

HCCI considers ‘honourable exit’ of member who tried to install himself as its president

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HYDERABAD: Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) president Ikram Rajput and other office-bearers on Monday held a meeting at the chamber to discuss how to avoid registration of an FIR against its former president, Seth Goharullah, and his maternal nephew, Mohammad Shahid, along with their several associates for trespassing the HCCI secretariat and trying to take it over after getting issued a press release regarding resignation of the incumbent president.

The talks remained inconclusive as another round was scheduled for Tuesday.

On Saturday, Seth Goharullah along with Mohammad Shahid and some former and sitting members of the HCCI arrived at the chamber and asked its vice president, Iqbal Baig, for the keys of the president's office. The president, Ikram Rajput, was away in Karachi at that time and, therefore, Mr Baig refused to hand over the keys to Goharullah. However, Goharullah and his companions broke open the lock of the door and Mohammad Shahid occupied the president's chair, declaring him the “newly elected HCCI president”. In the meantime, a press release was issued claiming that Mr Rajput had resigned as the president.

Ex-president Goharullah wants to escape police, court action

Mr Rajput, who was informed of the trespassing and false press release, rushed to Hyderabad and denied having tendered his resignation. By that time, police had arrived and locked the secretariat under the supervision of ministerial staff. A large number of HCCI members had also gathered there. Later, the two sides held talks at the Hyderabad SSP's camp office.

On Monday, the police briefly opened the secretariat to facilitate a meeting between the office-bearers and intruders. The meeting lasted several hours.

Insiders said that the participants agreed to hold another round of talks at 12.30pm on Tuesday to settle the issue.

Mohammad Shahid told Dawn that he had [abruptly] left the meeting in the afternoon and later received a message about the Tuesday round.

Insiders revealed that Mr Rajput and other office-bearers intended to lodge an FIR against him over the Saturday incident [trespassing etc]. Mr Rajput told him that a case had already been prepared but court was yet to be moved. He further told Goharullah that he and his colleagues had the information that he [Goharullah] intended to seek a stay order from court in his favour which he denied.

“Goharullah, in fact, wants safe and honourable exit for his nephew, Mohammad Shahid, now to settle the issue,” said a participant of the meeting. He claimed that Mr Rajput and his colleagues were ready for that.

It is learnt that some points have been jotted down and agreed upon by the two groups to reach a settlement.

Iqbal Baig told the other side that the management committee should accept resignation of Mohammad Shahid in lieu of such an honourable exit. Mr Baig argued that Mr Rajput had not resigned from his post but the false statement was issued through the press release. Therefore, the management committee's same 16 members, who accepted the fake resignation, should accept Shahid's resignation.

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