

## 06 BAN 10 – 06-10-27 Dhaka

Laboratoire des frondeurs.org



Segment horizontal du quadrillage ≈ 50 km

Note de contexte : Fin de mandat de 1<sup>er</sup> ministre de Khaleda Zia, qui est le leader du Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh (BNP). Le 1<sup>er</sup> ministre se retire et son pouvoir doit être transféré à un gouvernement provisoire qui a 90 jours pour organiser de nouvelles élections présidentielles. Le président a 15 jours pour désigner le gouvernement provisoire après le départ du 1<sup>er</sup> ministre. Le principal parti d'opposition est la Ligue Awami (AL) (voir le dossier 06 BAN - 06-09-11 Dhaka). Le président de la cour suprême qui doit présider le gouvernement provisoire est considéré comme partial par la Ligue Awami.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/oct/28/front.html#2>

### 3 killed as violence flares up

Staff Correspondent

At least three, including a BNP leader and a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, were killed and more than 200 injured as violence flared up in the capital city and elsewhere as power is set to be handed over from the four-party ruling coalition to the caretaker government and the BNP-Awami League dialogue on reforms proposals failed.



*Awami League activists set fire to a public bus at Jatrabari in Dhaka on Friday evening after the prime minister's address to the nation.*

— *New Age photo*

A Public Works Department employee, Khode Newaz Chowdhury, died after being hit with a bullet at Khilgaon Friday night. The police claimed there was no procession where he sustained wounds.

The offices of the BNP and its front organisations, Awami League offices, and the residences and business establishments of ministers and lawmakers were also attacked during violence that began after some BNP leaders had joined the newly-formed Liberal Democratic Party on Thursday.

The Brahmanbaria unit BNP vice-president, Sheikh Mohammad Habibullah, was killed in bomb attack on a procession at about 8:00pm Friday.

The district unit Juba Dal president, Emdadul Hassan, and student wing leader, Bidyut, were also injured.

A young man, Aslam, who sustained wounds during a clash at Dhamrai in Dhaka on Thursday after BNP lawmaker Ziaur Rahman had joined the new party, died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital Friday afternoon.

In Gazipur, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Ruhul Amin, died in an attack allegedly by the Awami League activists on the Jamaat office at Shibbari at about 8:15pm.

In Dhaka, the demonstrators vandalised BNP offices at Bangshal of Kotwali and Anandabazar of Shahbagh and set fire to the office of Ward 66 commissioner on Devidas Ghat Lane of Lalbagh.

The Awami League activists went on the rampage in other places, including Lalbagh, Kotwali and Sutrapur. The activists damaged shops and business establishments owned by BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu Thursday night.

On Friday, the supporters of the BNP and the Awami League began clashing at Imamganj of Lalbagh, in which 15 were injured. Raju and Emon, injured with bullet, were admitted to Mitford Hospital.

At Islambagh, the opposition activists set fire to the office of Ward 65 commissioner, Shahdiul Islam, at about 5:15pm.

At Shanirakhra of Demra, the opposition activists staged a sit-in demonstration suspending traffic from the south-east to the city.

Awami League activists vandalised several BNP offices at Lalbagh, Kotwali, Kamrangirchar, Motijheel and other areas, sources said.

In Gazipur, opposition activists brought out a procession with bamboo poles and oars and stopped traffic on the Dhaka–Mymensingh Highway at Joydevpur.

In Khulna, some young people vandalised the car of a physician and another vehicle of BNP

lawmaker, Ali Asghar Lobby, at Mirzapur at about 5:00pm. More than 70 were injured in clashes between the Awami League and the BNP activists at Debidwar and Burichang in Comilla on Thursday and Friday.

In Shariatpur, at least 20 people were injured in a clash between the activists of the BNP and the Awami League at Domsar Bazar on Friday.

Minister without portfolio Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was attacked and he took refuge in local police station.

The New Age correspondent in Barisal said the situation in the city was tense, but under control till late evening. Law enforcers intensified their vigilance.

The Patuakhali correspondent said BNP rival factions, led by lawmaker Altaf Hossain and his opponents BNP secretary Snehangshu Sarkar Kutty and municipal chairman Mostak Hossain Pinu clashed and chased each other in the town Friday evening.

In Rangpur, more than 50 were injured in clashes between the opposition combine led by the Awami League and the BNP when the BNP's youth front leader, Kamal Hossain, was in a vehicle as the opposition procession marched past near the press club in the afternoon.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/28/d6102801022.htm>

## **Violence flares up, houses of ministers, MPs attacked 2 alliance leaders, an activist killed, 500 injured**

Star Report

The country plunged into a chaos yesterday as Awami League (AL) and BNP activists were locked in battles over establishing supremacy in the localities of Dhaka and other places just hours before the end of the four-party alliance government's tenure.

The clashes left three ruling alliance leaders and activists killed, over 500 injured, and hundreds of houses and vehicles ransacked and torched. Two women also died in a road accident at Jatrabari during the rampage.

Even senior ministers and lawmakers of the four-party alliance were also not spared as their houses and offices came under attacks during yesterday's rampage in Dhaka and in many other districts.

The dead are Advocate Habib Ullah, vice-president of Brahmanbaria district unit of BNP, Ruhul Amin, a Rokon of Gazipur district unit of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, and Khoda Newaz Chowdhury, whose identity could not be ascertained.

Thousands of Awami League and 14-party coalition activists came out on the streets yesterday evening to gain pre-emptive control of their respective localities and to show off muscle immediately after the prime minister's address to the nation at 7:00pm.

Different parts of the capital were found literally burning into the chaos as armed activists of both the alliances indiscriminately blasted crackers and bombs, set tires on fire, ransacked vehicles and threw brickbats at rival processions.

The capital last night resembled the images of battle-prone streets of Palestine seen on TV screens with armed men prowling on empty streets which were marked with blazes eerily lighting up the night sky. A frightening calm engulfed the city which was punctuated by sounds of gunshots and battle cries of the operatives of two rival parliamentary parties that were engaged in a dialogue just a few days ago. Almost all the stores remained closed and most of the streets were deserted in the capital while its panic-stricken residents were glued to TV screens or hectic on phones trying to find

out what their uncertain lives are heading towards. The scene on the streets of Dhaka city last night brought into reality the hitherto fear of political experts even before the handover of power to a caretaker government.

At the time of filing this report early today Jatrabari, Shyampur, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Russel Square and its adjacent area in Dhanmondi, Pallabi, Lalbagh, Kamrangirchar, and Hazaribagh areas of the capital were under the control of AL activists.

In the port city of Chittagong a ban on gatherings on Laldighi Maidan was declared by the administration in the wake of a tense situation that arose after the local chapters of both BNP and AL had announced rallies there at the same time. Yesterday, as BNP tried to hold a rally on the maidan, AL activists chased the BNP activists out of the area and held an AL rally there presided over by City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who is also an AL leader.

## **CAPITAL**

Thousands of activists of AL and BNP and of their different front organisations came out on the streets in the capital during the prime minister's address to the nation and demonstrated violently leaving its residents in panic and anxiety.

Activists of both the parties threw bombs on rival party's processions, offices and other establishments and were locked in clashes, almost all over the city. Small battles were continuing in different areas of the capital at the time of filing this report.

The worst was seen in the area spanning from Motijheel to Demra, forcing hundreds of commuters to walk to their destinations in complete darkness as the clashing political operatives damaged the street lights and barred vehicular traffic on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Activists of both the parties were seen patrolling the streets with sticks and stones in hands in search of rival party men. They were chanting slogans against each other.

At least two men from Pallabi area were admitted to hospitals last night with critical bullet wounds. The two -- Bachchhu and Shahin -- were wounded at Duaripara in Pallabi.

Several crackers were blasted at the residence of Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas at Shajahanpur in Khilgoan during the clashes.

The house of Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at Dhanmondi also came under attack. The opposition activists hurled bricks at his residence leaving its windowpanes shattered.

Several crackers were blasted at the residence of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, parliamentary adviser to the prime minister, last night for the second time in the last seven days.

State Minister Amanullah also came under attack at his residence at Imamganj in Lalbagh. The attack left four including Aman injured as AL and BNP exchanged bullets there yesterday afternoon for half an hour.

AL workers also attacked the house of minister without portfolio Harun-ur-Rashid Munnu and the BEPZA office at Dhanmondi.

They also ransacked business establishments of lawmaker Salauddin Ahmed and the BNP office in Demra. In retaliation BNP men attacked the house of AL Adviser RK Chowdhury.

Some workers sprayed bullets on the house of Ward Commissioner Marzina in Khilgaon leaving Newaz wounded. He later succumbed to his injuries in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. BNP claimed Newaz as one of its activists.

In a separate incident at Postogola, a CNG three wheeler driver received burn injuries when some activists set fire to his vehicle at about 10:00pm.

Meanwhile, two unknown women died under the wheels of a bus at Jatrabari when BNP and AL men chased each other during a clash.

AL activists also set fire to about 25 vehicles in the capital, blasted bombs and crackers at different spots and fired gunshots. They also ransacked the radio broadcasting office at Shahbagh, Biman office at Motijheel and several BNP establishments.

BNP activists brought out a procession in Gulistan area last evening, which later had to confront AL activists. Police dispersed both the groups.

The opposition coalition activists later attacked Peer Yameni Market owned by Ward Commissioner Chowdhury Alam and damaged its gate.

AL operatives also burnt many BNP offices at different places in the capital including Lalbag, Mirpur, Demra and Dhanmondi.

AL activists burnt and ransacked the banners and posters of lawmaker Nasir Uddin Pintu at Kamrangir Char at 6:30pm.

AL activists allegedly set fire to the office of the commissioner of ward no 67 at Moulavibazar at 1:00am yesterday. Clashes between the operatives of BNP and AL in the area erupted again in the afternoon.

