

Jamaat, BNP should work together for next 5 yrs: Shafiqur

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said his party and the BNP should work together over the next five years for the sake of national stability.

“We have said that for the sake of our much-loved country, we worked together in the past and, InshaAllah, we will work together in the future as well. Mr Tarique Rahman and the BNP leadership have expressed the same aspiration,” he told reporters after a meeting with the BNP acting chairman at the BNP Chairperson’s Gulshan office.

Shafiqur said the two parties also discussed the possibility of working together to restore a stable and favourable environment for the nation over the next five years.

He added that the two parties will sit together after the election slated for February 12.

“Immediately after the election and before the formation of the government, we will sit together with an open mind to discuss national interests, think for the nation, and take decisions accordingly,” the Jamaat chief said.



Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman calls on BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman to express his condolences over Khaleda Zia's death at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Supply crunch

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During winter, global LPG prices usually rise and imports decline.

This time, the premium cost has nearly doubled, while the Saudi contract price (CP), which serves as the benchmark for setting local prices, has also increased, he said.

The premium includes freight, insurance, vendor margins, handling charges and other logistical costs involved in bringing LPG from suppliers to the importing country.

The premium cost stood between \$90 and \$120 per tonne in October, which rose to \$180 in November, said Amirul, also the managing director of Delta LP Gas.

However, BERC still considers the premium at \$110 in its pricing, Amirul said, adding that imports have dropped by as much as 60 percent in recent weeks.

January's LPG pricing will be announced on Sunday or the following day after a meeting with stakeholders, according to a BERC official.

The price may increase slightly as the Saudi CP rose last month, he said.

January may see a further LPG supply crisis as most companies import LPG under annual contracts and new deals are due to be signed this month, according to Amirul.

BERC Chairman Jalal Ahmed said the commission is investigating the price hike and has sent a letter to LOAB asking it to look into the matter and take action.

“They initially told us they are facing supply chain problems. They opened letters of credit but could not book shipments, which resulted in the supply shortage.”

He could not specify when the situation would return to normal.

The country requires around 14-15 lakh tonnes of LPG. As much as 98 percent of LPG is imported and marketed by more than 25 private importers.

Tarique earns

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or current savings, while the rest are fixed deposits or savings deposits, largely saved in his daughter Zaima Rahman's name.

His wife Zubaida has Tk 1 crore in bank, of which Tk 66.5 lakh is held as current savings.

The BNP leader mentioned in the affidavit that he will spend Tk 30 lakh in electioneering in Bogura-6 constituency, and the money will come from bank deposits and agriculture.

He is also running from Dhaka-17, but the affidavit for that constituency was not immediately available.

Tarique, 57, has shares worth Tk 68.5 lakh, furniture worth less than Tk 2 lakh and gold worth Tk 2,950.

He owns over 2 acres of land in Bogura, whose worth at the time of purchase was Tk 3.45 lakh. He also inherited 2.9 decimals of land in Gazipur and Cox's Bazaar from his brother Arafat Rahman Koko, who died in 2015.

Zubaida, on the other hand, has shared ownership of 111.25 decimals of land and an 800 square feet duplex house.

The estimated current value of the land properties has not been mentioned.

Tarique, who has a higher secondary degree, is classified by the National Board of Revenue as a “large taxpayer” and paid a little over Tk 1 lakh in taxes last year, while his wife paid Tk 5.6 lakh.

Between 2004 and 2019, he faced 77 cases filed across 38 districts, 50 of which were for defamation or speech-related offences.

About half the cases were disposed of before 2024, while the rest 42 after August 5, 2024.

Dhaka races to heat up as big guns

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Mamunul Haque and Nagarik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna submitted nominations for Dhaka-13 and Dhaka-18 respectively.

Labour Party President Mustafizur Rahman Iran, Amjantar Dal General Secretary Tarek Rahman, and NDM Secretary General Momintul Amin submitted nominations for Dhaka-12.

“The upcoming election in Dhaka is shaping up to be high-voltage. With top leaders from all major political parties contesting here, heightened intensity is only natural,” said polls expert Abdul Alim.

He said this calls for special attention from the Election Commission, as constituencies with heavyweight candidates demand enhanced monitoring and security.

“During campaigning, ensuring safety will be crucial, as miscreants may attempt to create disturbances. Given the Election Commission's prior experience with various risks, extra caution during this period is essential.”

Alim noted that races in Dhaka carries particular importance as the capital is focal point of national attention. “People from across Bangladesh live in Dhaka, and the outcome resonates far beyond the city, reflecting the sentiments of a diverse population.”

