

Petition scrapped, trial court to continue proceedings against Khaleda

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Online Desk: The High Court on Wednesday scrapped the petition seeking cancellation of Niko graft case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Now, there is no legal bar to continue the case proceedings in the trial court. An HC bench of Justice Mostafa Jaman Islam and Justice Md Aminul Islam passed the order after hearing on a revision filed challenging the legality of charge frame in the case.

Already, several hearings on the same petition have been held. At last, on Monday (August 28), the HC fixed today to pass its order. Former attorney general AJ Mohammad Ali and BNP's law affairs secretary Barrister Kaysar Kamal were present at the court today on behalf of the BNP chief. On August 9, the hearing on the petition began.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on December 9, 2007, filed the case against five, including Khaleda Zia with Tejgaon Police Station, for abusing power in signing a deal with Canadian company Niko for exploring and extracting gas.

On March 19 this year, Judge of Dhaka Special Court-9 Sheikh Hafizur Rahman framed charges against Khaleda and seven others in Niko graft case. The court also set May 23 for recording testimonies of the witnesses. The anti-graft body pressed charges in court against 11 people, including Khaleda, in May 2008.

The other accused in the case are former principal secretary Kamal Uddin Siddique, Khandaker Shahidul Islam, CM Yusuf Hossain, former Bapex general manager Mir Mainul Haq, Giasuddin Al Mamun, former parliamentarian MAH Selim and former vice-president of South Asia affairs of Niko Kashem Sharif.

Among the accused, BNP standing committee member Barrister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister AKM Mosharraf Hossain and former secretary of Bapex Shafiur Rahman died during the trial proceedings.