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## Country in volatile politics grip again

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The country braces for a volatile political situation with more violence as the opposition parties are determined to force the government to resign while the government has already taken a hard-line to defuse the opposition movement.

tougher programmes that include countrywide non-stop hartals. On the other hand, the BNP-led alliance government is firm to foil the movement that got momentum after the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, by launching a massive crackdown on the opposition men.

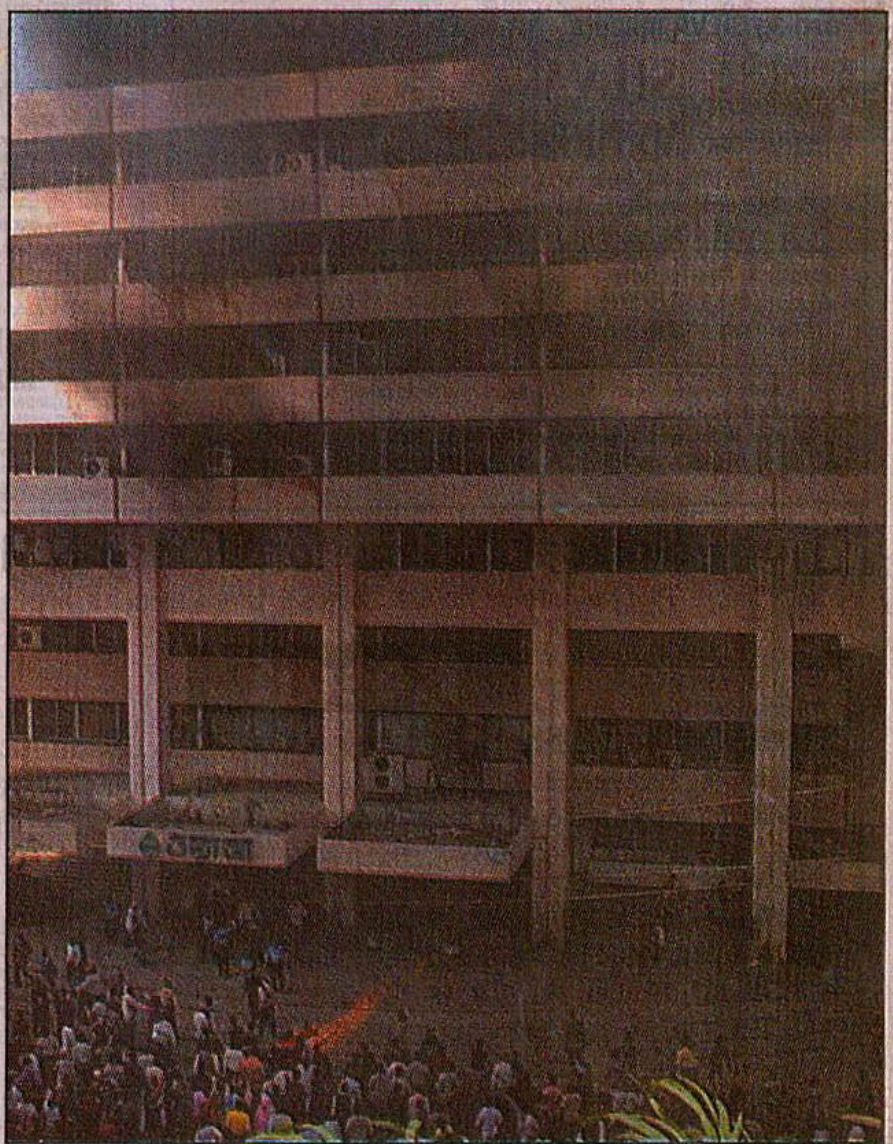
Meanwhile, heads of mission of the European Union have already expressed concern at the violence in Bangladesh (CPB), they were able to reduce the gap in the recent weeks, sources said. And now, efforts are on to bring Jatiya Party of former military ruler HM Ershad and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) of ex-president Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury into the fold for a simultaneous movement.

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## Fire at Wasa office knocks out 11

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
A fire at the Karwan Bazar headquarters of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) yesterday noon choked 11 people including two women unconscious and wasted furniture and fixtures the value of which is yet to be ascertained. The blaze is also suspected to have damaged the transmission system of ATN Bangla, the country's pioneering private satellite television channel housed on the second floor of the eight-storey Wasa Bhavan, forcing it to suspend airing of its scheduled programmes for over five hours.

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Panicked Wasa employees climb down ropes from the eight-storey building after a fire broke out from one of many electrical stoves on the fifth and sixth floors yesterday.

## Sharon, Abbas declare end to violence

**REUTERS, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**  
Israeli and Palestinian leaders proclaimed a formal end to more than four years of bloodshed at a summit in Egypt Tuesday. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he agreed with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to stop all violence. Sharon declared an end to military action at the meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, which was seen as a step back toward peace talks.