PASTELECTIONS

EC data shows that, except for the 1991 national polls held following the fall of dictator HM Ershad, chiefs of major political parties have rarely contested from Dhaka constituencies.

That year, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia contested five seats, including Dhaka-5 and Dhaka-9, and won all of them.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina contested three seats, including Dhaka-7 and Dhaka-10, but lost to BNP candidates in both constituencies.

During the 1996, 2001, 2008, 2014, 2018, and 2024 polls, no chiefs of major parties such as the BNP or the AL contested from Dhaka.

In 2008, Ershad won Dhaka-17, while Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon won Dhaka-8. Both were allies of the AL. Menon contested using the AL's electoral symbol, while Ershad used his own party symbol.

Since 1991, it has been observed that the party sweeping Dhaka seats usually goes on to form the government.

In the 1991 polls, the BNP won all 13 Dhaka seats. In the June 1996 election, the AL won eight of 13 seats. In 2001, the BNP again won all 13 seats. In 2008, the AL won 18 of 20 seats, while Ershad and Menon won the remaining two.

In the 2014 polls – boycotted by many parties including the BNP – the

AL won 14 of 20 seats, with 10 elected unopposed. Jatiya Party won three, Menon won one unopposed, and AL rebel Haji Mohammad Selim won one. BNP chief Abul Kalam Azad won Dhaka-17.

In the 2018 polls – controversial for ballot box stuffing – the AL won 17 of 20 seats. Alliance partner Jatiya Party won two, and Menon won one. Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman contested Dhaka-15 using the BNP's symbol, as Jamaat was banned at the time, but lost amid allegations of “widespread ballot stuffing on the night before voting.”

In the 2024 polls, in which the AL fielded its leaders as independents to make the election appear competitive, AL candidates won 16 of 20 seats in the capital, while the “independents,” won the remaining four.

WHO'S RUNNING FROM WHERE

Khandaker Abu Ashfaq (BNP), Mohammad Nazrul Islam (Jamaat), Farhad Hossain (Khalafat Majlis), Nurul Islam (Islami Andolan Bangladesh), Nasir Uddin Molla (Jatiya Party), and Sheikh Md Ali (Labour Party) have submitted their nominations for Dhaka-1.

Antara Selima Huda, daughter of a former BNP leader and founder of Trinamool Congress, also filed her nomination for the same seat as an independent.

Amanullah Aman (BNP), Abdul Haq (Jamaat), and Zahirul Islam (Islami Andolan Bangladesh) submitted nominations for Dhaka-2.

Gayeshwar Chandra Roy (BNP), Shahinur Islam (Jamaat), Bacchu Bhuiyan (Gono Samhati Andolan), and 13 others submitted nominations for Dhaka-3.

For Dhaka-4, eight aspirants, including Tanveer Ahmed (BNP), Syed Joydul Abedin (Jamaat), Mosaddek Billah (IAB), and Mohammad Mizanur Rahman (independent), filed nomination papers.

Sixteen aspirants, including Nabi Ullah (BNP), Kamal Hossain (Jamaat), SM Shahria (NCP), Atiqur Rahman Nannu Munshi (Khalafat Andolan), and Syed Mohammad Ibrahim (Gono Odhikar Parishad), submitted nominations for Dhaka-5.

Ishraq Hossain (BNP), Abdul Mannan (Jamaat), Amir Uddin Ahmed (Jatiya Party), and four others submitted nominations for Dhaka-6.

Fifteen aspirants, including Hamidur Rahman (BNP), Enayet Ullah (Jamaat), and Mohammad Saifuddin Ahmed Milon (Jatiya Party), submitted nominations for Dhaka-7.

Mirza Abbas (BNP), Nasiruddin Patwari (NCP), Kefayet Ullah (IAB), Meghna Alam (Gono Odhikar Parishad), and eight others submitted nominations for Dhaka-8.

Fourteen aspirants, including Habibur Rashid (BNP), Kabir Ahmad (Jamaat), Shah Iftekhar Ahsan (IAB), Kazi Abul Khair (Jatiya Party), Mohammad Javed Mia (NCP), and Tasnim Jara, who recently resigned from NCP, submitted nominations for Dhaka-9.

Rabiul Alam (BNP), Abdul Awal (IAB), Jashim Uddin Sarkar (Jamaat), and 10 others filed nominations for Dhaka-10.

Apart from NCP Convenor Nahid Islam, MA Kaiyum (BNP), Abdul Kader (Gono Forum), Sheikh Md Fazle Bari Masud (IAB), and eight others filed nominations for Dhaka-11.

