



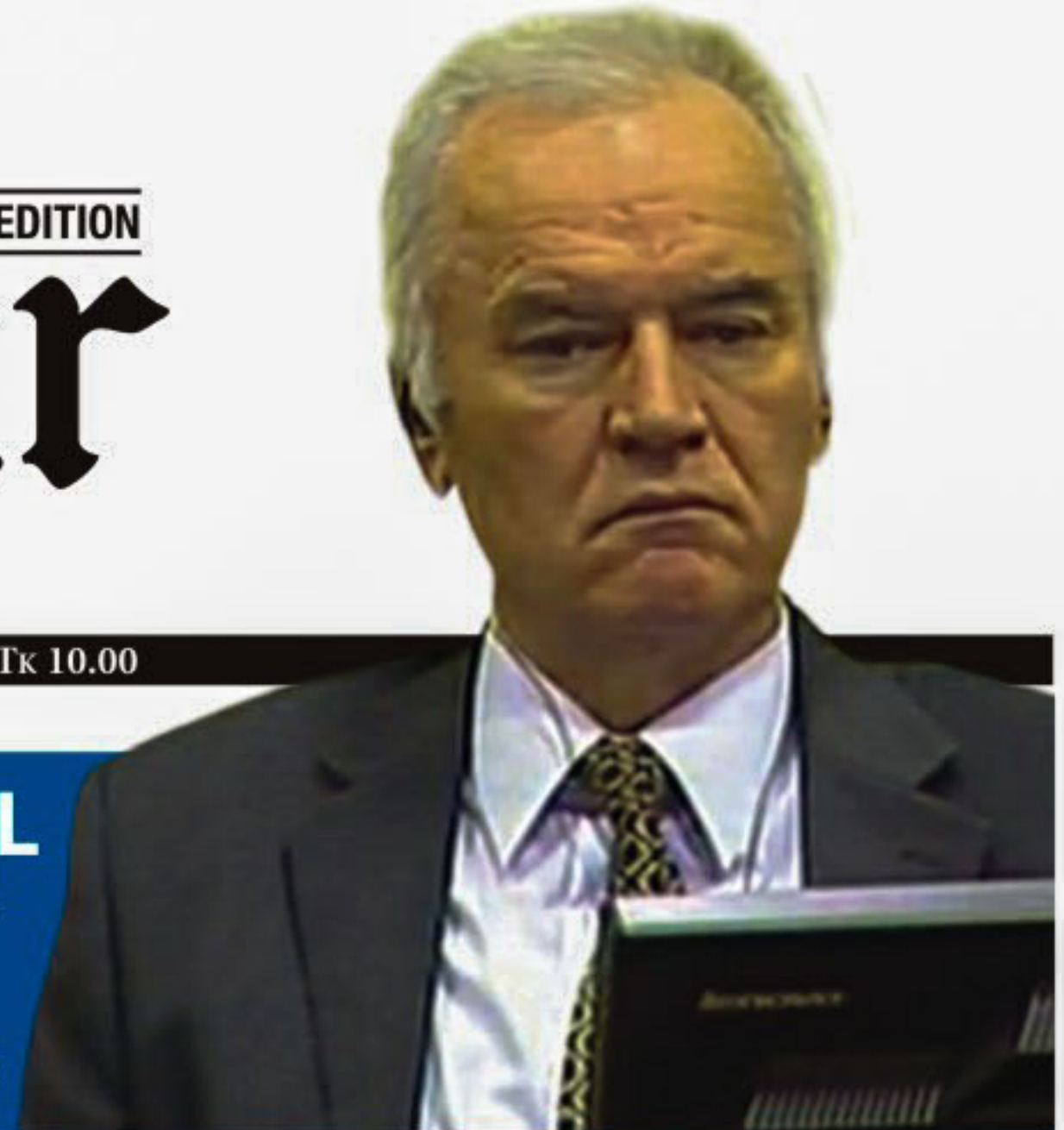
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Opposition top shots in jail

Court terms charges against 33 leaders non-bailable; violence erupts; hartal called for today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and 32 other high-profile opposition leaders ended up in jail after a Dhaka court yesterday rejected their bail prayers in connection with an arson case.

BNP standing committee members Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, MK Anwar, ASM Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah, Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra and former DCC mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka were among the leaders sent to jail. They had surrendered to the court and sought bail.

The BNP, a few hours later, called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal for today in protest. It demanded the unconditional release of its leaders, withdrawal of the cases against them and threatened tougher movements if the demands were not met. More agitation programmes

could be declared today.

After the leaders were sent to jail, pro-BNP lawyers got involved in a skirmish with police on the court premises that left 10 people wounded. Police also picked up around 150 people from the court premises but released all but three later on.

Reports of violence and arson across the country also began to pop up. At least 13 vehicles were torched and around 200 others were vandalised across the country.

