



## CASES AGAINST BNP-JAMAAT LEADERS

# Trials now rolling well into the night

### 7 nighttime hearings held over last 2 months; prosecution rushes to finish trials before polls

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and SHARIFUL ISLAM

On August 28, when Golam Akter Iqbal finally came out of a Dhaka court, he looked pale, his eyes sunken from fatigue. He had a very long day at the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court-3. In the packed courtroom, the proceedings began at 10:30am and continued till around 3:45pm. After a break of about 15 minutes, the hearing resumed around 4:00pm and lasted till 8:00pm, three hours beyond the official 9:00am-5:00pm court hours, according to one of his lawyers.

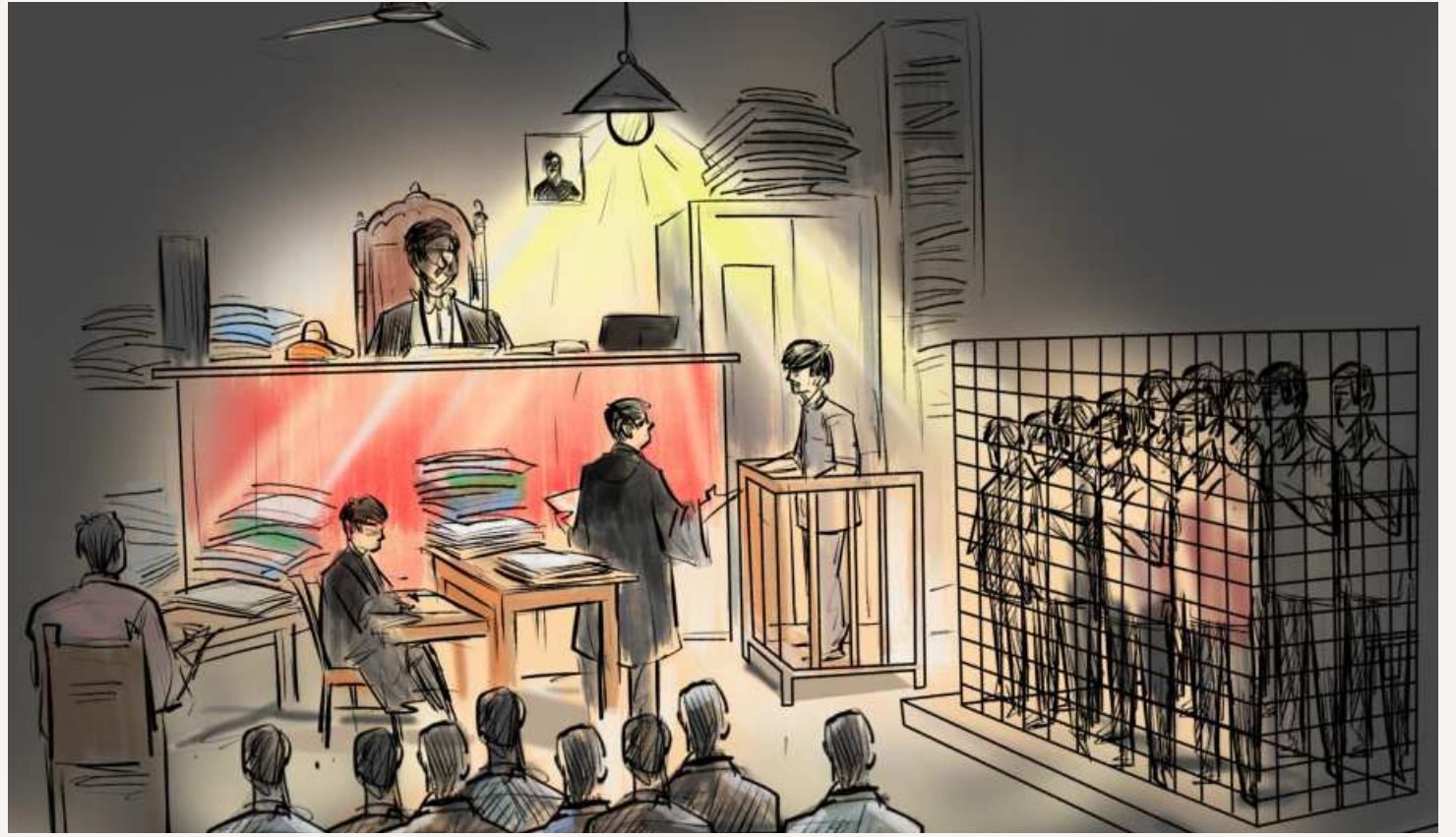
At 71, Iqbal has high diabetes, blood pressure, an enlarged prostate, and a failing vision.

