conference at his Gulshan residence,

Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said absolute power of the party chief must be curbed for the BNP to graduate to a democratic organisation. And for that to happen, the BNP constitution will have to be amended.

According to the proposals, from now on, the chairperson will be elected for three years instead of the

existing two years.

No one will be allowed to hold the apex post for more than two terms. This particular provision will be applicable also to those who have already been party chief for two terms or more than six years.

Once the proposal is incorporated in the party constitution, Khaleda Zia will have to stand down

as the chairperson since she has been holding the post for 23 years on the trot.

Also a former prime minister, she however welcomed the plans yesterday evening and said the national council will take decision after examining those.

Bhuiyan avoided a question

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Probe body to find people responsible for BNP's debacle

Says Bhuiyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said an enquiry committee would be formed to identify those people who are responsible for the current debacle of the party.

He also hoped that the party would be forever freed from efforts to establish dynasty, corruption, nomination trade and autocracy through the implementation of the reforms proposal and urged those who believe in Ziaur Rahman's ideology to work together in favour of the reforms proposal.

"An enquiry committee has to be formed for taking actions against those people who are responsible for the current disaster in the party," he said yesterday at a press briefing.

Asked when the enquiry committee would be formed, Bhuiyan

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CRACKDOWN ON INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION

Rajuk comes under anti-graft hatchet

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The military backed caretaker government recently kicked-off the first ever crackdown against institutionalised corruption in government agencies as part of its ongoing massive anti-corruption drive being carried out countrywide since February against high profile corruption suspects.

Two decades old Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) is the first target of the drive against institutionalised corruption introduced as the second phase of the ongoing anti-graft campaign in an effort to bring necessary reforms to the government agency for making it a service oriented vibrant organisation.

Other government organisations, known as corrupted, will also be brought under the purge, but the

Task Forces against Egregious Crimes and Corruption are giving priority to training their guns first on service oriented government agencies.

A government official said the public works department and organisations under the power sector are the next to undergo 'thorough' investigations, and the drive will advance gradually to get all the known corrupt government organisations reformed. The task force investigators already started digging into the corruption allegations against the public works department.

Twenty five officials under the four task forces assigned to investigate institutionalised corruption in Rajuk, have been working since the beginning of this month to find out the roots and nexus of graft in Rajuk. The task force staff are also tasked

with the job of identifying persons in Rajuk offices who are involved in corruption.

"Rajuk is a through and through corrupt institution," observed a task force officer while talking to The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

"It is quite astonishing that starting from a typist of Rajuk to the highest official of the agency, almost everybody owns real estate in the capital," the task force official quipped.

KAM Harun, chairman of Rajuk, over the phone on Sunday night told The Daily Star, "The task forces are observing the activities of Rajuk and also checking if there had been any corruption or irregularities earlier."

Admitting that there had been corruption in Rajuk, the chairman added, "The task forces are looking

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Council has final say

Reacts Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday welcomed any reform proposals from her party men and the people but said only the party council will take the final decision in this regard.

"I welcome all reform proposals from the party leaders, workers and people from all strata of life as well as Bangladeshis living abroad," she said in a statement issued just an hour after BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan announced intra-party reform proposals.

Goyeswar Chandra Ray, joint

secretary general of the party, at a press briefing at his business office at Fakirapool, read out and distributed copies of the statement on behalf of the party chairperson. She sent the statement to him through a messenger, Goyeswar said.

"Proposals for bringing changes in the party constitution should be placed before party councillors, and they will take the final decision according to the party constitution," Khaleda said in her statement.

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PHOTO: STAR

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan reveals the party's reform proposals at a press briefing at his Gulshan residence yesterday.

15-pt proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-form BNP leaders led by party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday announced their 15-point reform proposal for the party. Following is the full text of the proposal:

1. The changes that are to be brought in the existing party structure:

a. There are provisions for village councils and village executive committees in Article 1 of Section 6 (a). To be added here: Formation of 31-member ward executive committee.

b. Sub-section a (10) of Article 6 empowers the chairman to nominate 10 per cent of members in all eight stages of leadership, from thana executive committee to the National Standing Committee. This section will be abolished.

c. Section 10 (c) of Article 6 authorises the chairman to

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2 more forest bosses held, 8 suspended

STAR REPORT

The joint forces arrested two more top level forest officials yesterday on charges of graft in Chittagong and Moulvibazar as crackdown on corrupt forest department high-ups continues.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday suspended eight top level forest officials after their names had appeared on the list of corrupt government officials prepared by the joint forces based on information divulged by detained Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Osman Gani.

Four of the suspended officials had been arrested on Sunday. They are Conservator of Forests (CF) of Central Circle Ali Kabir Haider, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Shamsul Azam, CF of Khulna Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, and DFO of Rangamati Asit Ranjan Pal.

The four others are Salahuddin Ahmed, CF of Barisal Circle, Kartik Chandra Sarkar, DFO of Social Forestry Division, Abdul Latif Mian, DFO of Dhaka, and Abu Hanif Patwary, DFO of Tangail.

The forest officials detained yesterday are DFO Jafrul Hasan of Chittagong, and DFO Lashkar

Maksudur Rahman of Sylhet.

On the same day the forces also searched the office of Dr Tapan Kumar Dey, a DFO also the chief of Wildlife Management And Nature Conservation Department at Sholoshahar of Chittagong.

