

FROM PAGE 1

minister, and seven others in the case lodged by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2007.

The 79-year-old BNP chief -- currently in London for treatment -- was represented by her lawyer Mohammad Ziauddin Zia at the court.

Khaleda and other accused had no mala fide intention during the time of agreement between the government and Niko, a Canadian oil and gas exploration company, the judge observed in the verdict.

"The case was dragged onto politically harass

Begum Khaleda Zia and the other accused. Khaleda Zia did not commit any corruption. She did not even misuse her power," the court also said.

"Two cases were filed against former prime ministers -- Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia -- on the same day in December 2007. However, the case against Sheikh Hasina was quashed after she assumed power in 2009, while the case against Khaleda Zia continued throughout the entire Awami League regime," said the judgement.

"During the investigation, former

Dhaka Club president Selim Bhuiyan, an accused in the case, gave a confessional statement before a magistrate. He was forced to make the statement....," it said.

"Selim was tortured during remand and admitted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital for treatment," the verdict mentioned.

The court observed, "His confessional statement was not voluntary; it was done to implicate Khaleda Zia and others in the case."

The seven other accused are Giasuddin Al Mamun, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman's

**FROM PAGE 1**

Dal activists on Tuesday.

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The atmosphere in Kuet remained tense. Law enforcers stood guard in front of the main gate. Army personnel patrolled the areas adjacent to the campus. Some students left the dormitories.

Tension prevailed on different campuses in Dhaka and other parts of the country, as both sides continued blaming each other for the clashes.

Pro-BNP student organisation JCD's Kuet unit alleged that Islami Chhatra Shibir activists and anti-discrimination students using the banner of "general students" attacked its activists first before the clashes broke out on Tuesday. The violence left at least 40 people injured.

Besides suspending classes and keeping the ban on student politics effective, Kuet's syndicate at a virtual meeting yesterday afternoon recommended the suspension of students involved in the clashes. It also decided that the university administration would file a case against outsiders over the violence.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Muhammad Masud said the syndicate also decided to bar teachers and employees from participating in political activities. It recommended stern action, including dismissal, in case of violation of the ban by teachers and employees. Students will face expulsion if they are found involved in politics.

The meeting formed a four-member committee, led by Prof. MMA Hashem of computer science and engineering department, to investigate the clashes and identify the perpetrators. The committee was asked to submit its report in three working days.

The syndicate also

close friend; Khondaker Shahidul Islam, former acting secretary for energy ministry; CM Yusuf Hussain, ex-senior assistant secretary; Kamal Uddin Siddique, former principal secretary; Mir Moynul Haque, ex-general manager of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (BAPEX); Kashem Sharif, former president of Niko Resources (Bangladesh) Ltd, and Selim Bhuiyan.

Of them, Kamal, Moynul, and Kashem have been absconding since the case was filed.

On March 19, 2023, the court framed charges

The ACC filed the case in December 2007, accusing Khaleda and several others of abusing power to award a gas exploration and extraction deal to Niko when she was the prime minister between 2001 and 2006.

The names of former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister for energy AKM Mosharrar Hossain and ex-BAPEX secretary Shafiur Rahman were dropped from the charges of case as they died.

After the acquittal order in the Niko graft case, Khaleda's lawyer Masud

Ahmed Talukder told reporters that they finally got justice from the court. "The case was filed against the BNP chairperson just to harass her politically," he said.

A day after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5 last year amid a mass uprising, the president pardoned Khaleda in cases she had been punished during the AL rule.

She was acquitted in five defamation cases filed during the AL rule over derogatory remarks about the Liberation War, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and

Hasina on September 3 last year, and relieved of the charges in the Gatco graft case on October 24.

On October 30, the High Court scrapped 11 criminal cases, including one for sedition.

The HC on November 27 acquitted the BNP chief in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case in which she was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a lower court.

In the same day, she was relieved in the Barapukuria coalmine corruption case.

On January 15 this year, the Supreme Court acquitted Khaleda Tarique, and four others of

The AL government temporarily released her with an executive order, suspending her sentence on the condition that she remains at her Gulshan home and does not leave the country. The term of her release had been extended several times.

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decided that the university would bear all medical expenses for the injured students.

It recommended measures with guidance from Khulna divisional commissioner to ensure students' security on the campus and adjacent areas.

Hours after the clashes, the Kuet students protesting against JCD attacks made a five-point demand on Tuesday night, giving the authorities until 1:00pm yesterday to meet those.

Besides expulsion of those involved in politics on campus, they demanded legal and disciplinary action, including expulsion, against those involved in Tuesday's violence; deployment of

the same day it was formed on January 7 since student politics on the campus was banned, he said.

JCD General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir at a press conference at Dhaka University, however, alleged that Omar Faruk, former convener of Students Against Discrimination's/ Kuet unit, led the brutal attacks on the general students.

He also pointed the finger at Hasnat Abdullah, the convener of Students Against Discrimination's/ central committee, alleging that Hasnat had monitored the attacks from Dhaka.

At Jahangirnagar University in Savar, a group of leftist students formed a

FROM PAGE 2

yesterday on allowing Awami men to participate in polls.

"As I did not elaborate... my statement may not have been conveyed clearly. Some media outlets have also presented my statement differently. Here [in the statement], it was not said to allow Awami League to participate in elections. That question is irrelevant before a trial," he said.

The adviser also

**BANGLADES**

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়  
কুমিল্লা গানি উদ্য়ান বিভাগ  
বাণাটবো, পানি কবন,  
কাউতলা, কুমিল্লা।

emphasised the need for finding a permanent solution to this issue.

"If we don't do so, the Awami League will find a way to return to power today or tomorrow. The Awami League had banned Jamaat-e-Islami, but did that stop Jamaat's politics?" Asif called for an "integrated process" to ensure AL's eradication, noting that the party still has a large number of

He also said many who had some connection or other with AL ask why they should apologise if they have done nothing wrong. "Of course, they must apologise for their involvement with Awami League 'as a fascist enabler' or a beneficiary' in any given form. This process must be completed transparently and in phases."

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GD-469

GD-473

GD-468