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ARTICULATING NATURE

Rafiqun Nabi holds solo exhibition
 highlighting uncomplicated rural life

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KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

Parochial arrogance and religious bigotry
 must not get the upper hand

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DRONE AGAINST POACHERS

Authorities use unmanned aircraft
 in India to protect rhinoceros

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APRIL TILL 14TH

Only 4 days
 left for work

6 hartals plus weekends, holiday
 serve severe blow to economy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

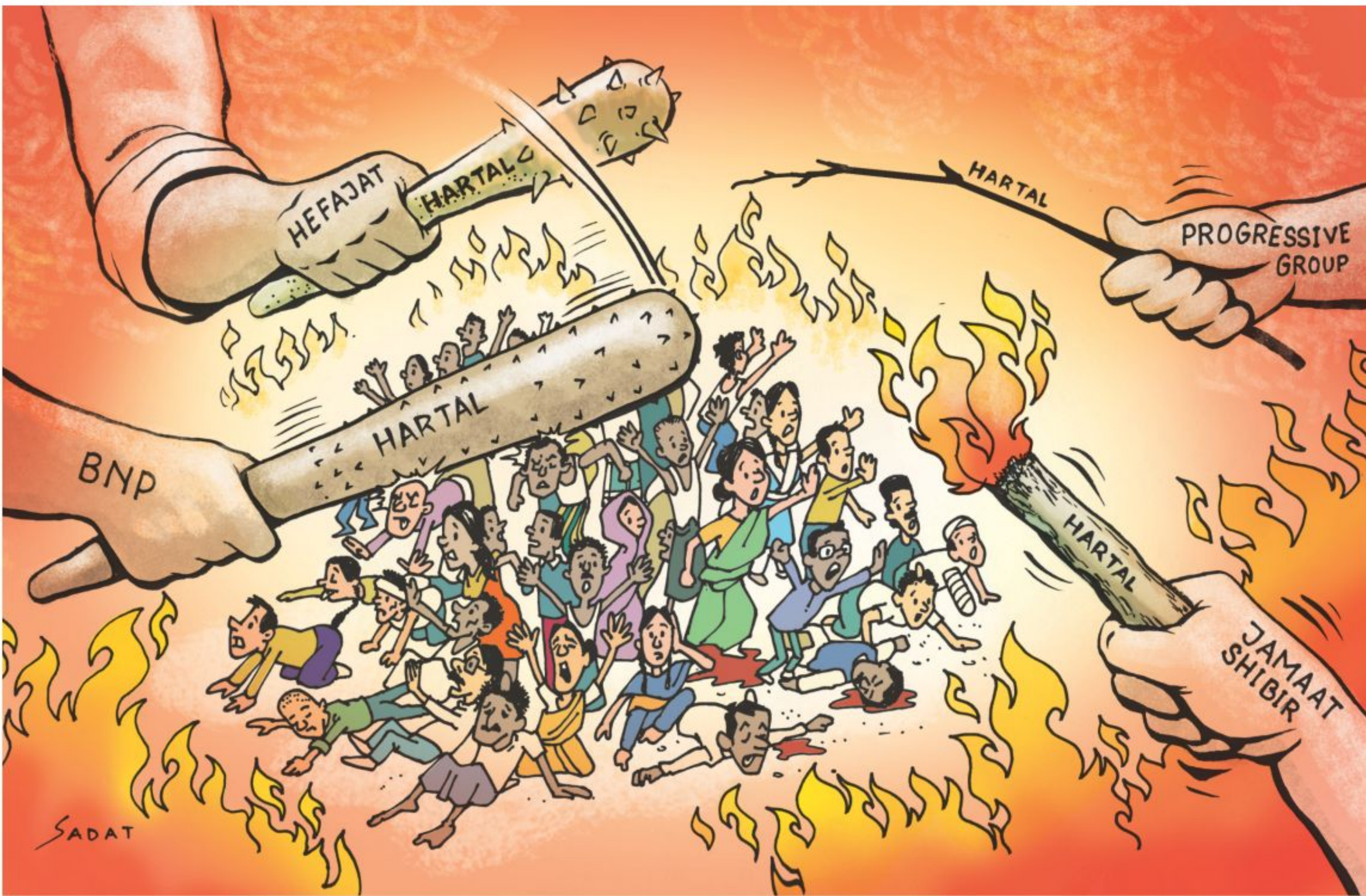
The economy is set to bleed after the export and service sector have become a hostage at the hands of the opposition parties, with fall in productivity punctuated by holidays and weekends.

Until April 14, when the country will celebrate Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year 1420, businesses will have had four workdays to operate, thanks to six shutdowns and four weekends and holidays.

Each shutdown costs Tk 2,000 crore, and the garment industry, which accounts for 80 percent of all the country's exports, loses Tk 360 crore for a day's hartal, according to the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

"We have already become a hostage to politics," Asif Ibrahim, former president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), said yesterday. "Buyers are cancelling orders. We are counting losses every day."

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Another
 hartal
 tomorrow

1 killed, 50 hurt on
 first day of shutdown
 by BNP, allies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sporadic violence in different parts of the country left one person killed and more than 50 injured yesterday as the 36-hour shutdown imposed by the BNP-led 18-party alliance began to press for the release of its leaders.

