

ACC pleads for recording deposition of Canadian cop afresh in Niko graft case

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Online Desk: The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) today pleaded to record deposition of Liyod Skuip, member of Canadian Mounted Police, afresh in Niko graft case against BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and seven others.

Today the defence concluded cross-examination of another accused and Liyod's colleague Kevin Duggan, who testified in the case yesterday. After that the ACC pleaded to record deposition of Liyod, who also submitted his testimony and was cross-examined yesterday, afresh.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of Dhaka Special Judge's Court-9 after that adjourned the hearing till November 2.

Liyod and Kevin in their testimonies said Canadian company Niko Resources Limited gave bribe to get the job of exploring and extracting gas in Bangladeshi gas fields and that bribe money was sent here from Canada via Barbados.

"Some officials of then Bangladesh government instigated Niko to take refuge of corruption. We learned about that from media reports. Niko Resources was convicted in Canada over graft," Liyod Skuip said in his testimony.

The court on September 17, 2023, allowed a prosecution plea to produce three foreigners including a former FBI agent to testify in the case.

Earlier on October 19, the court summoned the two Canadian men to appear today and testify in the case.

The court on March 19, 2023, framed charges against the eight 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 the 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.