

Verdict on graft case against Tarique, Zubaida at 3pm today

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Online Desk: A Dhaka court will deliver the judgement today in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2007 against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman. Judge Md Asaduzzsman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka, will deliver its judgment in their absence at 3:00pm, said Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court.

Ahead of the judgment, additional police forces were deployed on the court premises, said Deputy Commissioner (Prosecution) Anisur Rahman. Meantime, pro-BNP lawyers announced a day-long programme on the court premises in protest of the illegal judgment against Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman, said Faruq Faruqi, convener of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum of Dhaka Bar Association.

On July 27, the prosecution completed arguments and sought highest punishment for the couple. Earlier, the court recorded statements of 42 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case. The couple has been shown fugitives in the charge sheet.

On April 13, the same court framed charges against them. Before that, the court dismissed a lawyer's petition seeking permission to defend them. Tarique and Zubaida have been in London since 2008.

Tarique is accused in 15 other cases, mostly filed during the caretaker government rule in 2007 and 2008, and Zubaida has been indicted only in this one. Accepting the charges brought against them, this court on November 1 last year issued arrest warrants against the duo.

On June 26 last year, the HC declared Tarique and Zubaida "fugitives" and rejected their writ petitions challenging the filing of the graft case. The HC also withdrew the stay order on the case.

On September 26, 2007, the ACC filed the case with Kafrul Police Station against the two and Zubaida's mother Syeda Iqbal Mand Banu, on charges of amassing assets worth Tk 4.82 crore through illegal means and concealing the information of Tk 2.16 crore in their wealth statements.

After a probe, the investigation officer pressed charges against the three on March 31, 2009. However, trial proceedings against Zubaida's mother were cancelled. Tarique has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the August 21 grenade attack cases. He was also sentenced in two other cases, including the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.