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Probe committee empowered to go beyond Siddique's allegations

Star Report

Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena yesterday said the inquiry committee has been empowered to go beyond the allegations made by Kader Siddique.

"Mr. Siddique has made specific allegations about 19 polling centres and against some of the officials. But the probe body has been given the power to investigate incidents at any other centre, apart from the 19, and examine conducts of any officials concerned if deemed necessary," Abu Hena told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether he feels the entire administration failed to behave during the by-elections, the CEC said: "I won't say the entire administration failed to behave. But I have an impression, following reports from media and those from professional poll observers, that some officials in some places failed to prove that they were equal to the task given to them."

The CEC said some more officials might be penalised, if it was found that they were not neutral in conducting the polls. "Besides, polls in all the controversial 19 centres would be cancelled. But it would all depend on the probe body reports."

Asked whether he plans to

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Siddique meets Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Kader Siddique, who was "defeated" in Monday's Tangail by-election, had an exclusive talk with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night at her 29 Minto Road office in the city.

During the meeting that lasted about 15 minutes, Siddique apprised Khaleda Zia of the by-election and how the government had rigged the polls and manipulated the administration.

Talking to newsmen, Kader Siddique said that he met the Leader of the Opposition before the election and met her again to inform her of the incidents that had taken place during the polls.

"I contested the by-polls to see with my own eyes 'the Awami style of vote stealing, rigging and other crimes' that had taken place in the by-polls in my constituency," he added.

Replying to a question, he said the question to join BNP did not arise. Asked whether he will meet the Prime Minister, he said that he would not meet her as long as she "remains the Prime Minister".

There may be meetings with Sheikh Hasina in future, but on the streets", he added.

Ins de Today

Article

Government's offer of political dialogue

Holding an Olive Branch or Attempt to Foil Opposition Movement?

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Prayer Timings

November 18		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-20	5-25
Esha	7-15	7-45

The city witnessed worst traffic jam in many areas yesterday. The photo was taken from near the Ramma

— Star photo

Tangail byelection**Results won't be gazetted till probe body report**

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission yesterday formed a four-member inquiry committee to probe the alleged irregularities in the controversial parliamentary by-election in Tangail-8 constituency on Monday.

Besides, the EC has decided to wait for the probe body findings before gazetting results of the controversial by-elections.

It also has temporarily suspended four magistrates and four presiding officers who were on election duties at certain centres in the constituency during Monday's by-election.

The three-member EC headed by Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu

Hena took the decisions after receiving written complaints from Abdul Kader Siddique, Bir Uttam who contested the by-polls as an independent candidate. Siddique faxed the complaints to the EC Secretariat Tuesday evening and then met the CEC yesterday morning.

Headed by an Additional Judge, the four-man enquiry committee also comprises a Sub-judge and an Assistant Judge of Tangail and an EC official.

The committee would submit its report in 10 days from the day it starts the job.

We have already sought permission of the Supreme Court for allowing the judges to

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work for the EC. The probe body will start its job as soon as we get the SC approval," said Additional Secretary of the EC Secretariat Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury.

The magistrates and officials who have been suspended from their respective jobs were on election duties at Kaliapara Araihazar Madrasah centre, Baniachit Government Primary School centre, Barachaona Government Primary School centre and Boali Government Primary School centres. Of the four, polling at the first three centres were suspended by

Election Commission. The committee would submit its report in 10 days from the day it starts the job.

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