During the raid the joint-forces seized over Tk 12.96 lakh kept in a cupboard and a bag in the chamber of Abul Al Amin Mohammad Malekuzzaman, a deputy ranger of the Sadar Range in Chittagong. The chamber is located in the same office. The raid was going on till 5:45pm.

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Dhaka-Delhi foreign secy level talks begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign secretary-level talks between Bangladesh and India started yesterday with both sides agreeing to revive joint mechanisms on border security and water-sharing, with India also agreeing to consider greater access of Bangladeshi goods to its market.

Officials from both sides were tight-lipped about the agenda, but Acting Foreign Secretary Tuhid Hossain told reporters yesterday that they struck a "positive" note and covered all issues.

India agreed to form a committee to look into giving duty-free access to Bangladeshi goods, in addition to the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent announcement of giving duty-free access to some Bangladeshi goods, foreign ministry sources said.

The discussions, led by Tuhid and Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon at the state guesthouse Padma, also included the removal of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers between the two countries.

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ACC to quiz Tarique, wife, mother-in-law on his graft charges

HBM Iqbal, wife sued; the anti-graft body moves to get info from govt offices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) will interrogate BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman at the Dhaka Central Jail gate as the commission obtained a court order yesterday to do so.

The ACC will also interrogate Tarique's wife Zubaida Khan Rahman and mother-in-law Iqbal Mand Banu at the ACC headquarters in Shegunbagicha in the capital at 10:00am today.

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday filed a corruption case against former Awami League lawmaker Dr HBM Iqbal and his wife in connection with amassing huge wealth through corruption and concealing assets in wealth statements submitted to the ACC in February.

The anti-graft watchdog is planning to amend the Anti-corruption Commission Act with a provision to allow government agencies provide

information to the commission on its demand.

The ACC finalised the recommendations regarding this yesterday and it would soon be submitted to the cabinet division for the government's approval.

The ACC plans to amend the Anti-corruption Commission Act, as a number of government agencies failed to provide information to the ACC because their own rules did not permit them to do so.

Explaining the rationale for the amendment, ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday told journalists, "Income tax related information is a confidential matter now. The ACC was not included among the organisations which could seek income tax related information and we made the recommendation so that the ACC can have the information."

If the government approves this,

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Verdict in Manju's liquor case today

Ex-MP Nizam on 30-day detention

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement of a criminal case against former communications minister and Jatiya Party (Manju) leader Anwar Hossain Manju for possessing 21 bottles of contraband liquor at his Dhanmondi residence will be delivered today in his absence.

Proceedings of graft cases against detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda, his wife Sigma Huda and ex-BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi were adjourned.

Former BNP lawmaker Sarwar Jamal Nizam, arrested by the joint forces early Friday, was handed down a 30-day detention yesterday, reported our Chittagong correspondent.

MANJU CASE Judge Syed Zahed Mansur of the Metropolitan Special Tribunal-9 will give the verdict in Manju's absence at 11.30am, court sources said.

The joint forces on March 8

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Ex-BNP MP Anwar sued for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An extortion case was filed against former BNP lawmaker of Pabna-3 constituency KM Anwarul Islam, his wife Siddika Anwar and the former lawmaker's 'close associate' Rejaul Karim in Cognizance Court-2 of the district yesterday.

This is the second extortion case against the former lawmaker in a week.

Complainant of yesterday's case, treasurer of Bhangura upazila BNP Wares Ali, said the former MP and his wife demanded Tk 5 lakh when he sought permission to arrange a circus on the premises of Bhangura High School last year.

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10,000 Rohingyas to be shifted from Naaf riverbank

PORIMOL PALMA

The government has finally decided to move some 10,000 illegal Rohingyas living on the bank of Naaf river in Cox's Bazar to some safer place on humanitarian grounds.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting at the home ministry on May 30 where officials from foreign ministry, food and disaster management ministry, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), intelligence agencies and Bangladesh

Rifles (BDR) were present, a ministry official concerned said.

The home ministry has already sent a letter to the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and district administration in Cox's Bazar to find out a safe and high ground for the illegal Rohingyas to live. They have been living on the riverbank since 2004.

The Cox's Bazar district administration is looking for such a place for their shelter at Domdomia

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Rejoinder, our reply

Khagrachhari Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Shah-e-Alam yesterday protested a news item published in The Daily Star on June 5 under the headline "Insatiable greed wipes out a reserve forest."

Neither Shah-e-Alam nor the Panchhari range official was involved in taking bribes to pave the way for loggers to plunder the forest, the forest official said in a rejoinder.

He denied taking Tk 10 to 50 thousand in bribe for issuing permits for orchards.

He also brushed aside the allegation of taking Tk 50-70 thousand in bribes for dismissing cases.

The rejoinder also said the amount of expenditure, mentioned in The Daily Star report, for

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Murali massacres Tigers

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

Bangladesh succumbed to the sight of fearsome Mutliah Muralidaran, as the unorthodox off-spinner ran rings around their frail batting line up on the opening day of the first Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) ground yesterday.

The visitors crashed to 89, their third lowest Test score as Sri Lanka

tightened their grip on the visitors on the first day.

The Tiger's miserable experience in the island continued when they were dismissed below the three-figure-mark for the third time against the Lankans, after Mahela Jayawardene has decided to invite his opponents to bat on a flat track.

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PHOTO: STAR

Stagnant water turns pink at Hazaribagh in the capital as waste from nearby tanneries pollutes the area.