

DCC ELECTION
Khaleda demands
Tk 5 crore for party backing
Claims mayor aspirant Irad Siddiky

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Irad Ahmed Siddiky, a Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) mayor aspirant, yesterday alleged that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia demanded Tk 5 crore from him in exchange for party backing in the upcoming mayoral election. During a press briefing at his Gulshan home, Irad Ahmed, in presence of his father BNP standing committee member Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky, said, "I met the BNP chairperson and she wanted to know if I had enough money. I told her that honest and competent candidates are not supposed to have enough money. She said 'I would be very frank' and then asked for Tk 5 crore. I told her that I will not give her the money from my bank account since I am neither Mosaddak Ali Fahu nor Mirza Abbas."

Refuting this allegation, BNP Chairperson's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Soheli yesterday told The Daily Star, "This is absolutely baseless, false and narrow-minded propaganda against Khaleda Zia."

"He [Irad] is not of BNP and he has no right to seek party nomination. He is spreading the propaganda using the privilege of being the son of a BNP leader. This is why the media should not encourage such defamatory statements made against a former prime minister," Maruf said.

Irad during the press briefing also said, "I am ready to accept the BNP ticket if it decides to give it to me but the BNP chief should know that I will not be servile to any dynasty."

He said, "They [BNP] will prove themselves to be a party with vested interest if they do not nominate me... it will prove that they are not interested in the welfare of Dhaka city, rather interested in grabbing power."

Coming down heavily on former DCC mayors Mohammad Hanif and Mirza Abbas and incumbent Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Irad said all of them have failed.

"How does a responsible political party nominate people like Mirza Abbas, Sadeque Hossain Khoka or Hannan Shah who has a corruption record?"

"If BNP nominates these people, it will be bad for the country. I want to contest the mayoral election to change the traditional politics and non-political issues should be focused on in the mayoral elections," he said.

Irad also announced his candidature for the DCC mayoral election set for June.

"I will be a BNP-minded independent candidate," he said.

He also said there are two streams in BNP - one is 'Zia stream' and the other is 'Khaleda stream'. "I want to be a BNP-minded candidate of the 'Zia stream'."

Later, he distributed a 76-point election manifesto and explained some of his plans to turn Dhaka into a beautiful digital city.

When asked about Irad's allegation, his father Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky said, "Madam [Khaleda Zia] said at least Tk 5 crore will be needed for the election as there are 15 constituencies in Dhaka. It was a private discussion and he should not have disclosed it in public."

Tanbir also said Irad lacks political acumen and he is a simple-minded person but he is "a highly-educated expert and researcher".

Form regional bodies to end militancy in SA

Speakers tell consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a consultation yesterday underscored the need for forming national and regional bodies to end bloodshed, arms trafficking and militancy in South Asian countries.

Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre (BDPC) and South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) jointly organised the consultation titled 'Consultation on Peace and Security in South Asia' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Sharif A Kafi, director of BDPC, read out the keynote paper at the meeting.

Kafi said it is not easy for Bangladesh and its neighbours to protect more than 4424 km long border.

The law enforcers had seized huge weapons, ammunitions and explosives from Islamic militants and international terrorists on several occasions in the last decade, he said, adding, "Brutal attacks were launched on Bangabandhu, presidents, prime ministers, army and mass people since 1975 and unfortunately, every time, the government intelligence failed to give even a little hint before the attacks."

"Frequent failures of intelligence agencies raise various questions, which is not good for the country," he added.

The government intelligence also failed to give any hint before the recent killing at the BDR headquarters, he also said.

He urged the investigating teams to check the call lists and transcripts of all the cellphone companies to know the activities of the members of the intelligence agencies during the attack.

Under such circumstances, regional coordination and a platform to control weapon trafficking and terrorism are very necessary. He urged the government to form a national commission on peace and security, too.

Rashid e Mahub, representative of SAAPE, alleged that exploiting the country's poverty, foreign forces are financing terrorism to destabilise the country.

BDPC Project Directors Aktanin Khair Tanin, Hasan Shahriar and Ilias Mia also spoke at the meeting.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia places wreaths yesterday at the graves of the army officers and an army officer's wife killed during the mutiny at the BDR Headquarters on February 25-26.

Changing mindset a must to end repression on women

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The laws, policies and international treaties are not enough to eliminate women repression from the society unless people change their mindset, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

The We Can Alliance to End Domestic Violence and Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra organised the discussion at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers at the discussion said in most of the cases, violence against women take place in the family and most of the people take it as a familial or personal matter, which is not right.

So it is time to change people's mindset and be united to root out violence against women, they added.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal said people's willingness to resist repression is the key to eliminate violence against women in the society.

"It is not possible to resist violence by making laws although laws can contain

violence somehow," she said, adding, "We need change makers who will motivate people in this regard and journalists can play an important role as change makers."

Bangladesh got involved with the We Can Alliance to End Domestic Violence in 2004. The alliance has been working in six countries. In Bangladesh currently the campaign extends to some 48 districts, the speakers said.

The objective of the campaign is to wipe out the acceptability of women repression from the society and to make it a safer place for women, they said, adding that around 300,000 change makers are now involved with the campaign.