"The calm which will prevail in our lands starting from today is the beginning of a new era." Sharon said: "For the first time in a long time there is hope in our region for a better future for us and our grandchildren." It was the highest-level meeting between the sides since a Palestinian uprising blew up in 2000 after peace talks collapsed. The two sides did not sign a formal cease-fire agreement and Israel emphasized it was dealing only with Abbas's Palestinian Authority and not the militants behind attacks. The host, President Hosni

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## 36-hr hartal on Feb 14, 15

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The main opposition Awami League (AL), left-leaning 11-party combine and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) yesterday called a 36-hour countrywide hartal for February 14 and 15 demanding trial of the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and resignation of the BNP-led coalition government. The opposition parties separately announced their simultaneous anti-government programmes including the shutdown that begins at 6:00 am on February 14.

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## The brave heart

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
When several hundred WASA employees trapped on the top floors of their eight-storey building tried desperately to escape the inferno yesterday, Mohammad Mostafa, 22, a day laborer in Karwan Bazar, braved his way to the second floor by climbing a thin rope thrown to him from above. As Mostafa struggled his way to the third floor from the eastern side of the building, thousands of onlookers, including fire brigade

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## 3 outlaw leaders killed in 'crossfire'

Total number of deaths rise to 221

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**  
Three leaders of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (M-L Lal Pataka) were killed in 'crossfire' between police and the outlawed party cadres in Bagmara upazila early yesterday. Of the dead, Rajshahi Regional PBCP Commander Abdur Razzak alias LG killer Razzak, 43, hailed from Santipur, District Commander Abdur Rashid Khan alias Chapati Rashid, 25, from Baroihati, and Idrish Ali alias Pistol Idrish, 44, from Beerkutsa of Bagmara. With these three, the number of deaths in shootouts involving Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police since June last year rose to 221. Detective Branch of police on Monday afternoon arrested them at Ektara Bazar in Bagmara. Following

information obtained from the arrestees, a team led by assistant superintendent of police (Puthia circle) took them to Boalipara olive orchard in Jugipara union. As police reached the olive orchard at around 4:00am, accomplices of the three opened fire on them. Police returned fire starting a half-an-hour-long shootout. At one stage, the three while trying to flee the scene got shot. Police took them to Bagmara Health Complex, where the doctors declared them dead. Police recovered an Indian pistol, one local gun, two bullets and two cartridges from the scene of the shooting. They could not show any criminal records against them, but said the three while under interrogation

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LANCER CUP

An invitation to drive without the car

**LANCER CUP GOLF TOURNAMENT 2005**

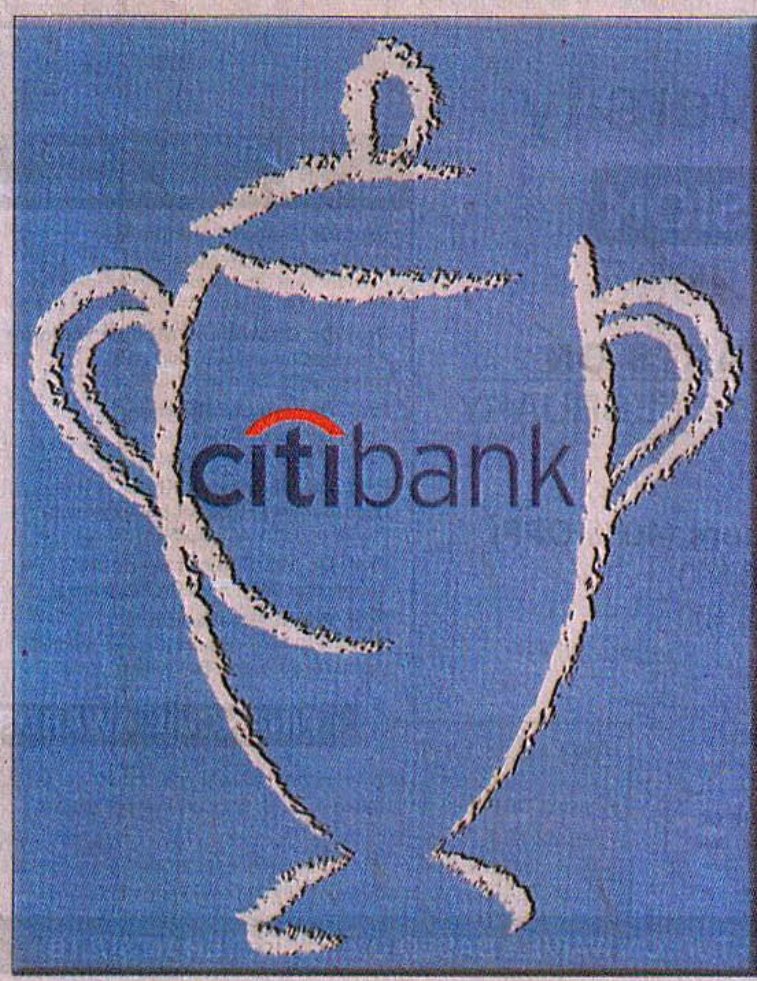
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