BNP activists brought out processions at Dainik Bangla crossing, Hatir Pool and Dhaka University.

### **BRAHMANBARIA**

The district BNP brought out a procession in the district-headquarter immediately after the prime minister's address to the nation.

Some unknown men threw bombs at the procession leaving Advocate Habib and several others injured. Doctors declared Habib dead after he had been rushed to a local clinic.

### **GAZIPUR**

AL and BNP activists got locked in a battle at Shivbari crossing when AL activists tried to set fire to a local Jamaat office yesterday evening.

Several Jamaat activists including Ruhul Amin became targets of the attack as they were coming out of an adjacent mosque after saying their prayers.

Police charged batons to disperse the fighting activists of the two party leaving at least 15 injured.

Ruhul Amin died on the spot during the police action, said sources but Gazipur police claimed that he died of a heart attack.

## **PATUAKHALI**

AL activists attacked a motorcade of Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, a minister without portfolio, at Subed Ali Bandar under Mirzaganj thana in Patuakhali at noon on Thursday.

Altaf was forced to take shelter at the local police station as a local AL procession, led by former general secretary of Bangladesh Krishok League Harun-ur-Rashid Hawlader, threw stones at his motorcade and chased him during his visit to his constituency.

## **RAJSHAHI**

About 30 persons were injured yesterday, 10 of them with bullet wounds, in a daylong clash between two rival groups of BNP one led by Post and Tele-communications Minister Barrister Aminul Haque and the other by Tanore municipality chairman also former upazila Juba Dal president Emran Ali Mollah.

The clash began when supporters of Emran beat up eight supporters of the minister at a rally on the founding anniversary of Juba Dal on the Dak Bungalow ground, reports our Rajshahi staff correspondent.

To secure the loyalists of the minister, police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the mob hitting 10.

Protesting the police attack, Emran's men stormed the local police station, damaged the local BNP office, and set fire to three motorcycles.

## **KHULNA**

An AL procession attacked the house of BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi in Khulna and damaged two private cars and windowpanes of the house. It also assaulted Qamrul Ahsan, Khulna bureau staff photographer of the daily Prothom Alo. Later, police rescued Qamrul.

## **BOGRA**

At least 10 were injured in an attack on the office of BNP lawmaker Kazi Rafiq from Bogra-1 constituency. The lawmaker, however, was unharmed.

## **RANGPUR**

Five cops and 50 activists of the 14-party opposition coalition and Juba Dal were injured, 10 of them critically, in a series of chase and counter-chase in Rangpur town last evening.

## **BARISAL**

The local administration imposed section 144 in Baufal fearing confrontations in the locality. Over 80 people were injured and many residences of both BNP and AL leaders came under attacks in Barisal in the last two days.

## **COMILLA**

Over 50 people were injured and 10 houses damaged in clashes between AL and BNP activists in Debidwar and Burichang upazilas in Comilla over a feud about graffiti on Thursday.

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[http://www.french.xinhuanet.com/french/2006-10/28/content\\_336524.htm](http://www.french.xinhuanet.com/french/2006-10/28/content_336524.htm)

## **Affrontements au Bangladesh: deux morts et 300 blessés**

2006-10-28 19:28:36

DHAKA, 28 octobre (XINHUA) -- Au moins deux personnes ont été tuées et 300 autres blessées, beaucoup par balles, dans les affrontements samedi entre les partisans du Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh (PNB, au pouvoir) et ceux de la Ligue Awami.



Mohammad Hossain, 24 ans et Monir, 40 ans, ont trouvé la mort dans les violents conflits à Dhaka, capitale du pays. 115 blessés ont été admis à l'hôpital du Collège médical de Dhaka.

Le nombre de personnes tuées dans les affrontements de ces deux derniers jours est ainsi porté à 6, alors que les conflits ont été notifiés dans différentes parties du pays. A Dhaka, la police anti-émeute a fait usage du gaz lacrymogène et des balles caoutchouc pour faire face aux partisans de l'opposition.



Des milliers de partisans de la Ligue Awami, beaucoup d'entre eux étaient armés de bâtons, ont manifesté dans la rue et ont attaqué la police à coups de pierres. Un véhicule de la police a été incendié.

Le Premier ministre sortant, Khaleda Zia du PNB, dont le mandat a expiré le 27 octobre et doit confier les rênes du pouvoir à un gouvernement provisoire qui sera dirigé par K.M. Hasan, ancien président de la Cour suprême.

Le gouvernement provisoire sera chargée d'organiser des élections législatives en janvier 2007 et de garantir leur transparence. La Ligue Awami s'oppose à la désignation de M. Hasan à la tête du gouvernement provisoire, l'accusant d'être un fidèle du PNB.

Le PNB et la Ligue Awami ont mené six tours de négociations sur la réforme des élections sans aboutir.

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/international/newsid\\_6093000/6093698.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/international/newsid_6093000/6093698.stm)

## **Bangladesh: continúa ola de violencia**

Publicada: 2006/10/28 12:32:12 GMT

Por segundo día consecutivo, Bangladesh es escenario de violentas protestas callejeras. Al menos tres personas murieron el sábado elevando a nueve el número total de víctimas en los últimos dos días de disturbios en todo el país.

El motivo de los enfrentamientos entre los simpatizantes y opositores del gobierno es quién encabezará el gobierno interino, a cargo de organizar las elecciones en enero de 2007.

La ceremonia del traspaso de poder estaba prevista para el sábado, pero fue pospuesta por tiempo indefinido debido a que K. M. Hasan, el ex magistrado del Tribunal Supremo, quien iba a presidir el gobierno interino, está enfermo, informó un portavoz del gobierno.

El corresponsal de la BBC en Dhaka, Roland Buerk, señaló que éste era un momento muy conveniente para enfermarse; circulan rumores no confirmados de que Hasan no ha podido conseguir suficientes personas para formar un nuevo gobierno.

La opositora Liga Awami amenazó con paralizar el país con manifestaciones, bloqueos de carreteras y vías ferroviarias si Hasan asume el poder.

Según la Liga Awami, Hasan es una figura demasiado cercana al gobierno de Jaleda Zia, con lo cual no hay garantías de que las elecciones sean neutrales.

### ***Sistema de gobierno***

El período de la primera ministra, Jaleda Zia (del Partido Nacionalista de Bangladesh), finalizó el viernes a la medianoche.

Bajo el sistema de gobierno de Bangladesh, cuando un período gubernamental llega a su fin, el poder se transfiere a un gobierno interino que tiene 90 días para organizar las elecciones.

Pero la oposición quiere participar en la elección del jefe del gobierno interino.

La Constitución establece que el presidente, Iazuddin Ahmed, tiene 15 días para formar un gobierno provisorio.

Horas antes de terminar su período, Zia prometió respetar la Constitución e hizo una llamado para que el país regrese a la calma.



Zia prometió que las elecciones serían libres y justas y que la Constitución "protegerá a un país responsable y amante de la paz".

Dijo además que era "muy lamentable" que las conversaciones con la oposición destinadas a resolver la crisis actual, no hayan producido resultados.

### ***Violencia***

En el pasado se han producido manifestaciones de violencia esporádicas, pero según Buerk, mucha gente teme que esto sea un momento de calma previo a la tormenta.

Buerk señala que el traspaso de poder puede provocar una gran confrontación entre el gobierno y la oposición.

El viernes, una persona murió en el pueblo de Brahmanbaria, en el este del país, durante enfrentamientos entre simpatizantes del gobierno y la Liga Awami.

Otra murió cerca de Dhaka a raíz de enfrentamientos entre seguidores del gobierno y simpatizantes del recientemente formado partido Demócrata Liberal, que incluye entre sus miembros figuras de alta jerarquía que abandonaron las filas del partido gobernante.

Una tercera falleció en otro enfrentamiento en el distrito de Khilgaon, informó una agencia local de noticias.

### ***Rivalidad personal***

La situación política en Bangladesh está marcada por la profunda rivalidad personal entre Sheik Hasina de la Liga Awami y Jaleda Zia.

Ambas han gobernado el país en distintos períodos pero no se hablan desde hace años.

El Parlamento ha sido boicoteado regularmente por cualquiera de los partidos que se encuentre en la oposición y cada vez más se recurre a las protestas callejeras.

Como las elecciones no se llevarán a cabo hasta enero, según Buerk, el país será testigo de futuros disturbios.

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<http://www.ansa.it/ansalatina/notizie/rubriche/mundo/20061028122234093760.html>

## **ENFRENTAMIENTO Y CRISIS POLITICA EN BANGLADESH**

28/10/2006 12:22

DACCA, 28 (ANSA)- Cientos de personas resultaron heridas hoy en enfrentamientos en Dacca, donde estaba previsto el pasaje de poder entre el gobierno renunciante y un ejecutivo interino con vistas a las elecciones de enero próximo.

El premier designado, el ex presidente de la Corte Suprema, K.M. Hasam, no se presentó a la ceremonia de traspaso de poderes porque, según sus colaboradores, está "gravemente enfermo". Militantes del oficialismo y de la oposición se lanzaron a las calles y se enfrentaron en distintos puntos de la capital, de acuerdo al reporte de testigos.

El mandato del actual premier, Begum Khaleda Zia, venció el viernes.

La oposición acusa a Hasam de ser un colaborador de Khaleda Zia, líder del BNP, Bangladesh Nationalist Party, oficialista).

La oposición, integrada por una coalición de 14 partidos, había amenazado con paralizar el país si Hasam asumía el cargo de premier interino.

(ANSA).

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/29/d6102901033.htm>

## **12 killed, 2,000 hurt as violence hits country**

Star Report

At least 12 people were killed and about 2,000 wounded, many by bullets, as activists of outgoing BNP-led four-party coalition government and Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine clashed in an escalation of violence across the country yesterday.

