

NCP-backed student group eyes reforms after DU, JU debacles

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Following its heavy defeats in Ducusu and Jucusu polls, Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS), the student group backed by the National Citizen Party, is preparing for a major organisational overhaul to rebuild and regain strength.

Senior leaders of both organisations said the reforms may include a leadership shake-up, reduction in organisational posts, and even a possible name change, as the NCP seeks to clarify its affiliation with BGCS.

Launched on February 26 as an independent student body with a section of former leaders from Students Against Discrimination, the platform that spearheaded the July uprising, BGCS has remained active on several campuses.

But its poor performance in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) and Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucusu) elections has prompted top leaders to rethink its structure.

A senior NCP leader, requesting anonymity, said the party failed to clearly establish its ideological link with BGCS.

"The student wing has fallen behind because we could not assert our affiliation fully, unlike Jamaat and BNP. Now we want to clarify this relationship by defining the concept of dependency, which is why reforms are under discussion," he told The Daily Star.

Abu Baker Mojumder, central convener of BGCS, confirmed that discussions are underway on renaming and restructuring in consultation with NCP. A general meeting on the matter is expected by Monday, he told this newspaper.

According to sources, the NCP reviewed the Ducsu debacle at an executive council meeting, where leaders admitted BGCS had yet to establish itself as a strong organisation. They cited internal divisions and the absence of hall-level committees as major reasons for the defeat.

Mojumder acknowledged that stronger support from the NCP might have changed the outcome. Still, he noted, BGCS-backed candidates managed to win the vice-president post in two halls and the general secretary post in four halls at Ducsu.

However, in the central Ducsu election on September 9, BGCS failed to secure any of the 28 posts, while in Jucusu its candidates won only two out of 25. BGCS's Ducsu VP candidate Abdul Kader got 1,103 votes and GS candidate Mojumder received 2,131, both finishing fifth.

The polls also laid bare divisions within BGCS, with five leaders separately contesting for the assistant general secretary post. Among them, Ashrefa Khatun secured 900 votes, while others drew between 300 and 3,000. After the defeat, leader Hasibul Islam, who ran for AGS, resigned from the organisation.

NCP insiders said BGCS's failure to attract non-residential students' votes and the lack of visible party backing undermined the student body.

"In Ducsu, Jamaat worked for Shibir internally while BNP worked for Chhatra Dal, but we could not do the same for Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad, nor openly declare it as our official student wing," said a central NCP leader.

Some fear the crushing defeat could impact NCP's national politics. But the party's Member Secretary Akhter Hossen dismissed such concerns.

"As a new organisation, BGCS has not yet built an organisational base, which was reflected in the Ducsu results. But the Ducsu election is not the final destination. With stronger ideological and organisational foundations, they will do better in the future," he told this newspaper.