

Three foreigners to testify in Niko graft case against Khaleda

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Online Desk: A court here today allowed a prosecution plea to produce three foreigners, including a former FBI agent, to testify in Niko graft case against BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and seven others. The three foreigners are- former supervisory special agent Debra LaPrevotte Griffith of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the USA, and Kevin Duggan and Liyod Skuip of Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of Dhaka Special Judge's Court-9 at Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj passed the order after holding hearing on a plea filed by Attorney General AM Amin Uddin. The attorney general filed the plea on September 12 and the court had set today for holding hearing on the matter.

The court at the end of today's proceedings adjourned the hearing till October 10. Earlier on March 19, 2023, the court framed charges against the accused. Begum Khaleda Zia, who is now on bail, pleaded not guilty through her lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder on that day and demanded justice. The other accused in the case are- Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Khandaker Shahidul Islam, CM Eusuf Hossain, Mir Moinul Haque, Gias Uddin Al Mamun, Selim Bhuiyan, and Kashem Sharif.

The anti-graft body filed the case against five including Begum Khaleda Zia with Tejgaon police station on December 9, 2007, for abusing power in signing a deal with Canadian company Niko for exploring and extracting gas. The ACC on May 5, 2008, submitted the charge-sheet against 11 people including Khaleda Zia. The ACC accused them of causing the incurring a loss of more than Taka 13 thousand crore to state exchequer by signing that deal.

As three accused- Barrister Moudud Ahmed, AKM Mosharraf Hossain, and Md Shafiur Rahman died of natural causes, they were discharged from the case, leaving the eight other accused to face the justice.