Reports came that seven were killed while over 1,400 injured in clashes between the activists of the two alliances at different places outside the capital. Five were killed in Dhaka.

The political activists vandalised and set fire to offices and houses of rivals as they came out on streets with vengeful programmes a few hours after curtain fell on the coalition government.

Local administrations imposed section 144 on political gatherings in different parts of the country to check violence, but the political activists carried on with their programmes defying the ban.

The dead include two activists of Awami League (AL) and Jubo League killed in Kushtia and Meherpur, a Jamaat-e-Islami member in Magura, an Islami Chhatra Shibir leader in Kurigram, and three BNP men in Narsingdi and Bagerhat.

### **MEHERPUR**

Jubo League activist Abbas Ali was killed in Gangni upazila when police opened fire on an AL procession, leaving at least 50 injured.

When the rally reached Gangni bus stand, some AL activists stormed into a BNP office there and started to ransack it. As a joint forces team rushed there, the AL men threw bricks at the police, prompting them to open fire.

### **KUSHTIA**

BNP cadres opened fire on an AL procession passing the Bheramara upazila BNP office around 4:30pm. At least 50 activists of both the parties were hit by bullets. They were admitted to Kushtia general hospital.

Critically injured Bashir Uddin died at about 7:45pm. At least 15 policemen were also injured in the Meherpur and Kushtia incidents.

### **KURIGRAM**

A Shibir leader was killed and at last 60 activists were injured in a clash between the 14-party and four-party alliances near the Central Shaheed Minar area at 1:00pm yesterday.

The clash began after the BNP hurled two cocktails on an AL procession.

Critically wounded Rafiqul Islam, president of Panchgati Union unit of Shibir, succumbed to his injuries at about 5:00pm.

The AL activists vandalised BNP offices at Rajarhat and Roumari upazilas and set fire to Juba Dal office in Kurigram town.

They clashed again at Ghoshpara in the evening leaving four activists wounded.

### **MAGURA**

An associate member of Jamaat's town committee was killed and 95 others injured in a clash between BNP and 14-party men at Magura bus stand yesterday afternoon.

Arafat Hossain, 45, was standing on a rooftop near the bus stand when he was bullet-hit. He died on the way to Dhaka.

### **NARSINGDI**

Hazipur Union Parishad Chairman Saiful Islam Sarkar and his younger brother Ripon Sarkar were shot dead while four others of the same family were seriously injured yesterday afternoon as AL activists allegedly stormed into their house and opened fire.

The two died while being rushed to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital. The injured are Mahe Alam, 45, Shamim, 30, Hannan, 35, and Elem, 33.

### **BAGERHAT**

A local BNP leader and former municipality ward commissioner, Asaduzzaman, 38, was chopped to death and 20 others were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists in the town last night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the AL and BNP activists locked in a bloody clash at 7:15pm. Police found the body of Asaduzzaman in front of the Light Cinema Hall.

Earlier in the afternoon, the AL men damaged and set on fire six BNP offices, some business houses owned by BNP men. Sporadic clashes left over 50 people wounded.

### **NARAYANGANJ**

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) organising secretary of Murapara union Motiur Rahman Panna, 25, died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital after he was injured in a clash between JCD and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Narayanganj Friday night.

### **RANGPUR**

At least 60 activists of 14-party and four-party alliances were injured in a series of attacks and counter-attacks in Rangpur town yesterday after BNP and Jamaat activists attacked 14-party leaders at Jahajcompany point.

The BNP-Jamaat men ransacked AL office and Mercantile Bank on Station Road. They also set fire to a stage made by the 14-party combine and the house of a Jubo League leader.

The 14-party men set fire to the daily Juger Alo office owned by Rahim Uddin Bharsa, president of Rangpur district unit BNP, on GL Roy Road. They also burnt two autorickshaws, a microbus and a bus owned by Asadul Habib Dulu, deputy minister for food and disaster management of the outgoing government.

## **RAJSHAHI**

Ten people, including three policemen and president of Rajshahi Photojournalist Association Asaduzzaman Asad, were injured in Rajshahi city during an agitation programme of the 14-party at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point yesterday.

The agitators ransacked BNP offices in Chapainawabganj sadar upazila and district town and damaged a business centre owned by a BNP leader and the house of Doctors' Association of Bangladesh President Dr Moyez.

Sonamasjid Land Port became inoperative as barricades were set up at different points on the Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid highway.

## **TANGAIL**

At least 100 people including 10 policemen were injured in a fierce clash between BNP and 14-party workers at Nirala intersection in Tangail town yesterday.

The 14-party activists also vandalised BNP offices in Dhanbari and Basail upazila headquarters in the district while 20 people were injured during chase and counter-chase in Madhupur upazila.

## **SIRAJGANJ**

At least 35 persons including policemen were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists at Ullapara yesterday after the BNP attacked an AL procession.

The 14-party workers blocked the highway and railway at different points and damaged at least seven vehicles during their demonstration programmes.

## **SATKHIRA**

Workers of the 14-party alliance burnt Jamaat offices in the town and in Shyamnagar. They also damaged the office of Islami Insurance Division in the town.

## **BOGRA**

Seventy-five people were injured in clashes between the workers of 14-party combine and four-party alliance in Bogra town and adjacent areas yesterday. BNP men vandalised the offices of the AL, Jubo League, JSD and Workers Party and attacked the house of former municipality chairman Rezaul Karim Montu, an AL leader.

Twenty-five people were injured in another clash between AL and Jamaat workers at Dhunat upazila while unknown people set fire to the house of Sonatola upazila BNP President Abu Taiyab Zaki.

Witnesses said Zaki opened fire on the agitated AL men during the incident, injuring three.

## **NETROKONA**

At least 55 people were injured in three upazilas of Netrokona. Besides, 15 people were wounded in AL-BNP clash in Durgapur and 20 in Mohanganj upazila when BNP activists swooped on an AL procession.

## **DINAJPUR**

At least 120 workers of four-party and 14-party were injured and a number of party offices burnt as they got locked into battles over establishing supremacy in areas of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

AL workers set fire to Chirirbandar upazila BNP office and assaulted former MP Md Akhtaruzzaman.

### **PATUAKHALI**

At least 30 activists of BNP and AL were injured in clashes at different places in Patuakhali district.

BNP cadres ransacked district offices of AL and NAP (National Awami Party), prompting AL activists to vandalise district BNP office.

They also attacked the house of district BNP vice-president and president of district Krishak Dal and Sramik Dal office in launch ghat area.

### **KHAGRACHHARI**

At least 25 AL men including AL district committee adviser Dina Bandhu Sarker were injured, many business centres and many government offices ransacked and torched in sporadic clashes between AL and BNP over getting supremacy at different parts of the hill district yesterday.

The clashes ensued after BNP cadres led by district Organising Secretary Mostafizur Rahman Millat attacked an AL procession.

AL activists later ransacked a number of offices including the press club, Sramik Dal office, several vehicles and furniture shops while BNP men set fire to AL activists' houses at Shalbagun village.

Bangladesh Rifles men were deployed later.

### **NOAKHALI**

Thirty people including the officer-in-charge (OC) of Sudharam Police Station were injured during clashes between the AL and BNP at Town Hall intersection in Majdi yesterday evening.

The BNP workers later vandalised AL and Jubo League office, a shop and four motorbikes.

Meantime, 45 others of the rival groups were injured in Hatia upazila.

The AL men vandalised 20 shops owned by BNP men and their supporters.

### **FARIDPUR**

Twenty people including the OC of Faridpur Police Station were injured in a clash between the workers of 14-party and Jamaat in the town. The clash began after some people from Jamaat office hurled stones on AL procession.

Later a mob ransacked the BNP office.

### **MYMENSINGH**

Nineteen people were injured during clashes between 14-party and BNP men in the district. The 14-party workers ransacked vehicles and shops and set fire to district Sramik Dal office.

### **JHENIDAH**

Forty people were injured in clash between BNP and AL activists in the district. The AL activists of Kaliaganj set fire to a BNP office, hurled bomb at a police van leaving four constables injured.

## **KISHOREGANJ**

Over 55 people including a journalist were injured when AL workers ransacked two BNP offices and a Zia Parishad office and put barricade on the highway.

## **PABNA**

Thirty people were injured and offices of different political parties and 25 shops ransacked during clash between AL and BNP men in the district yesterday.

## **GAIBANDHA**

At least 15 people including three policemen were injured when 14-party workers attacked a BNP office and set fire to the house of BNP leader Hamidul Huq Chhana in Munsipara.

They also ransacked Jamaat and BNP offices at Bonarapara.

## **BARISAL**

Fifty people including four police constables were injured when the AL men vandalised over 100 establishments including houses of BNP leaders and activists and offices of the BNP and Jamaat in Barisal town yesterday morning.

Although they had control on the town the whole day, Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal activists led by City Mayor Mujibur Rahman Sarwar entered the town at 5:00pm.

With police escort, they were firing gunshots while entering the town and re-established their supremacy.

## **KAPASIA**

Twelve AL men were bullet-hit in a sudden attack by BNP men yesterday afternoon.

Former state minister for jute Hannan Shah led the attack on an AL procession near Itkhola, said former MP Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj.

## **SYLHET**

Ten people including the president of the Sylhet district unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir sustained injuries in clashes between the activists of four-party alliance and AL-led 14-party in Sylhet city yesterday.

The 14-party activists forced away the Shibir and Jamaat men, who were preparing for a rally in city's court point area.

Shibir men vandalised at the AL office at Ibrahim Smriti Sangsad and five shops and injured Juba League activist Tapan Mitra.



An unidentified man, reportedly a Shibir man, fires a shot while another reloads a weapon during yesterday's clash between Jamaat-e-Islami and 14-party combine near Paltan intersection in the capital.