But the ward-level BNP leader also has 52 cases against him, and must present himself before courts for frequent, prolonged hearings in these cases over arson, explosion, vandalism and attack on police.

Iqbal, from the capital's Shantinagar, has spent a good part of the last 10 years in court corridors. But for the last few months, he has been shuttling between courts almost every day except for the holidays.

In the past, hearing dates would be months apart and hardly any prosecution witness would appear to testify. The interval between hearings has now shortened, as the trial is now moving fast upon government instructions to quickly dispose of old cases like those Iqbal is facing.

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## Kohli, Shami star as India down New Zealand

REUTERS, Dharamshala

Virat Kohli's crafty 95 trumped Daryl Mitchell's rapid 130 as hosts India beat New Zealand by four wickets in a top-of-the-table clash in the 50-overs World Cup on Sunday.

Kohli could not complete the chase but was instrumental again as India reached a victory target of 274 with two overs to spare to maintain their unbeaten run in the tournament.

Their fifth successive win put the twice champions at the top of the table followed by 2019 runners-up New Zealand who tasted their first defeat at this year's tournament.

Mitchell smashed a rapid hundred but New Zealand did not get the late flourish and were all out for 273 in exactly 50 overs.

Mitchell forged a 159-run partnership with Rachin Ravindra (75) before the Indian bowlers applied the brake.

Mohammed Shami led India's spirited bowling effort, claiming 5-54 in his first

match of the tournament which earned him player-of-the-match award.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (46) led India's rollicking start but it was Kohli's fourth 50-plus score in five innings that helped to inflict on New Zealand their first defeat of the tournament.

Electing to field, India dominated the powerplay segment, reducing New Zealand to 34-2, but subsequently dropped three catches to let their opponents off the hook.

Once Shami had dismissed Ravindra, New Zealand, cruising at 205-3 in the 37th over, collapsed in a heap, managing 54 runs in the last 10 overs and losing six wickets.

Rohit gave India a flying start, smacking four sixes in his effortless knock, as the hosts raced to 71 for no loss in 10 overs.

Lockie Ferguson broke the stand with a wide delivery which Rohit dragged on to his stumps. In his next over, Ferguson

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## Tigers feeling the heat in Mumbai

MAZHAR UDDIN from Mumbai



ডাক বিভাগের ডিজিটাল লেনদেন

"Can you please pass me the water bottle and make sure you give the chilled one," Bangladesh vice-captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, drenched in sweat, asked team director Khaled Mahmud Sujon after

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## Reach Dhaka by 25th for rally

### BNP asks its leaders, activists to avoid possible obstructions

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Apprehending police obstruction, the BNP has instructed its leaders and activists to arrive in Dhaka by October 25 so that they can attend Saturday's rally.

It has prepared a guideline for the activists on how to get to the capital avoiding obstacles, party insiders said, adding that the initiative was taken after lessons learnt from the December 10 and July 28 rallies in Dhaka.

A senior leader, wishing not to be named, said the guideline mentions where the activists would stay once they are in Dhaka.

Abdul Awal Mintoo, vice-chairman of the party, told The Daily Star, "We hope that the government will not stop our leaders from joining the rally. But, due to our previous experiences, we asked our party leaders and activists to remain alert and come to Dhaka safely."