"If we cannot change the attitude and behaviour towards women in the society, it is not possible to create a peaceful and harmonious society with equity," said President of Nari Sangbadik Kendra Nasimun Ara Huq Minu.

They also talked on the role of mass media to resist violence against women and how the

women are depicted in the media.

Jinat Ara Haque, programme officer of the We Can Alliance to End Domestic Violence, Parveen Sultana Jhuma of Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra and Shahnaz Munni of ATN Bangla also spoke.



Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley speaks at a seminar at the Gulshan office of Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh in the city yesterday.

Law minister exempted from proceedings of writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday exempted Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister

Barrister Shafique Ahmed from the proceedings of the writ petition claiming that he (Shafique) was simultaneously holding posts of the minister and member of Bangladesh Bar Council.

As the Attorney General and also ex-officio chairman of Bar Council, Mahbubey Alam yesterday informed the court that Shafique Ahmed had resigned from the post of the Bar Council member on January 6 before taking oath as minister, the HC released him from the petition.

ABM Nurul Islam, a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court, filed the writ petition stating that he (petitioner) has received the next highest number of votes in the Bar Council election and he should have been invited to fill up the post that fell vacant after Shafique Ahmed took over as the minister.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui, however, issued a rule upon the Bar Council chairman and secretary to explain within two weeks why the petitioner should not be recognised as a member of the council in the absence of Shafique Ahmed.

In the petition filed on March 5, the petitioner said, as per Article 12 of Bangladesh Bar Council Order 1972, if any elected member of the Bar Council assumes another office of the government or any statutory body, the post of that member will be casually vacant and the candidate, who received the next highest number of votes in the Bar Council election, will be entitled to be the member.

According to the petition, Nurul Islam is the receiver of the next highest number of votes in the election and he (Islam) should be entitled as a member of the Bar Council in the absence of Shafique Ahmed as per the law.

C'wealth must exploit potential of youths

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Commonwealth, an association of 53 sovereign nations, must exploit the potential of its 100 crore young people to achieve its goals, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

It still remains a relevant association to promote justice, democracy, human rights and peace, they said.

The Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh (CSB) organised the seminar in the city on the occasion of the 60th Commonwealth Day.

The Commonwealth envisions bringing potential of the youth in the forefront to achieve its future goals, said CSB President Mokammel Haque, who presided over the seminar.

Nearly half of the 200 crore people in the Commonwealth countries are under 25 years of age, according to a message Queen Elizabeth has issued as head of the Commonwealth on the occasion.

"These are the people that this association must continue to serve in the future. It is they who can help shape the Commonwealth of today....," said the Queen in her message.

Foreign minister Dipu Moni sent a written speech to the seminar as she could not attend it.

CSB vice-president Inam Ahmed Chowdhury read out the message: "Common values of pluralism, liberalism and democracy unite the diversities of Commonwealth countries."

Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth in 1972.

In January, the Commonwealth selected justice KM Hasan as president of its Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal.

The Commonwealth's Youth Programme has four regional centres in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific to support young people in their education, training and cultural pursuits.

CSB executive member Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presented a keynote speech while CSB secretary general Nasrine R Karim read out the Queen's message.

Former ambassadors, including Barrister Harun Ur Rashid and Farooq Sobhan, and CSB vice-president Maj Gen (Retd) KM Shafiqullah also spoke.



A family member of a BDR jawan breaks down in tears at a gate of the BDR headquarters in the city yesterday after hearing the news of death of a BDR member yesterday.

3 get 30 yrs' RI for possessing heroin

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced three people to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing 3.5kg of heroin in January 2001.

Judge Mohammad Abu Mohsin of the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts. The convicts are Harunur Rashid, Mohammad Mazharul Hossain and Kazi Zafar Reza.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 19 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, three convicts, proprietors of M/S Turag Enterprise, carried four baskets of vegetables at Zia International Airport for export purpose at 4.00pm on January 22, 2001. But the customs officials searched those baskets and seized 3.5kg of heroin. They also arrested the three for possessing the heroin. A case was filed with Cantonment Police Station in this connection the same day.

The investigation officer pressed charges against the three on May 29, 2001.



Nasimun Ara Huq Minu addresses a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her right is Advocate Sultana Kamal and on her left is Shanta Maria.

AL, BNP clash in N'ganj: 5 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Five people were injured in a clash between activists of Awami League and BNP at Ladurchar under Sonargaon Police Station in Narayanganj yesterday.

Seriously injured BNP leader Habibullah Master and his son Marmun were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Police said during the four-party alliance rule, BNP leader

Habibullah master harassed his rival Awami League leader Anwar Hossain by filing false cases. In that case Anwar Hossain suffered jail term and got released recently.

To take revenge, a group of criminals led by Anwar Hossain yesterday noon attacked Habibullah Master and his son Marmun. Local people rescued them and sent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital. A case was filed with Sonargaon Police Station in this connection.

BIG SOUND 4:24 THE MS

SPEAKERS 4:04 THE MS

LOUD AND CLEAR 2:45 THE CRANBERRIES

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 Touch screen with multiple input methods
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