## **Downtown Dhaka turns into battlefield**

Star report

Downtown Dhaka turned into a fierce battlefield yesterday with thousands of AL workers clashing with Jamaat supporters at Paltan for seven hours and with police at Bangabandhu Avenue and Golapshah Mazar that left at least five killed.

The dead are Monir Hossain, 30, an AL activist also a garment factory employee, Russell Ahmed Khan, 35, Khilgaon thana joint secretary of Jubo Moitri, Mohammad Mujahid, 20, an Islami Chhatra Shibir activist, Jasim Uddin, 24, a Shibir activist of ward no 67 in the city, and two others whose identities could not be known immediately.

AL workers beat to death at least two Jamaat workers with oars and sticks they were carrying. But Jamaat hit back with firearms, firing at least a hundred rounds, killing at least one AL man. The police remained a silent spectator to the mayhem.

The downtown streets turned into a horror place with bricks flying at every direction, shops and establishments vandalized and tyres and furniture burning, billowing black smokes that canopied the city sky.

The first of the clashes started at Paltan at 11.30am where the Jamaat workers had blocked the whole stretch of the street in front of the Baitul Mokarram mosque, a traditional bastion of Jamaat. A 14-party rally passing by the Jamaat gathering suddenly started throwing bricks and sticks at the Jamaat workers yelling slogans like "catch the Razakars (collaborators)".

Caught unawares, the Jamaat first retreated to the mosque gate. But one of their workers were caught by the attackers who beat him to death.

Within minutes, the Jamaat regrouped and launched a counter attack, chasing the AL men back. Stones and bricks started flying in both directions. Jamaat men set afire some tyres and wooden benches to create a thick smoke screen.

As thousands of AL workers started assembling, the Jamaat workers opened repeat shots from firearms, leaving at least five AL men critically wounded. The agitated AL workers damaged hundreds of shops and offices by the Bijoyagar road.

After a few minutes of lull, the two groups started their chase and counter-chase and the place bore much semblance to the Rwandan scene of Hutus and Tutsis going for each other's throats. One group charged into the other with blood curdling war cries, the other group ran in wild panic. But not all of them could sprint to safety and a few always stumbled to the ground. The fallen is immediately grabbed and taken inside the party bastion and beaten to meatballs.

The Jamaat men were seen producing pistols and long-barreled guns from under their flowing Panjabi and firing quick shots at the AL workers. AL men were buzzing around most with sticks and some with long swords. At around 1:00pm, an AL worker was whisked away with a bullet wound in his chest. The man -- many identified him as Faruk -- gasped for breath.

At around 2:00pm, an AL supporter dropped to the ground with half his skull blown away by a single bullet. The man writhed slowly and winked aimlessly as he was being hand-carted. A few minutes later, he died.

The AL men immediately chased and caught a Jamaat man and started beating him with wooden oars. For half an hour, the thrashing continued. As everybody thought he was dead, the man in white panjabi now smeared with blood unsteadily got up on his feet and staggered across the road. The oars fell in rhythm on his head and face, but he had vowed not to fall down again to certain death.

Finally, a policeman took the initiative to save the Jamaat man. The cop grabbed his hands to steady him and quickly pulled him before the Paltan police box. The enraged policemen still attempted to hit the man whose half the skull was gone and who was bleeding profusely.

Then an AL man was carried through the crowd with his head and face drenched in blood. The man tried to keep his head high and was too dazed to know what he was doing. His head bobbed almost independent of his nervous system.

At around 2.15pm, some AL leaders were seen urging the policemen to take action against the Jamaat. They were exchanging heated words with the police officers. But the cops just gave them a dead fish's look, as if they were there holidaying.

As the noon turned high, the party men were too tired to continue and the intensity of the clash died down. After about two hours' rest, at around 5:00pm, a number of big bombs were blasted close to the Jamaat bastion as Jamaat chief Matiur Rahman Nizami was at the tail end of his speech. Immediately hell broke loose as bullets were fired indiscriminately from Jamaat position. It took the AL a few minutes to reorganise and fire back.

AL leaders on a truck parked near Muktangan asked its supporters over loudspeakers not to retreat in the face of Jamaat attack and to retaliate with firearms. A little later, three AL supporters were rescued from the melee with a bullet in the head.

Probably tired of the attacks and counter attacks that produced no clear victor, police finally stepped in and took position between the two feuding factions. As the dusk approached, both sides called it a day and walked away.

### **PALTAN MAIDAN BATTLEFIELD**

The clashes between AL activists and police began when the activists tried to take control of Paltan Maidan defying a police ban on holding rallies there. The clashes began in the morning and continued for about five hours.

Although AL men took control of Paltan Maidan to hold their prescheduled rally, police drove them away at about 3:00am yesterday which angered the AL activists.

Hundreds of AL activists with sticks, oars and brickbats yesterday morning gathered around Paltan area to break through the barbed wire police barricade, sparking battles with the law enforcers.

As police barred a procession trying to enter the area, the activists ransacked a police van in front of Bhasani Hockey Stadium at about 11:45am, triggering chase and counter chase between themselves and the law enforcers.

Smaller battles then spread to adjacent areas of Paltan and continued for three hours leaving more than 50 injured including seven journalists.

The policemen also got locked in altercation with journalists who they had assaulted and later apologised to.



Thousands of AL activists from Manikganj, Kamrangir Char and different parts of the city then reached Paltan to attend the rally. The sheer show of manpower inspired the activists and compelled the police to retreat.

The clash then spread to different places including the area surrounding Mayor Bhaban, Nababpur, and Golap Shah Mazar which continued simultaneously for two hours.

Police fired rubber bullets and teargas shells to disperse the AL activists, leaving many innocent pedestrians and bystanders injured also.

### **DEMRA AND DHAKA-CHITTAGONG HIGHWAY**

AL activists took control of Demra area and Dhaka-Chittagong highway on Friday evening and continued blocking the highway for 36 hours at a stretch yesterday.

BNP activists tried to recapture the area yesterday noon by bringing out a procession there but AL activists chased them away leaving several injured.

Two army vehicles were seen patrolling Sayedabad area yesterday, which calmed down the fighting activists for some time.

Operatives of both the parties again locked in a face to face battle, but AL leaders stopped their followers and took them towards Bangabandhu Avenue to attend the rally at Paltan.

### **KERANIGANJ**

Clashes between AL and BNP activists left 70 people injured including three journalists in Keraniganj area yesterday, 25 BNP offices were also ransacked there.



Supporters of 14-party combine and Jamaat-e-Islami hurl brickbats at each other during a Jamaat rally near Paltan intersection in the city

## It's all because of a caretaker chief



1. Workers of 14-party try to rush a wounded fellow worker to hospital after he was shot in the head near Paltan intersection yesterday during a clash with Jamaat-e-Islami. The man died later. 2. 14-party men destroy a foundation stone recently unveiled by BNP leader M Saifur Rahman in Sylhet. 3. President Iajuddin Ahmed, centre, talks to BNP Secretary General Abdul Manna Bhuiyan, left, and Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil at Bangabhaban. 4. Police charge truncheons on high-ranking Awami League leaders during a rally at the south gate of Baitul Mokarram Mosque. 5. A man lay unconscious on a pavement at Phulbaria near Gulistan after police severely beat him up. 6. 14-party men set fire to makeshift shops at Phulbaria. 7. Jamaat men bring in bricks to be hurled at 14-party activists near the north gate of Baitul Mokarram Mosque. 8. A Jamaat man injured near Paltan intersection. 9. ntv Cameraman Abdullah Al Hossain Milu after being injured near Paltan intersection during a police attack. 10. 14-party men occupy Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Kanchpur in the city as part of their Dhaka siege programme. 11. 14-party men rob a policeman of his pants near Paltan intersection. **Photo: Star**

## Political complexity takes new turn

*AL rejects president's proposal to take charge; president to meet major parties today*  
Nazrul Islam, Moloy Saha and Ofiul Hasnat Ruhin

Political complexity has taken a new turn with the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, proposing that he is ready to take over as chief of the caretaker administration, and the Awami League rejecting the presidential proposal.

BNP's response to the president's proposal could not be ascertained until 10:30 last night. The leaders of the party were holding an emergency meeting to work out its strategy.

Earlier, the outgoing prime minister, Khaleda Zia, in her public speech in the afternoon said that her party would accept whatever the president proposes as regards the appointment of the chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Under this circumstance, president Iajuddin has decided to start talks with the 'major political parties' to resolve the crises

However, the president's proposal for taking charge of the caretaker administration himself came up after the immediate-past chief justice, KM Hasan, who was to head the caretaker government,

officially communicated to the president his unwillingness to take over.

The president invited Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Abdul Jalil, the secretaries of the BNP and the Awami League respectively, on Saturday to resolve the political impasse over appointment of the chief adviser.

The BNP's five-year tenure expired on October 27 and the chief adviser to the non-party caretaker administration was supposed to take over on Friday. But the process was delayed by the political stand-off which sparked off uncontrolled violence.

After emerging from the meeting with the president, Jalil told waiting journalists that they had 'reached agreement' over appointment of the chief of the caretaker administration, some one except Justice Hasan and justice M A Aziz, by Sunday evening.

Bhuiyan told journalists that they have 'discussed some proposals' and decided to go back to their respective parties for decisions. 'I hope the matter will be resolved by tomorrow [Sunday]'

They were scheduled to inform their decisions to the president Saturday night.

Subsequently, the AL and its allies decided against the president's proposal to head the caretaker government himself. 'We just can't accept his proposal,' Jalil told New Age at 8:00 in the evening.

'We requested him [the president] to appoint the chief of the interim government as per the constitution,' he said, without proposing a new name as chief of the caretaker government.

The president at the meeting called upon the leaders to resolve the problem in line with the constitutional provisions, said Mokhlesur Rahman, the press secretary to the president.