To add to the woes of city dwellers, especially the poor, Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, has called for another hartal tomorrow protesting the "torture of its detained president Delwar Hossain in police remand".

In the capital, several crude bombs were

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7 VANDALISM CASES
 10 leaders
 seek bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ten top BNP leaders, including acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, yesterday sought bail, challenging lower court orders that denied them bail in seven vandalism cases.

The same day, party's Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed was put on a three-day remand.

Mirza Fakhrul, Moudud Ahmed, Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Barkatullah Bulu, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annee, Abdullah Al Noman and Moazzem Hossain Alal were sent to

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BNP behind bars

Finds it hard to hold political programmes
 as over 50 active central leaders in jail

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

The crackdown on main opposition BNP has plunged the party into a temporary leadership crisis, as more than its 50 central leaders, including the acting secretary general, are now in jail.

The situation has put the opposition in a quandary. Many of its activists are confused about the fate of the ongoing anti-government agitation, as almost all the leaders active on the street have been put behind bars in less than a month.

Against such backdrop, BNP has asked its young leaders to stay safe from arrests, said party's senior leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday.

He said his party would step up the ongoing

agitation and the legal battle to free their detained leaders.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, some political analysts and opposition leaders observed that the crackdown would not yield positive result; rather deteriorate the situation further by closing the window for resolving the crisis through talks.

On Sunday, eight senior BNP leaders, including its acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir who had earlier been put behind bars twice in less than a year, were denied bail and sent to jail. They have been charged with torching vehicles and assaulting police during opposition's agitation.

The party's standing committee members

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PM to be
 compelled

Says Hefajat about
 blasphemy law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Leaders of Hefajat-e-Islam yesterday voiced their determination to compel Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to enact an anti-blasphemy law.

If the prime minister wants to stay in power, she has to enact the law to ensure that Muslim culture in the country is not compromised, they told newsmen at a press conference at Jamiatul Ulum

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Death of a
 dream

MAMUN UR RASHID, Bogra

Shahidul Islam Khokon, the truck driver who was killed by pickets when he was driving his goods-laden vehicle through Bogra in the early hours yesterday, had cherished a dream. His neighbours said the only dream he had was to educate his son and give him a better life.

Father of an eight-year-old boy, Khokon, 40, worked extremely hard to earn a living that enabled him to send his son to school and feed his family, the neighbours added.

On the fateful day yesterday, his Chittagong-bound



Shahidul Islam

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Tripods are seen without cameras and their operators in front of the BNP Nayapaltan headquarters yesterday. Newspersons usually wait there to get opposition leaders' comments as they emerge out of the office. But with almost 50 of its active leaders behind bars, there was no opposition leader yesterday to speak to the media for quite a while. The BNP is finding it difficult to even hold press conferences on schedule.

PHOTO:
 SK ENAMUL HAQ

Presidential
 polls Apr 29

EC fixes schedule; writ
 petition for stay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The presidential election will be held on April 29, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad announced yesterday.

Aspirants for the post will have to submit nomination papers on or before April 21 to the CEC.

The nomination papers will be scrutinised on April 22 and the last date for withdrawal of those is April 24.

The CEC announced the polls schedule at a press briefing at the Election Commission shortly after a meeting with acting Speaker Shawkat Ali.

According to the electoral law, president is elected by the MPs through open voting with the CEC as election officer.

As per the schedule, the MPs will cast votes from 3:00pm to 6:00pm in parliament, which goes into session on April 21.

If there is only one candidate, the CEC will declare

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EU worried,
 calls for
 dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union has expressed deep concern over the recent wave of violence in Bangladesh and called for constructive dialogue.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Dipu Muni on April 2, Baroness Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the

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Padma tender by June

Muhith hopes construction to end by 2016

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will float tenders by the first half of June to select bidders for construction of the long-awaited Padma Bridge, according to new implementation schedule.

The construction will be completed by June 2016.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith discussed the new schedule at a pre-budget meeting with the Economic Reporters Forum yesterday.

He said the government would unveil the detailed schedule by April 13, the day he is slated to leave for Washington to attend the World Bank-IMF spring meetings.

"The work on the Padma bridge project will start from where it was left off (in September 2011)," Muhith said adding that river training would also start from where it was stopped.

He reiterated that the bridge would be constructed with the government's own funds. For this, the

ministries would not be given additional allocations in the next year's budget.

However, the finance minister said, the previous development partners like ADB and Jica, if they want, could still participate in the Padma bridge project.

"We will follow the design accepted by the development partners; and we will follow the tender process and the list of pre-qualified

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Buet student stabbed
 at dormitory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified man stabbed a Chhatra League activist at a dormitory of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) in broad daylight yesterday.

With serious injuries to the head, back and the left eye, Arif Raihan Dwip, a third-year student of mechanical engineering and a resident student of Nazrul Islam Hall, is now admitted to Square Hospital in the capital.

As of filing this report around 1:10am today, surgeons were operating on Dwip. He was taken to the operating theatre around 8:30pm, a relative of the victim told The Daily Star.

Hall guard Zakir Hossain said he saw a punjabi-clad man, aged between 25 and 30, dragging Dwip down the stairs from the first floor of the dormitory around 11:30am. The attacker was carrying a bag on his back.

A fellow student, who happened to be

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