Dhaka-12 is set to be a key battleground as top leaders from the Biplobi Workers Party, Labour Party, Amjantar Dal, and NDM submitted nominations. Jamaat's Saiful Alam, Taslima Akhter (Gono Samhati Andolan), Mahamudul Hasan (IAB), and others also entered the race for this seat.

Besides Mamunul Haque, Bobby Hajjaj, Murad Hossain (IAB), Mizanur Rahman (Gono Odhikar Parishad), and seven others submitted nominations for Dhaka-13.

Enforced disappearance victim Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem (Jamaat), Mayer Daak Coordinator Sanjida Islam Tuli (BNP), Abu Yusuf (IAB), and others submitted nominations for Dhaka-14.

Nine aspirants, including Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, Shafiqul Islam Khan (BNP), Sajedul Huq Rubel (CPB), and Shafiqul Islam (Gono Forum), filed nominations for Dhaka-15.

Former national football team captain Aminul Huq (BNP), Abdul Baten (Jamaat), Mamun Hossain (Gono Odhikar Parishad), and 10 others submitted nominations for Dhaka-16.

Tarique Rahman submitted nominations for Bogura-6 and Dhaka-17, marking the first time he is contesting for public office.

Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF) President SM Abul Kalam Azad, SM Khaliduzzaman (Jamaat), Mohammad Ullah (IAB), and others also submitted nominations for Dhaka-17.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna (Nagarik Oikya), SM Jahangir Hossain (BNP), Muhammad Ashrafur Huq (Jamaat), Ariful Islam (NCP), Anwar Hossain (IAB), and 13 others submitted nominations for Dhaka-18.

Afzal Hossain (Jamaat), Dewan Mohammad Salahuddin (BNP), Chowdhury Hasan Sarwardy (LDP), Dilshana Parul (NCP), and seven others submitted nominations for Dhaka-19.

Tamiz Uddin (BNP), Abdur Rouf (Jamaat), Nabila Tasnid (NCP), Ashraf Ali (Khalafat Majlis), and several others submitted nominations for Dhaka-20.

“I used to be on Madam's duty. Today, Madam is no more. The house feels empty. When you go inside, there is a silence you can feel,” he said.

Another security staff member recalled Khaleda's personal care for them, saying she would often ask whether they had eaten properly.

Several security personnel on duty were seen wearing black badges, their faces marked by grief.

Next to Feroza is the plot allotted to Khaleda in 1981 by the government of then acting president Abdus Sattar following her husband's death.

Her son, BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, moved in here after his return to Bangladesh last week following 17 years in exile in London.

Grieving the loss of his mother, Tarique spent most of yesterday at home saying prayers for his mother's departed soul, said Atikur Rahman Rumon, member of BNP Media Cell.

TK 2,858CR EMBEZZLEMENT

ACC files 4 cases against Salman F Rahman, 33 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed four cases against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's adviser and Beximco Group vice chairman Salman F Rahman and 33 others over allegations of embezzling around Tk 2,858 crore from Janata Bank by abusing Export Development Fund facilities.

ACC Director General Md Akhtar Hossain disclosed the information at a media briefing at the commission's headquarters in Dhaka.

According to the ACC, the accused abused power and, through collusion, took EDF-backed loans in the names of fake and newly formed garment companies. They allegedly created accommodation bills by showing fictitious imports and exports through Bangladesh Bank letters of credit and laundered the embezzled money through transfer, conversion and layering.

A five-member investigation team led by ACC Deputy Director Muhammad Zainal Abedin conducted the probe.

The investigation found that loans were approved and disbursed in favour of a newly formed company, Yellow Apparels Limited. Through internal import-export transactions and around 700 accommodation bills created using BB LCs, USD 48.978 million – equivalent to approximately Tk 416.37 crore – was misappropriated.

BNP aims to transform

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BNP Standing Committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said, “After the death of Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia led the BNP forward. Now, after the death of Khaleda Zia, the BNP will move ahead under the leadership of Tarique Rahman.”

He said the public participation at Khaleda's namaz-e-janaza carried political significance.

“It proves the love and trust people had for her. That trust has now shifted towards her party, and we are determined to hold on to it.”

Political analysts said turning this sympathy and trust into votes would require a clear plan under Tarique's leadership.

They also said how effectively the party manages this transition under Tarique's leadership will shape not only the election outcome but also the BNP's future direction.

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, former professor of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, acknowledged that the huge crowd at Khaleda's funeral was a positive sign for the BNP ahead of the polls.

“The BNP would be naïve if it fails to utilise Khaleda Zia's charisma. The trust and sympathy it got after her death is definitely going to help the party.”

He said Tarique now has to take charge.

“He has to move forward with devising a clear election strategy, keeping Khaleda Zia at the centre of the campaign,” he said.