Earlier, a crucial dialogue in its sixth round on October 23 between the two general secretaries to resolve political stand-off had ended inconclusively as the BNP had refused to consider the Awami League's demand of not appointing KM Hasan as chief advisor.

After KM Hasan's expression of unwillingness, AL argues that two more persons — Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Hamidul Haque — are entitled to head the caretaker administration.

But the BNP-led alliance asserts that Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury's case could not be considered as he was the third retired chief justice, while Hamidul Haque is ineligible as he is holding an 'office of profit'.

Under these circumstances, the president has decided to start talks with the 'major political parties' to resolve the crises from Sunday, said the press secretary to the president.

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## 13 more killed as violence rages

Staff Correspondent

At least 13 more people were killed and about 1,000 injured, many with bullets, in clashes between the activists of the outgoing ruling alliance and the opposition and in police firing in Dhaka and elsewhere on Saturday.

With the new casualties, 17 people were killed in political violence in two days as rival activists clashed with each other with the handover of power from the ruling alliance to the caretaker government drawing near.

Four were killed on Friday. A BNP leader was killed in Brahmanbaria, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader in Gazipur and a government employee in Dhaka. Another, injured in clashes at Dhamrai Thursday night, died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Friday.

Five people were killed in Dhaka on Saturday — a union council chairman along with his brother in Narsingdi, one each in Chittagong, Kurigram, Bagerhat, Kushtia and Moulvibazar in political clashes. Another died in police firing in Meherpur.

The death toll may increase as many of the injured admitted to hospital were in a critical condition, hospital and party sources said.

Road communications between Dhaka and other areas remained snapped. Shops and business establishments were closed. Streets in towns and cities were deserted.



Railway communications were also disrupted in many places. Air traffic and river routes were almost normal, according to information reaching Dhaka.

In Dhaka, all the five people — two Islami Chhatra Shibir activists, a Juba League supporter, a garment factory worker and an unnamed man — were killed in the daylong violence in Paltan and Baitul Mukarram areas.

More than 175 people, 75 with bullet wounds, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Three bodies were sent to the hospital morgue. A Shibir activist lay dead in Islami Bank Hospital till 8:00pm.

Gulistan, Paltan and Baitul Mukarram in downtown Dhaka, and Jatrabari, Mirpur, Pallabi, Shahbagh, Dhaka University campus and other areas turned into battlefields as the opposition, Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP and the police clashed almost all day long.

In Narsingdi, the police and witnesses said Hajipur union council chairman Saiful Islam, 33, also a local BNP leader, and his younger brother, Ripon, 28, died in the attack at about 2:30pm.

His elder brother, Mah-e-Alam, 42, cousin Shamim, 35, and supporters Hannan Sarkar, 33, and Elen Hossain, 32, were injured when they tried to save Saiful from opposition activists.

More than two dozen offices of the BNP and its front organisations were vandalised in clashes between the BNP and the opposition combine.

In Chittagong, a toll collector of Shah Amanat Bridge, Abul Kalam, wounded in an attack by Awami League activists Saturday morning, died in Chittagong Medical College Hospital at about 4:00pm.

Kalam and three others were wounded when the opposition activists, during a road blockade, attacked state minister Zafrul Islam at 11:30am. Zafrul escaped unhurt.

In Meherpur, Awami League activist Abbas Ali, 35, was killed and six were wounded reportedly in police firing on a procession at 5:30pm.

The Meherpur police officer-in-charge, Abdus Salam, denied firing by the policemen and said a rival group might have opened fire.

Witnesses said the marchers in a procession attacked the house of the district Jamaat amir and damaged two motorcycles, leading to clashes with the police. More than a dozen, including four policemen, were wounded.

The police earlier fired at an Awami League procession, in which at least 50 were wounded. The policemen opened fire as the protestors damaged the portraits of Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, witnesses said.

In Bagerhat, an unnamed young man was hacked to death and 20 were injured in an Awami League-BNP clash Saturday night.

In Kurigram, Islami Chhatra Shibir activist Rafiqul Islam, wounded in a clash with the Awami League activists, died in a clinic at about 5:00pm.

Rafique and more than 50 were wounded in the clash that began at about 1:00pm. They again clashed at Ghosepara in the evening, in which four were injured.

Reports of violence also reached from other cities and towns where the outgoing ruling and opposition alliance activists clashed with each other or with the police.

The BNP regained control of the Barisal city heart by firing on the opposition activists in the afternoon; other city areas were in the control of the opposition, local people said.

In Gopalganj, anti-government protestors set fire to the houses of five BNP leaders, including the president and general secretary of the district unit.

The New Age correspondent in Sirajganj said the district administration ordered Section 144 as the rival parties convened meetings at the same place and at the same time on Saturday.

The administration of Patuakhali also imposed Section 144 for the same reason. The BNP set fire to the Awami League office at Galachipa. Juba Dal of Bauphal looted goods from at least 10 business establishments.

The Rajbari correspondent said the opposition activists damaged business establishments at English Market at noon.

At least 20, including two policemen, were injured in clashes in Mymensingh. A Mymensingh-

bound local train was stopped for two hours at Shambhuganj in the morning.

In Kishoreganj, about 100 people were injured. Both the groups vandalised about 100 shops.

The Gazipur correspondent said the opposition combine leaders and activists besieged the town, suspending traffic. The activists blocked the Dhaka–Mymensingh Highway.

The Magura correspondent said at least 50 BNP and Awami League activists were injured in the district.

In Faridpur, Awami League activists attacked government and BNP offices. The Awami League activists damaged a traffic signal at place which was recently named as Zia Square.

In Manikganj, a huge procession marched along the Dhaka–Aricha Highway with bamboo poles and oars.

The correspondent in Natore said at least 12 were injured in a clash in the afternoon.

In Noakhali, Awami League activists set fire to the BNP office at Chatkhil and also damaged the upazila Jamaat office.

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## **A city of siege, a day of panic**

Khadimul Islam

Political rivals fought running battles in several city points shutting Dhaka from the outside on Saturday. The highways remained deserted as no inter-district vehicles entered or left the city.

People spent a day of fear and panic. Most dwellers remained indoors. Shopkeepers kept their shutters down. Eeriness and anxiety reigned all day long.

The activists of the opposition combine led by the Awami League took to the streets, started fire in markets, set vehicles ablaze and clashed with the BNP and Jamaat activists, and even with the law enforcers.

Hundreds of Awami League activists carrying bamboo poles and oars paraded most city roads, chanting slogans against Khaleda Zia and Justice KM Hasan.

The Awami League activists came out on the road in small processions early morning to assemble on the stretch from the Paltan crossing to Bangabandhu Avenue.

They occupied the entire Gulistan and areas of Bangabandhu Avenue and stayed there till the evening. They pelted stones, started fire with tyres, looted shop furniture and exploded bombs to create panic.

The BNP activists, on the other hand, gathered near their office at Naya Paltan and the Jamaat activists at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram. The Paltan crossing turned into a battlefield at noon and continued to remain so inside the evening where a series of clashes took place between the Awami League and Jamaat activists. Policemen stood bystanders in most places.

The police cordoned Paltan Maidan where the Awami League was scheduled to hold a rally at noon. The party activists also fought pitched battles with the law enforcers in the morning when the activists tried to enter Paltan Maidan where the Dhaka Metropolitan Police had earlier ordered a ban on rallies. The activists burnt down a police car at the south gate of Bangabandhu Stadium.

Air at Dhaka Medical College Hospital was heavy with the sobs of the relatives of the injured and the dead. Hundreds of distraught relatives and party activists thronged the hospital to see whether their relatives were among the dead and the injured. More than 150 of the injured were admitted to the hospital.

The Awami League activists blocked almost all the city entry points in the morning and clashed with any procession of the BNP they saw. The major violent incidents took place on the Paltan crossing, and at Shahbagh, Jatrabari and Mirpur.

Thousands of people in and on the outskirts of the city suffered because of the clashes.

The suffering was immense for the people trying to enter the city.

The passengers towards the city were forced to get off the vehicles in the city surroundings. They had to walk down as there was no vehicle to take them to their destinations.

Some rickshaws were on the road, but the pullers charged four to five times the usual fare.

The activists snapped railway communications at several points, by either halting trains or uprooting railways. A few four-stroke three-wheelers plied the roads. Several hundred of buses and trucks remained stranded on the highways, just outside the city.

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<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=1600692006&format=print>

Sun 29 Oct 2006

## **Bangladesh hunt for interim leader provokes riot**

By Anis Ahmed

DHAKA (Reuters) - Bangladesh's hunt for an interim government to steer the country through to January elections took a dramatic turn on Sunday after the state president offered to head a caretaker team and the opposition turned him down.

The crisis has already sparked two days of riots in the capital, Dhaka, and other cities in which 16 people have been killed and hundreds injured.

President Iajuddin Ahmed put himself forward at talks on Saturday evening with senior leaders of outgoing Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the main opposition Awami League.

The presidential gesture came after former Supreme Court chief justice, K.M. Hasan, withdrew just hours before he was due to be sworn in as chief of a caretaker administration. Khaleda's five-year term ended on Friday.

A 14-party opposition alliance led by Awami chief and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina had refused to accept Hasan in the key post because of his past association with the BNP.

"I was prepared to serve ... the national interest, but the level of mistrust between the political parties has made my position untenable," Hasan said in a statement on Saturday.

"It is best I should stand aside rather than be a hurdle to the political process."

Under the constitution, Hasan, as the immediate past chief justice, is first choice to head the interim administration. If he declines or is deemed unfit, one of his predecessors, not above the age of 72, should be chosen as an alternative.

Two other former chief justices -- Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Hamidul Haque -- are now contenders for the post. The opposition said they had no objection to either of them.

But the ruling BNP and its ally, the Jamaat-e-Islami party, are believed to object to the appointment of either Chowdhury or Haque, officials monitoring the transition said. Media carried similar reports.