A leader from Sylhet division said the central BNP leaders have asked them to reach Dhaka by October 25 unless there is something important to do.

However, the BNP top brass held a number of meetings regarding the rally and it believes that the government, to avoid embarrassment, would not stop BNP activists since the local and international communities are watching.

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## Convicts cannot contest polls with mere stay order

### HC observes in full verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anyone sentenced to more than two years in jail cannot contest any election until the conviction is set aside by the higher court, the High Court has observed in its full text of a verdict.

Mere pendency of the criminal appeal would not allow him or her to contest the election unless five years have passed after serving the sentence, an HC bench said.

Currently, a person facing sentence of two years or more can contest the election by obtaining a stay order on the sentence from the higher court.

But following the HC verdict, nobody will be able to contest the election taking stay orders on lower court verdicts, said senior Supreme Court lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam recently released the full text of the

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Virat Kohli pulls one during his 95-run knock, which helped India beat New Zealand by four wickets in their World Cup match in Dharamshala yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Nagad, Kori get go-ahead for digital bank

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank yesterday issued letters of intent to Nagad Digital Bank and Kori Digital Bank, in a development that can substantially enhance people's access to finance.

Habibullah N Karim, the husband of former finance secretary Fatima Yasmin, is the chairman of Kori Digital Bank. Yasmin, who was appointed the vice-president of the Asian Development Bank in June this year, assumed the role of finance secretary in June 2022 after Abdur Rouf Talukder was made the BB governor. Before that, she was the secretary of the Economic Relations Division.

Sponsors of Kori Digital Bank include conglomerates ACI and Square Group; Rubana Huq, chairman of Mohammadi Group; and Kamran T Rahman, chairman of the Kapna Tea Company and former president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation. The Daily Star has learnt from BB officials informed with the proceedings.

The other recipient of the letter of intent (LoI) is Nagad Digital Bank, whose

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## 266 killed in Gaza in 24 hours

### Israel keeps pounding the enclave; US sees significant risk of attacks on Mideast interests

AGENCIES

Israel yesterday stepped up strikes on Gaza killing at least 266 Palestinians as fears of a wider conflict grew.

Washington yesterday said it was increasing military readiness in the Middle East warning of a significant risk to US interests in the region.

Iran said the region could spiral "out of control" and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Lebanon's Hezbollah that if it got involved, it would be "the mistake of its life".

Amid this war of words, Gaza's Health Ministry yesterday said 266 Palestinians, including 117 children, had been killed by Israeli air strikes in the past 24 hours in the enclave.

Israel has laid "total siege" to Gaza after a mass infiltration into Israel by Hamas gunmen on Oct 7.

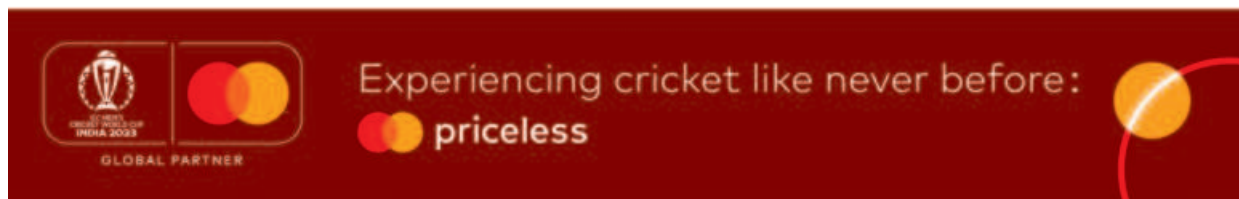
Hamas fighters also took 212 hostages.

Since Oct 7, Israel's air and missile strikes have killed at least 4,741 Palestinians and wounded 15,898, with over a million of the densely populated enclave's 2.3 million people displaced.

More than 40 percent of Gaza's housing has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Saturday that Washington would send more military assets to the Middle East

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