He said Tarique has already taken strong steps, including expelling rebel candidates, which is a positive sign.

Another analyst, Mohammad Mojibur Rahman, professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research, also sees the outpouring of love and compassion for the late prime minister as a plus point for the BNP.

He said the signs are clearly positive that many within the party are supporting the transition of leadership from Khaleda to Tarique.

However, he also pointed to potential challenges that Tarique may face.

“He has to deal with the rebel candidates and identify people within the administration who follow certain political ideologies and will be involved in running the election,” he said.

BNP leaders said that even before Khaleda's death, the party was utilising her clean image and political legacy as part of its election strategy.

Now, after her death, the BNP plans to move forward by following Khaleda's

political path under Tarique's leadership.

They believe that even in her absence, her role in restoring democracy and leading the party through years of political struggle will help mobilise voters further.

Party leaders said the message they want to send to voters is that Khaleda's ideals and political direction remain central to the party's agenda.

Besides, party insiders said that as part of campaigning, Tarique is likely to visit the homes of victims of the July uprising and may begin touring different parts of the country after December 20.

MESSAGE FROM GRASSROOTS

Grassroots leaders echoed the central leadership's message, saying the party wants to move forward by turning grief into political strength.

SA Jinnah Kabir, a nominated BNP candidate for Manikganj-1, said local leaders want to approach the election by keeping the late BNP chief's vision in mind.

He said people's trust and confidence in the BNP are now much stronger and must be preserved.

Sylhet district BNP President Abdul Quyum Choudhury said the party wants to move forward under Tarique's leadership and described the upcoming election as critical for both the party and the country's democratic future.

Dhaka North city unit Member Secretary Aminul Haq said, “Madam is no longer with us, but we want to turn our grief into strength and move forward. We have felt that people's trust in us has increased, and we will not let it be wasted in any way.”

STEERING COMMITTEE

BNP yesterday formed a 41-member Central Election Steering Committee to coordinate electoral strategy, candidate management, and organisational activities.

Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan has been appointed chairman of the committee, while Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi will serve as its member secretary. BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council member Ismail Jabiullah has been named chief coordinator.

Among the 38 other members are Standing Committee member Selima Rahman; Vice Chairman Shamsuzzaman Dudu; Joint Secretary General Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, adviser to the BNP chairperson; Bijon Kanti Sarker; BNP Joint Secretary General Habib-un-Nabi Khan Soheli; Tarique Rahman's adviser Mahdi Amin; and AKM Wahiduzzaman, secretary of the party's ICT affairs, among others.

I feel this entire nation

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh bid farewell to Khaleda Zia in a state funeral that drew vast crowds mourning a towering leader whose career defined the country's politics for decades.

Tarique said he was deeply moved by the outpouring of love from friends, neighbours, and well-wishers who came in their millions to honour Khaleda Zia's life and legacy.

“Seeing you all here, standing with our family through these most difficult hours, reminded me of something very precious: that she was not only a mother to me, but in many ways a mother of this nation,” he said.

The BNP leader said he could not help but remember his father, Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, and his brother Arafat Rahman at that “moment of personal loss.”

“And yet, to be surrounded here by so many who feel like family has been a source of comfort I never expected on a day like this. Today, at a time of greatest sorrow, I feel like this whole nation is my family,” Tarique said.

He also expressed heartfelt gratitude to senior dignitaries from South Asian countries who attended in person, as well as to foreign governments, diplomats, and partners who conveyed their condolences to the family and the party, saying their gestures of respect and sympathy touched his heart deeply.

He said his mother devoted her life to serving others with relentless

dedication.

“I feel the weight of that legacy, and I promise to honour it with humility and commitment. Where her journey paused, I will strive to continue her work to the people whose faith and love sustained her until her last breath.”

He concluded, “May Allah grant her eternal peace, and may we find strength in the devotion she shared with us all.”

In another Facebook post, Tarique expressed his gratitude to the chief adviser and advisers of the interim government, members of the armed forces, law-enforcement agencies, government officials, and media professionals for their role in ensuring a dignified and orderly farewell.

“In yesterday's (Tuesday's) moments of deep personal loss, I want to speak from the heart and thank the many individuals whose care and professionalism helped the country conduct itself through my mother's final farewell,” he said.

He mentioned several ministries, as well as members of the armed forces, intelligence agencies, government staff, and journalists, for their sincere efforts.

“On behalf of my family, I thank each of you, not as institutions, but as people, for the empathy, respect, and sense of duty you showed at a time when we were grieving a great loss. Your efforts made it possible for our family, Alhamdulillah, and for the nation, to honour her memory with dignity,” he said.