The Awami League denounced what it called a BNP conspiracy. Other parties urged the president to act prudently to avoid further controversy and avert more violence.

"I can smell a conspiracy in the attempts to put the country's president in charge of the interim government," Hasina told reporters late on Saturday.

"I appeal to all Bangladeshis to remain alert and stay tuned to the developments and face them accordingly," she said.

Earlier, Khaleda had told a rally in the capital that her party would accept whatever the president decided and that all other parties should agree to it.

Legal experts say the president can head a caretaker team only if no retired chief justice -- or non-political, non-partisan figure acceptable to all parties -- is available.

The caretaker authority's job is to steer Bangladesh to general elections within three months of expiry of the outgoing government's term, and then hand power to a newly elected team.

Fierce street battles between supporters of rival parties which erupted on Friday have killed 16 people in the last two days, police and hospitals said.

"We are still facing a dangerously turbulent situation," said a police officer on Sunday. "Anything may happen anytime," he told Reuters.

"Bangladesh has never faced such a political dilemma in more than 20 years," said a senior government official, who asked not to be named.

Protesters blocked highways, burnt vehicles, and attacked offices of Khaleda's BNP and the homes of some ministers, police and witnesses said.

Communications between Dhaka and the rest of the country have been virtually cut since Friday night, officials and transport operators said.

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<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2006/10/29/2003333831/print>

## **Clashes in Bangladesh leave 11 dead**

AP, DHAKA

Sunday, Oct 29, 2006, Page 1

A caretaker government to oversee Bangladesh's upcoming polls will be installed by tonight, an opposition leader said after meeting with the president, hinting at an end to a political crisis that has fueled deadly riots.

At least 11 people were killed and hundreds were injured in two days of violence after the opposition refused to accept a retired chief justice invited to lead the interim government.

"A new government will be installed by Sunday evening," Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the main opposition Awami League party, told reporters after meeting with Bangladeshi President Iajuddin Ahmed and Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, an outgoing government minister.

Zia's government invited K. M. Hasan to lead Bangladesh until the general election due in January. However, Hasan yesterday declined the offer, presidential spokesman Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury told reporters.

"Former chief justice K. M. Hasan has expressed his inability to become the head of the caretaker government," Chowdhury said. He didn't elaborate.



Activists from Bangladesh's main opposition party alliance shout slogans during a protest in Dhaka, yesterday. Bangladesh's government postponed transferring power to a caretaker administration as one person died in clashes between supporters of rival political parties and police, officials said. PHOTO: AFP

The opposition alliance refused to accept Hasan as the leader of the interim government saying he once belonged to the party of outgoing Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and therefore cannot be impartial as required under the Constitution.

"We have agreed to a caretaker government headed by some one else but K. M. Hasan," Jalil said.

Jalil earlier said the opposition would accept another former chief justice, Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, as leader of the interim administration.

Late on Friday the government announced a delay in handing power to the caretaker authority, saying Hasan had been taken sick -- a claim the opposition alliance debunked.

"We don't believe K. M. Hasan is sick ... we have information from his close sources that he is unwilling to take over as the head of the caretaker administration," opposition spokesman Jalil said.

There was no word from Hasan, 67, who was in his Dhaka home, guarded by elite security forces. He has declined to meet or speak to the media.

At least five people died -- including three politicians belonging to Zia's four-party coalition -- and more than 100 were injured on Friday in widespread violence sparked by Zia's choice of Hasan to lead a caretaker government.

The violence continued yesterday, with riot police firing tear gas, rubber bullets and warning shots in the air to disperse thousands of stone-throwing protesters in the capital, Dhaka.

Two people died in violence in downtown Dhaka yesterday, the United News of Bangladesh agency reported. One person died in southeastern Chittagong and another in northern Kurigram district, the agency said without providing details.

Also, two members of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party were shot dead in central Narsingdi district, the agency said.

At least 300 more people were injured yesterday, the agency said.

Zia, meanwhile, at a rally in downtown Dhaka, restated her pledge to hand power to the caretaker government, but did not say when.

She criticized the opposition for creating anarchy and asked her supporters to retaliate.

Angry mobs smashed or burned vehicles and Zia's party offices, along with tires and furniture looted from nearby shops.

Dhaka, a city of 10 million people, was virtually cut off from the rest of the country as thousands of protesters blocked highways leading to it, TV footage showed.

Zia, whose five-year term in office expired at midnight on Friday, can stay in power for a maximum of 15 more days until the interim administration is installed, according to the Constitution.



Zia's departure has been further clouded by the defection from her party of more than two dozen politicians protesting alleged corruption and incompetence in her administration.

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<http://fr.chinabroadcast.cn/181/2006/10/29/262@115429.htm>

## **14 morts dans les affrontements au Bangladesh**

2006-10-29 15:54:31 cri

14 personnes ont été tuées et un millier d'autres blessées, beaucoup par balles, dans les affrontements ces jours-ci entre les partisans du Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh (PNB, au pouvoir) et ceux de la Ligue Awami.

Mohammad Hossain, 24 ans et Monir, 40 ans, ont trouvé la mort dans les violents conflits à Dhaka, capitale du pays. 115 blessés ont été admis à l'hôpital du Collège médical de Dhaka.

Le nombre de personnes tuées dans les affrontements du 28 octobre est ainsi porté à 10, alors que les conflits ont été notifiés dans différentes parties du pays. Et 4 personnes ont trouvé la mort les 26 et 27 octobre. A Dhaka, la police anti-émeute a fait usage du gaza lacrymogène et des balles caoutchous pour faire face aux partisans de l'opposition.

Des milliers de partisans de la Ligue Awami, beaucoup d'entre eux étaient armés de bâtons, ont manifesté dans la rue et ont attaqué la police à coups de pierres. Un véhicule de la police a été incendié.

Le Premier ministre sortant, Khaleda Zia du PNB, dont le mandat a expiré le 27 octobre et doit confier les rênes du pouvoir à un gouvernement provisoire qui sera dirigé par K.M. Hasan, ancien président de la Cour suprême.

Le gouvernement provisoire sera chargée d'organiser des élections législatives en janvier 2007 et de garantir leur transparence. La Ligue Awami s'oppose à la désignation de M. Hasan à la tête du gouvernement provisoire, l'accusant d'être un fidèle du PNB.

Le PNB et la Ligue Awami ont mené six tours de négociations sur la réforme des élections sans aboutir.

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[http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2006/10/29/news/nation/17\\_52\\_0310\\_28\\_06.txt](http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2006/10/29/news/nation/17_52_0310_28_06.txt)

## **Riot-fueled political crisis in Bangladesh leaves 18 dead**

*By: FARID HOSSAIN - Associated Press*

DHAKA, Bangladesh -- A retired justice whose appointment as Bangladesh's interim leader led to deadly riots declined the position on Saturday, but the political crisis that has paralyzed the country

for two days appeared no closer to a resolution.

At least 18 people were killed -- including three politicians linked to the outgoing administration of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia -- and hundreds were injured in two days of violence.

Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the opposition Awami League party, said a new government would be installed by Sunday evening, but the opposition rejected both the retired justice and the president as interim leaders, leaving that timetable in doubt.

At a rally in Dhaka on Saturday, Zia restated her pledge to hand power to the caretaker government, but did not say when. She criticized the opposition for creating anarchy and asked her supporters to retaliate.

The justice who stepped aside, K.M. Hasan, was a former member of Zia's party and refused the post in response to criticism that a nonpartisan government was required to oversee upcoming elections in January.

Jalil, whose party led the drive against Hasan, said later Saturday that the opposition alliance also rejected an interim government headed by the president, who was elected as a candidate of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

"We have rejected the proposal and asked the president to find a nonpartisan person for the post," Jalil said.

Zia initially had delayed handing power to a caretaker administration Saturday, saying Hasan -- a former member of her party -- was ill. The opposition, however, claimed Hasan refused the post because of the protests and alleged attempts by the government to rig the upcoming elections.

Hasan, 67, said he stepped aside because of doubts about his impartiality.

"I'm doing this for the interest of the people and as a patriot who loves his country," the former justice said in a statement.

A spokesman for Bangladeshi President Iajuddin Ahmed said he would meet political leaders on Sunday to discuss who should run the caretaker government.

Zia's five-year term in office expired at midnight Friday; she can stay in power for a maximum of 15 more days until the interim administration is installed, according to the constitution.

Riot police fired tear gas, rubber bullets and warning shots to disperse thousands of stone-throwing protesters in the capital, Dhaka. Thousands of protesters blocked highways leading into Dhaka, cutting off the city of 10 million people from the rest of the country, TV footage showed.

Angry mobs smashed or burned vehicles and Zia's party offices, along with tires and furniture looted from nearby shops.

The riots subsided slightly after Hasan's decision to step aside, but opposition leaders said they will return to the streets again on Sunday until a nonpartisan leader is put in charge of overseeing the polls.

Zia's last days in office have been further clouded by the defection of more than two dozen politicians from her party over alleged corruption and incompetence.

Bangladesh, an impoverished Southeast Asian country, has a history of political unrest. It spent more than 15 years under military rule after its independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Both Zia and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina led a pro-democracy movement in 1990, ousting the country's last military ruler, Gen. Hossain Mohammad Ershad.

The two politicians have been locked in political bickering since then.

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<http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/10/29/bangladesh/>

## **Dhaka tries to fill power vacuum**

POSTED: 0729 GMT (1529 HKT), October 29, 2006

From Journalist Tasneem Khalil in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh (CNN) -- Bangladeshi President Iajuddin Ahmed huddled with the four major political parties in the country Sunday in an attempt to name a new leader for the interim government after the original man chosen for the job withdrew amid deadly rioting over his appointment the day before, a presidential palace spokesman said.

If the president feels the handover will take more time he might allow the current government to stay, his office said.