Before the BNP even called the hartal, Chittagong (south), Thakurgaon (hometown of Fakhru), Pabna, Natore, Bogra and Sirajganj district BNP jumped the gun and called for daylong hartals in their districts.

"We had no plans to call a hartal. But the government forced us to do so. We are urging people to make the hartal a

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TODAY'S HSC EXAM TOMORROW-- PAGE 2



BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and party leader AKM Fazlul Haque Milon chant anti-government slogans as they board the prison van from a Dhaka court yesterday. This is the first time so many top opposition leaders were sent to jail at once by a court.

Was the ruling obvious?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two reasons seemingly led to the rejection of bail prayers by 33 opposition leaders yesterday. However, doubters as always saw the government's hand in the affairs of the lower courts.

The judge in this instance was left with little or no option regarding a grant of bail as the arson case was pushed to the speedy trial court and charges had already been pressed days before the leaders surrendered before the trial court yesterday at the instruction of a higher court.

When the accused surrender after a

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CHAOS AFTER COURT ORDER

13 vehicles burnt, 200 smashed

STAR REPORT

Agitated leaders and workers of BNP-led 18-party alliance vandalised around 200 vehicles and dozens of establishments across the country yesterday, ahead of today's nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal.

Scores were also injured in clashes between the alliance activists and law enforcers. The activists had blockaded roads and brought out processions protesting the court order that sent opposition leaders to jail.

A Dhaka court yesterday sent 33 leaders of 18-party alliance, including BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, to jail rejecting their bail petition in a case filed in connection with torching a vehicle near the Prime Minister's Office during April 29 shutdown.

Since yesterday afternoon, at least 13 vehicles were torched in Dhaka. Of them, four buses were set ablaze in Mirpur, one in Rajarbagh, one in Karwan Bazar, one on Panthapath, two pick-up trucks in Rampura, a taxi on Elephant Road and

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BNP reels from prison shock

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP, which had been threatening to launch tough anti-government movements, suddenly finds itself in deep trouble as a record number of senior leaders of the party and its associated bodies have been put behind bars in an arson case.

Leaders of all tiers of the party got "puzzled and panicky" when 33 top leaders of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, including BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, were sent to jail yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, party insiders termed the incident "unprecedented" in the country's political history and feared that the government's "hard line" against

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MURDER IN RAJSHAHI

2 ex-BCL men to die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday handed down death sentences to two former leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) unit at Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute for murdering Chhatra Moitree leader Rezwanaul Islam Sunny two years ago.

Out of ten convicts in the case, RPI unit's former president of BCL Nizam

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A minibus burns on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar in the capital yesterday afternoon, hours after 33 top opposition leaders were sent to jail in an arson case.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

GRAMEEN BANK, ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS Commission formed to review activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a four-member commission to review the activities of Grameen Bank and its associated organisations, and make recommendations on how to run the organisations.

The move comes a week after the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's two-day visit to Bangladesh when she said the US government would not endorse any action of the Bangladesh government undermining Grameen Bank's achievement.

Bank and Financial Institutions Division issued a circular on formation of the commission under The Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1956, and asked the commission to submit a report within three months.

Former secretary Mamunur Rashid will head the commission while barrister Ajmalul Hossain QC and Mosleh Uddin Ahmed FCA are its members. Director General of Planning and Development Academy MA Kamal will act as the member secretary.

The terms of reference of the commission are to identify institutional strengths, weaknesses and constraints of Grameen Bank, as evidenced in the years of its existence since its inception in 1983 till 2010.

The commission will recommend measures for good governance, accountability of the management and transparency in the bank, which together with its founder Prof Muhammad Yunus won Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for "efforts to create economic and social development".

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I'm transport worker first Says minister Shajahan Khan

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan yesterday identified himself

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Goodbye, middlemen

Dhaka, KL agree on state handling of workers' job in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur have agreed on state arrangements for recruitment of Bangladeshi workers by Malaysia eliminating middlemen from the process to reduce the cost of sending workers and end their perennial abuses.

"Malaysia is very concerned about human trafficking. It wants to improve this situation," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister

Khandker Mosharraf Hossain told journalists yesterday on his return from a four-day visit to Malaysia.

The minister was briefing the media at his office about his talks with the Malaysian authorities. He led a four-member delegation.

In Putrajaya, the delegation held meetings with Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin

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'Clean' Suranjit declares 'return' to politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suranjit Sengupta announced his "return" to politics yesterday, a month after he resigned as railway minister taking full responsibility for the Tk70 lakh scandal that involved his aide and two railway officials.

"I have decided to return to politics as I was primarily proved innocent by a departmental probe body of the railway," Suranjit, now a minister without portfolio, said at a press conference at his Jhigatola residence in the capital.

His remarks came two days after the probe body consisted of two railway officials did not find any involvement of the former railway minister in the scandal.

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