

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK SC adjourns hearing until May 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned until May 26 the hearing of the leave to appeal petitions filed by the state challenging the High Court verdict that acquitted BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the August 21, 2004 grenade attack.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed passed the adjournment order after concluding yesterday's proceedings on the matters.

Additional Attorney Generals Abdul Jabbar Bhuiyan and Aneek R Haque appeared for the state while a group of lawyers including SM Shahjahan, Mohammad Shishir Manir and Kayser Kamal were present for the accused during the hearing.

On December 1 last year the HC acquitted Tarique, Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the grenade attack.

The HC also scrapped the lower court verdicts that convicted and sentenced the 49 accused.

CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS Travel ban on former minister Muktadir, wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on former housing and public works minister RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury and his wife Fahima Khatun in connection with corruption allegations brought against them.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order following an application filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Assistant Director Abu Mohammad Anwarul Masud, who is leading the inquiry team.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir moved the application on behalf of the anti-graft body.

In the application, the ACC stated that Obaidul Muktadir allegedly amassed huge moveable and immovable assets using his political influence.

"The ACC official came to know from a credible source that the couple was attempting to flee the country. If they flee, inquiry into the allegations brought against them might be hampered. So, an order is needed to prevent them from doing so," read the ACC's application.

Muktadir, a former Awami League lawmaker from Brahmanbaria-3, was arrested from Dhaka's Nakhpalara area on November 1 last year.

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06. Other terms and conditions can be found in the tender document.

Deputy General Manager
Common Services Division



Local fishers repair their nets before they head out into the Kalabadar River. The photo was taken in the Vheduria area of Barishal Sadar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

KALUKHALI HEALTH COMPLEX Doctor shortage disrupts services

SUZIT DAS, from Rajbari

An acute shortage of doctors at the Kalukhali Upazila Health Complex in Rajbari has left health services in disarray for nearly two lakh residents.

Only five doctors are serving the hospital against 17 sanctioned positions. Currently, only the upazila health and family planning officer, a gynecology consultant, two medical officers and a dental surgeon are posted at the hospital, while three doctors are on deputation elsewhere, two are undergoing training, and seven posts remain vacant.

The absence of an anesthesiologist, in particular, has halted all surgical procedures, including Caesarean sections since February.

Moreover, while being designated as a 50-bed hospital, the health complex receives medical supplies meant for 30-bed facilities, adding to its woes.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the emergency unit and outpatient department quite overwhelmed with patients, while the operating theatre on the upper floor lies non-functional.

Dr Atish Dipankar, a medical officer at the hospital, said at least 200



patients come for treatment at the outpatient department, and nearly 40 patients get admitted daily, alongside some patients at the emergency unit.

Prodip Biswas, 26, from Chandipur village, whose mother is currently admitted to the hospital, said, "The district hospital is 25 kilometres from here, so we rely on this facility for urgent health services. However, due to the prevailing shortage of doctors, the hospital often refers critical patients to Rajbari or Faridpur, leading to delay in treatment."

Ananda Kumar Shil, 39, of the village, echoed him.

Dr Israt Jahan Ummon, upazila health and family planning officer in Kalukhali, said, "Just two doctors now run the operations, often working 24-hour shifts to cover both emergency and outpatient services. Only cesarean surgery used to be conducted here, but it has been suspended due to lack of anesthesiologist. Although we have diagnostic equipment, we can hardly utilise them amid manpower shortage. I have informed the civil surgeon about the situation."

Rajbari Civil Surgeon Dr SM Masud said they have notified higher authorities to resolve the crisis.

The absence of an anesthesiologist, in particular, has halted all surgical procedures, including Caesarean sections, for the past three months since February.

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Md. Ziauddin Iqbal
Senior General Manager (General Services)

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