Fierce clashes between political protesters and riot police have left at least 15 people dead and more than 500 wounded in the past two days, according to unofficial police estimates in Dhaka.

Police and paramilitary forces are reportedly unable to completely control the riots in many parts of the country as uncertainty over who will be named the next caretaker persists.

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice K.M. Hasan was set to be sworn in as caretaker leader Saturday after current Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's five-year mandate ended on Friday. However, Hasan issued a press statement Sunday saying he was unwilling to take the responsibility of the chief of the caretaker government. He did not elaborate.

On Saturday a spokesman with the president's office said Hasan was declining taking the post because he was ill. Officials close to Hasan declined to comment.

Opposition leaders jumped on the issue, claiming Hasan was declining his post not because he was ill but simply because he was unwilling to take over amidst violent protests against him, a source with the opposition speaking on terms of anonymity told CNN. Local media reported the opposition's claim as well.

Political tension has stewed in Bangladesh ever since Hasan was tapped for the position because many residents have said the former chief justice -- who is also a member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party -- is biased.

Impartiality is important for the leader of the 90-day interim government, since that government is meant to oversee the upcoming parliamentary election, which is set to be held early in the next year.

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[http://news.monstersandcritics.com/southasia/article\\_1215914.php/Violence\\_leaves\\_21\\_dead\\_as\\_Bangladesh\\_unrest\\_spreads\\_\\_Roundup\\_](http://news.monstersandcritics.com/southasia/article_1215914.php/Violence_leaves_21_dead_as_Bangladesh_unrest_spreads__Roundup_)

## **Violence leaves 21 dead as Bangladesh unrest spreads (Roundup)**

Oct 29, 2006, 17:50 GMT



*Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BRD) security officials sit in front of the press club, Dhaka on Sunday 29 October 2006. BDR members have been deployed to control the violence in major places of the city as six persons died and 1,000 got injured in clashes between Awami League activists and Jamat activists yesterday. EPA/ABIR ABDULLAH*

Dhaka - An uneasy calm prevailed in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka Sunday after a weekend of political unrest left at least 21 people dead and hundreds injured, witnesses said.

The death toll from continuing turmoil across the country rose as riot police and paramilitary frontier guards deployed in the beleaguered capital braced for more street violence.

Twelve new deaths were reported Sunday by hospitals and sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs pushing the overnight death toll from nine to 21.

A senior police officer, who declined to be named, said the fatalities included four critically wounded protesters who succumbed to their injuries in hospitals outside Dhaka.

Violence erupted in Dhaka on Friday over differences in the formation of a non-party caretaker government before holding January's parliamentary elections.

The Dhaka turmoil quickly spread to other cities and towns across the country.

Fierce clashes broke out between the supporters of the outgoing Nationalist-Islamist coalition government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the activists of the main opposition party Awami League, police said.

The failure to agree on a consensus figure to run the country in the three-month transition period triggered widespread political riots.

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<http://www.localnewsleader.com/kindred/stories/index.php?action=fullnews&id=20578>

## **Bangladesh leader taps himself for post**

Staff and agencies

29 October, 2006

By FARID HOSSAIN, Associated Press Writer

DHAKA, Bangladesh - Bangladesh's president installed himself as leader of the country's caretaker government Sunday, hoping to end days of deadly rioting over a political standoff ahead of national elections.

"The president should have appointed another person as the head of the caretaker government instead of himself taking over the charge," said Hasina, herself a former prime minister. "However, we hope that the president will act neutral and impartial in conducting the next general election. We will keep him under watch."

Even the city's normally ubiquitous tricycle rickshaws quickly left the streets amid fears of renewed violence after the announcement.

Much of Bangladesh's political scene revolves around the battle for dominance between Zia and Hasina, the leaders of the country's two most powerful political families.

The clashes between Zia and Hasina's supporters have repeatedly filled the streets of Dhaka with rock-throwing protesters, riot police and the smog of tear gas. The rioting has left at least 27 killed — including three politicians from Zia's coalition — dozens of cars burned and dozens of shops looted.

It has spent more than 15 years under military rule since it broke away from Pakistan in 1971, political killings occur frequently and, in recent years, an Islamic insurgency has further unsettled the political scene.

In the years leading up to then, the country had seen two presidential assassinations, three military coups and 19 failed coups.

Retired army Maj. Gen. Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, a Dhaka-based writer on political issues, condemned the move, and said "there is a strong possibility of deepening the crisis."

Opposition politicians, lead by Hasina's Awami League coalition, have accused Zia's government of trying to rig the elections, and while Zia attended the swearing-in ceremony at the president's office, Hasina did not.

Hasan said the doubts about his impartiality had led to his decision.

Hasina said she would not call off the protests.

"We will continue with the protests to press for the electoral reforms," she said.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/oct/30/front.html#3>

## **8 more killed, 300 hurt as violence continues**

*Dhaka relatively calm, remains shut from outside*

Staff Correspondent



*Demonstrators at Tongi railway station in Gazipur attack a train during the programme of siege by the combine led by the Awami League on Sunday.*

— *New Age photo*

Eight more people were killed and about 300 injured as political violence continued to rage at different places across the country for the third straight day on Sunday.

Four of them were killed in Noakhali, two in Magura and one each in Barisal and Narayanganj.

With the new casualties, the death toll in bloody clashes between the activists of the immediate-past coalition government and the Awami League and its allies in the past three days rose to 25.

The situation in the capital Dhaka, however, was relatively calm on Sunday but it remained shut from the outside because of continued blockade.

Violent clashes between the activists of the BNP and the AL in Sirajganj, Noakhali, Magura, Narayanganj, Barisal, Narsingdi, Pirojpur, Nilphamari, Gopalganj, Savar and Keraniganj on the fringe of Dhaka on Sunday also left about 300 more people injured.

The administration imposed Section 144 at Shyamnagar in Satkhira, Chapainawabganj, Pirojpur, Barisal, Nilphamari and Mongla in Bagerhat as rival political parties called meetings at the same

venues at the same time.

In Noakhali, two BNP activists and two Awami League supporters were killed in the coastal Hatiya upazila in fierce clashes on Saturday night and Sunday.

Of them, Obaidul Haq, 55, joint-secretary of the BNP Char Ishhar union, was allegedly slaughtered by the Awami League supporters at a brick kiln in the morning.

AL supporter Abdul Mannan, 60, injured in a clash between BNP and AL activists at Nijhum Dwip in Hatiya upazila on Saturday, died on way to sadar hospital on Sunday. Another injured, Noman, 28, of Saturday's clash also died at Hatia upazila health complex early Sunday.

Besides, injured Heju Miah, a BNP supporter, died at his house at Bandar Tila of Nijhum Dwip in the morning.

In Magura, a Juba League activist, named General, 20, shot allegedly by the BNP activists and Arafat, 25, a Jamaat-e-Islami activist, beaten up during clashes on Saturday, died on their way to Dhaka early Sunday.

Chase and counter-chase between BNP-Jamaat and 14-party activists continued in the district on Sunday as a sequel to Saturday's clashes.

The para-military BDR patrols have been intensified in the district.

In Narayanganj, an activist of the Islami Chhatra Shibir, Farhad, 20, injured in clashes with the AL activists Saturday, died at a hospital in Dhaka on Sunday.

New Age correspondent from Barisal reports: a BNP activist, Abul Kalam Azad, who was injured in clash in Pirojpur, died at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital on Sunday.

The activists of the BNP-led alliance attacked and torched the office of the Workers Party at Fakir Bari Road of the city, at about 11 am Sunday. Local people extinguished the fire.

Aminul Islam, DIG, Barisal Range and commissioner-in-charge of Barisal Metropolitan Police, imposed section 144 in the areas surrounding the offices of BNP, AL, WP, Left Front, 11-party, JI and ICS at Sadar Road, Hemayetuddin Road and Fakir Bari Road on Sunday afternoon to maintain law and order.

A group of unknown people set fire to the house of Justice M A Aziz, the chief election commissioner, at his village home at Ambowla under Agoiljhara upazila early Saturday.

There was no one in the house of the CEC and local people put out the flames before any major damage.

In Keraniganj on the fringe of Dhaka, more than 50 people sustained bullet injuries as police fired on the activists of the AL and its allies in Rohitpur area Sunday.

Local sources said several hundred activists of the 14-party alliance blocked Dhaka-Mawa highway and Dhaka-Dohar-Nawabganj road at 10:00am.

Police fired over 100 rounds of rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators at Rohitpur about 1pm, leaving over 50 injured, ten of them critically.

The injured were admitted to Mitford Hospital and Rohitpur General Hospital.

In Patuakhali, followers of Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, a BNP leader and former minister, are guarding his house in Sabujbagh area of the district town. The police have also been deployed at his house where the former minister is staying now.

In Nilphamari, at least 50 people were injured as violent clashes erupted in Jaldhaka upazila on Sunday between the activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Awami League.

Branches of two commercial banks and a number of houses of both Awami League and Jamaat activists were set on fire and damaged.

Over 70 people were injured in sporadic clashes between the AL and the BNP activists in Saidpur town. Section 144 was imposed both in Jaldhaka and Saidpur municipality areas.

Earlier, Jamaat activists brought out a militant procession brandishing sticks in Jaldhaka town at 10:30am after a rally in front of the party office. Fierce clashes erupted as the AL activists hurled stones at the procession in reply to provocative slogans from the Jamaat activists.

In retaliation Jamaat activists attacked and torched the upazila Awami League office and its front Sainik League office. In a counter-attack the AL activists damaged and set fire to the local branch of Islami Bank.

The Jamaat men then torched the house of Shaheed Hossain Rubel, upazila secretary of the Awami League. They also set fire to the local branch of state-owned Sonali Bank. The business office of upazila AL president, Ansar Ali Mintu, was also torched and looted.

