

## Party reforms

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lobbying their councillors. "But we are in contact with them," he said.

BNP sources said leaders close to Khaleda have also been keeping contact with grassroots level leaders in an effort to be prepared to tackle any embarrassing situation that might raise its head in the upcoming party council.

"The councillors will not accept any proposal aimed at only excluding Khaleda Zia from the party," said a BNP leader close to the current party chairperson.

All reformists on the other hand said several thousand of their leaders and activists including around 2,800 councillors from across the country will have to gather at the council venue before the council starts, and it is impossible for them to come to the capital in such a large number under the state of emergency.

Moreover, the AL reformists said holding of meetings and political discussions in party forums including in the party's central working committee has to be allowed for holding a council.

AL President Member Motia Chowdhury posed a question regarding how councils of political parties could be held with a ban still imposed on political activities. She told reporters yesterday that the councillors are not 'puppets' that they can be forced to follow the diktats of someone.

"When there is no right to express opinions, then how a council could be held?" asked Motia adding that the party's central working committee has to decide to hold a council before it could be held. "Even, Party President Sheikh Hasina cannot unilaterally decide to hold a council," she added.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan continued his views exchange meetings with former BNP lawmakers and its district level leaders to secure support for his proposal for bringing changes to the party constitution.

They are also planning to bring a few changes to the proposal itself, which might include some new provisions regarding making someone the party secretary general.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan on June 25 announced the current reform proposal where a number of new provisions were proposed regarding who could become the party chairperson and who could not, but it did not say anything new about the post of the party secretary general, giving rise to criticisms.

"More proposals will come but the party council will take the final decision, before which indoor politics should be allowed," MK Anwar told reporters after a meeting with Bhuiyan in the latter's Gulshan residence.

BNP leaders who met Bhuiyan and expressed their desire to get on the reform bandwagon included

former ministers and lawmakers Maj Gen (retd) Mahmudul Hasan, Ehsanul Haque Milon, Abdul Hossain Khan, Syed Makbul Hossain, Mujibur Rahman Manju, Shah Abu Zafar, SA Sultan Titu, Eng Shahiduzzaman, Anwarul Azim, Nazir Hossain, and party leaders ZA Khan, Brig Gen (retd) Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, Lokman Hossain, Kamrul Monir, and Mofazzal Hossain.

BNP reformists said the secretary general will continue his discussions with those party leaders who will play vital roles in the reform process as councillors at the council which might be held amid the state of emergency if the government allows it.

According to the BNP reformists they will seek permission from the government to hold the council after the conclusion of Mannan Bhuiyan's views exchange meetings within a couple of days.

## Oriental Bank

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In June last year, the central bank dissolved the board of directors of Oriental Bank and appointed an administrator from the central bank.

Later the BB investigated into the bank's scam and found that its majority shareholders Obaidul Karim, former managing director Chowdhury Koyes Sami and a number of officials were involved in misappropriating about Tk 595 crore.

Meanwhile, the central bank yesterday asked all commercial banks to pay all import related accepted bills by next seven days following complaints from different sections that the banks are not paying huge amount of bills for a long road.

AL President Member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty were present at the meeting.

**KHALEDA'S MEETING**  
A BNP statement said Khaleda told the Indian foreign secretary that Bangladesh always gives preferences to its friendly relationship with India.

Focusing on different initiatives taken by her government with India, she expressed her hope that the foreign secretary level meeting between the two countries will continue in future and problems will be solved through meetings and bilateral relationship will be boosted up.

At the meeting Menon conveyed to Khaleda the greetings of Indian premier Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi. Thanking Manmohan and Sonia, Khaleda also urged Menon to convey her greetings to them.

Adviser to the BNP chairperson Riaz Rahman, the foreign ministry director general and the Indian high commissioner were present at the meeting.

President of Natore district Jatiya Chhatra Samaj Asaduzzaman Shah filed the case with Naldanga Police Station (PS) on February 25 accusing 105 people.

Officer-in-Charge of Naldanga PS Arman Hossain submitted two separate charge sheets-- one for arson and looting and another under explosives act-- accusing total 94 persons on May 3.

According to the charge sheets, the accused launched a series of attacks at Ramsa Kazipur (Dulu's home village), Shapara and Amtali Bazar on Dulu's directives to retaliate.

The kidnappers left a chit in which they demanded Tk 40 lakh in ransom for releasing the Danida staff. But they did not contact with either the members of the joint forces or the local administration.

In reply to a question, he said, "Reform in political parties is their internal matter, we have nothing to say about that."

He went on, "The commission is helping political parties to become democratic through introduction of political party registration act with some regulations providing that the parties have to ensure democracy within them if they want to get registered with it (EC)."

The election commissioner also talked about Sirupur pilot project for gathering field level experience on simultaneously preparing voter list with photographs and national identity cards.

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## Electoral reforms

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Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at a meeting with the law adviser on April 4 asked the government to lift the ban on indoor politics, allowing the EC to hold dialogue with political parties. The EC cannot yet hold talks with them since the government has not responded to the EC's request.

The CEC on several occasions said it is not possible for political parties to send their representatives to express their views on electoral reforms as they will not be allowed to hold party meetings to discuss the proposed reforms proposals.

In such a situation, the election commissioner yesterday came up with his views on discussions with political parties to finalise the EC's reform proposals.

"Many have contacted us, and we asked them to come. If it is so, we will schedule who should come when to sit with us," Sakhawat said.

"We are open (to discussion)... We don't have any objection if they (representatives) come to us with authorisation (from their parties). We aren't going to sit with whosoever comes," he said.

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of draft proposals for electoral reforms, which includes those to ensure democratic practices and financial transparency within the political parties. The CEC repeatedly said the EC will finalise the draft proposals in consultation with major political parties.

Sakhawat noted that the EC's proposals are solely election-related. "Those contain nothing about structural reforms in any political parties since that is not our concern."

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## Birdem doctors

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Asking the striking doctors to join work, the hospital authorities yesterday issued another notice saying that their lawful demands will be considered by the national council meeting of Bangladesh Diabetic Association on June 30.

But the striking doctors announced that they will continue striking till their demands are met, because the authorities had given such assurances several times before but did not keep their word.

"The authorities did not put out any concrete proposal rather they said the lawful demands will be considered. So we can't rely on their assurance," said a striking doctor seeking anonymity, who also apprehended that the strike might continue until Secretary General of the National Council of Bangladesh Diabetic Association Prof AK Azad Khan returns home from abroad on June 30.

The striking doctors also said the notice informing them that no contractual appointment will be renewed might be a product of a conspiracy for hiring 50 students of Ibrahim Medical College, who are about to graduate in two months.

While the medical college was being established it was told that a hospital would be established there too and with that promise the authorities got the permission to

establish the medical college. But no hospital was established with the college while the authorities are now contract bound to give the students an opportunity for internship with a hospital, the striking doctors said.

"The Birdem authorities are more eager to take these interns as they would be able to pay the interns lesser than what they have to pay experienced doctors," said a striking physician.

While contacted, a member of the Board of Management of Birdem, Major Gen (retd) Prof AR Khan, said the issue of interns is nothing but a rumour.

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