

Staff reporter

Claiming that there is no division or grouping in BNP's Dhaka City unit, its convener Mirza Abbas on Wednesday said the newly formed committee is committed to working together and playing a vital role in the party's coming anti-government movement.

"Neither Sadeque Hossain Khoka nor I has created any group. Some people are spreading it to make their political gains. There's only one group in our party and that is Khaleda Zia group," he said.

Abbas was talking to reporters at a press briefing at Bhashani Bhaban after the committee's maiden meeting.

A-52 member convening committee with party standing committee member Mirza Abbas its convener and Habibun Nabi Sohel member secretary was announced on Friday night to rejuvenate the party's crucial unit.

Abbas replaced Khoka who was at helm of the Dhaka city unit of BNP for nearly 17 years. Allegations are there that BNP's Dhaka city unit could not play its due role in the opposition's movement before January 5 due to conflict between Khoka and Abbas over leading the unit. The 40-minute meeting that started around 12 noon was held at the auditorium of Bhashani Bhaban with Abbas in the chair.

Forty-one members of the 52-member convening committee were present at the first meeting. As per a decision of the meeting, Abbas said the new committee office-bearers along with party leaders and activists will pay homage to BNP founder late president Ziaur Rahman by placing wreaths at his grave.

He said the meeting decided that the unit will take all-out preparations for making success the party's post-Eid movement to be launched for restoration of people's voting right and caretaker government.

It also decided that the thana and ward committees under the Dhaka city unit will gradually be reconstituted to make the party stronger.

He said the meeting demanded the government withdraw all the 'false' cases against BNP leaders and activists, including party chairperson Khaleda Zia and senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman, and release the arrested party men.

Accusing the government of carrying out killings and enforced disappearances with Rab to make its political gains, the committee also demanded the government disband the elite force. Abbas said the meeting also prayed for the early recovery of ex-convener of the body and party vice chairman Sadeque Hossain Khoka, now undergoing treatment in the USA.

He said the new committee strongly condemned and protested the mass killing carried out by Israel on Palestinian people and called upon the world leaders to take steps to halt it.

The new city BNP convener said the remarks of the ruling party leaders have given an impression that the new committee has become a headache for the government.

As journalists drew his attention to Awami League general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam's remark that BNP's new city committee would not be able to wage any movement in the city, Abbas said, "I don't know why they (AL) are bothered about our committee. They're making unguarded remarks about our committee as it has become a matter of worry for them."

Sought his comment about media reports that he got aggrieved as Habibun Nabi Sohel has been made member secretary of the committee, Abbas did not make any comment, but transferred the mike to Sohel to say about it. Sohel said, "Abbas is my senior brother and I'm his

junior one. There' s no division among us.”

Committee joint convener Abdul Awal Mintoo also claimed that they have no division though there might be defences of opinions. “We're united and will work together to make the party stronger.”