The Awami League activists set fire to the residence of upazila Jaamat secretary Abdul Gani.

In Sirajganj, over 100 people were injured, two by bullets, in clashes across the district on Sunday.

Locals said two BNP activists received bullet wounds when police opened fire on rioting supporters of the AL and the BNP in Railgate area Sunday noon.

The clash broke out when processions of the rival parties came face to face in the Railgate area.

On information, police rushed to the spot and fired on the mobs to break them up, leaving Sha Alam and Shamsu of BNP injured.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/30/d6103001044.htm>

## **More violence, more deaths**

*Toll rises to 24, section 144 imposed in many places*

Star Report

Seven more political activists died and hundreds of others were injured yesterday as rival activists of Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition and BNP-led four-party alliance continued to clash violently across the country for the third consecutive day.

With the killings of the six people three from Noakhali and one each from Magura, Pirojpur and Narayanganj -- the death toll rose to 24 since the eruption of clashes in the final hours of the four-party alliance government's regime.

Activists of 14-party blockaded roads and highways, uprooted rail lines and set fire to trains in some places as they continued their Dhaka siege programme. Local administrations imposed section 144 to ban political gatherings at different parts of the country to avert clashes but the demonstrators defied the ban.

Political activists vandalised and set fire to offices, houses, and business establishments of their rivals besides holding demonstrations.

### **NOAKHALI**

Two leaders of BNP and one of AL were killed in vengeful attacks on Hatia Island yesterday.

Local ward unit AL President Abdul Mannan, 55, was murdered at Bandartila on Nijhum Island in the early hours of yesterday.

As the news spread, angered AL men caught and bludgeoned to death a local BNP activist, Henju Batainya, 45.

AL activists slaughtered Obaidul Haq, 47, joint-secretary of BNP's Char Ishwar union unit, in front of a brickfield at Char Kailash in Hatia municipality yesterday afternoon. Doctors declared him dead after he had been rushed to the hospital. Sources said AL men were angered as he had filed an attempt to murder case against some AL activists.

Meantime, BNP and AL men vandalised, looted and set fire to several shops at Oskhali, Tamruddi, Sonadia, Boyarchar, Nolerchar, Jahajmara, Nijhumdwip and Char Ishwar yesterday.



In Maijdi, 14-party activists vandalised a local UCBL Bank and some business houses owned by BNP members and supporters, prompting police to fire rubber bullets and tear gas canisters.

Twenty of 14-party men and some policemen were injured during the incident.

### **BOGRA**

A BNP activist, Thandu, was killed as police opened fire on four-party alliance men when they stormed Kahalu police station in Bogra chasing AL men last night.

While an AL meeting was going on at Kahalu upazila bazaar at 9:30 last night, the four-party alliance men attempted to attack it, but failed due to police guard. A huge number of alliance men later encircled the police while others chased with the AL leaders and activists.

As the AL men took shelter inside the police station, about 3,000 BNP and Jamaat men laid a siege to the police station and stormed into it to attack the AL men.

Police opened fire on the alliance men, thinking that the police station was attacked. Kahalu thana unit BNP president Fariduzzaman Farid said their activist Thandu was killed in police firing and one Haider was injured.

Angry 14-party activists yesterday vandalised HAWA Bhaban, an office of BNP in Dhunat upazila from where BNP men used to control tender biddings for construction works.

They also set fire to Chandanbaisha BNP office and captured Kutubpur BNP office. Meantime, the local administration imposed section 144 in Kahalu banning political gatherings there following Saturday's clash and vandalism.

### **MAGURA**

Zinarul Islam, general secretary of Choulia union committee of AL, died on his way to Dhaka for better treatment after being injured in Saturday's clash between BNP and 14-party coalition men at Dhaka Road Bus Stand in Magura town, bringing the number of death in the clash to two. The other victim was Jamaat-e-Islami's town committee associate member Arafat Hossain.

### **BARISAL**

BNP worker Abul Kalam, 24, who was injured in Saturday's clash between BNP and 14-party coalition at Shorupkathi in Pirojpur died in Barisal Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Unknown people vandalised the offices of Workers Party and Chhatra Moitree while rivals vandalised houses of AL leaders and activists at different parts of the district.

The local administration imposed section 144 in Barisal city for an indefinite period from 4:00pm yesterday.

### **NARAYANGANJ**

A cadre of Islami Chharta Shibir, Farhad, 20, who had been injured in an AL attack at Siddirganj on Saturday, died in Ibne Sinha Hospital in Dhaka yesterday, reports UNB.

Some shops and houses were plundered in violent incidents across the district when four-party alliance activists moved in processions.

## **NILPHAMARI**

About 50 people were injured in sporadic clashes between Jamat and AL activists amid section 144 in Jaldhaka upazila yesterday, while two commercial banks were burnt during the rampage.

The clash in Jaldhaka began when AL activists pelted a Jamaat procession with stones yesterday morning, prompting them to burn Sainik League office. The AL men later burnt a local Islami Bank alleging that it has been fronting for Jamaat.

Jaamat men then set fire to houses of two AL leaders and a local Sonali Bank, while AL activists burnt several houses of Jamaat leaders.

Fire engulfed the whole area and went out of control, while the so-called activists also looted around 30 shops and business establishments.

## **SIRAJGANJ**

Over 100 persons were injured, two of them critically, including police and journalists, in sporadic clashes among Awami League, BNP, Jamaat and police in Belkuchi, Ullapara and Sirajganj district town yesterday.

AL and BNP-led alliances got locked in daylong clashes, and later operatives of both the parties had small battles with police when the law enforcers tried to disperse them.

Seven shops, five vehicles, two houses and a large number of signboards, nameplates and business establishments owned by ruling BNP men, were also damaged and looted, said police.

## **GAZIPUR**

Activists of 14-party coalition vandalised National University and Open University in Gazipur during their siege programme yesterday.

## **SAIDPUR**

Around 70 people were injured in clashes between the activists of BNP and AL amid section 144 in Saidpur yesterday which led to looting and damaging of business establishments.

Defying section 144, both AL and BNP men burnt the offices of rival parties on Saturday night.

## **BRAHMANBARIA**

Twenty-five activists of BNP and 14-party were injured during clashes on Saturday night and yesterday morning.

AL activists vandalised a BNP office at Bancharampur upazila headquarters, burnt a motorcycle and damaged several vehicles on Bishwa Road. BNP activists vandalised and ransacked a number of establishments in the district. Five platoons of BDR were deployed in the town.

## **DINAJPUR**

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between the operatives of 14-party and four-party alliances. AL demonstrators torched offices of BNP and Jamaat, and an inter-district train.

The local administration imposed section 144 from yesterday at Birampur, Ghoraghat and Hili under Hakimpur upazila as the rival alliances had called public meetings at the same place and time.

## **KHAGRACHHARI**

At least 37 activists of BNP and AL were injured, and many business centres, government offices,

rickshaws and houses were ransacked and torched in attacks by the activists of the two archrivals in different parts of the hill district. The local administration imposed section 144 for an indefinite period to avert further violence.

### **MYMENSINGH**

At least 30 people including two journalists were injured in sporadic clashes between the activists of 14-party and BNP in the town yesterday afternoon.

### **NETRAKONA**

At least 20 activists of both AL and BNP were injured in a clash in Mohongonj municipality area in Netrakona defying section 144 in the area.

Defying the ban yesterday noon, both the parties brought out processions and clashed in front of a local Sonali Bank. Eight rounds of bullets were fired.

BNP activists attacked and ransacked 15 to 20 business establishments and houses of AL leaders in the area while AL activists damaged and looted some business establishments and houses of BNP leaders.

AL activists chopped off both hands of a BNP activist, Monjurul Haque, of Durgapur upazila yesterday.

### **KHULNA**

Twelve people were injured in a fierce clash between the activists of 14-party coalition and Jamaat in Koira upazila yesterday. Police fired several rounds of bullets and teargas shells to disperse the mob.

### **PATUAKHALI**

At least 15 Jubo Dal activists, youth wing of ruling BNP, were injured in a clash between AL and Jubo Dal at Dumki upazila town in Patuakhali yesterday. The AL activists also ransacked Jamaat's upazila unit office.

### **JESSORE**

At least 10 persons including an upazila unit Amir of Jamaat were injured in attacks on BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and activists at Jhikargachha upazila town in Jessore yesterday.

On Saturday, an unruly mob led by AL damaged at least 100 shops in Jhikargachha town. They also damaged and burnt offices of BNP and Jamaat injuring at least 15 people. AL put up a barricade on Jessore--Khulna highway on Sunday.

### **THAKURGAON**

At least 10 activists of AL were injured during clashes with BNP men in Ranishankail upazila. Angry 14-party men set fire to BNP and Jamaat offices there. Four were also injured during an AL-Jamaat clash in Haripur.

### **GAIBANDHA**

Four Jamaat leaders and activists were injured in a clash between 14-party and Jamaat in Sadullapur upazila yesterday.

Activists of 14-party later vandalised and set fire to a Jamaat office in Sadullapur and burnt a motorcycle there.

## **CHAPAINAWABGANJ**

A clash between AL and Jamaat at Chatra Bazar in Shibganj upazila left eight persons injured on Sunday evening. The injured were admitted to local clinics.

## **MUNSHIGANJ**

Activists of AL and BNP fought with each other in Tongibari upazila headquarters yesterday noon leaving 22 persons injured.



*Activists of 14-party alliance demonstrate by burning tyres at Lalkhan Bazar intersection in Chittagong during yesterday's hartal. PHOTO: STAR*

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/30/d6103001096.htm>

## **Dhaka at a standstill for the second day**

Staff Correspondent

An eerie calm continued to reign over the city for the second consecutive day yesterday as the political turmoil over appointment of the next caretaker government chief raged on with no immediate resolution in sight.

For many of the city dwellers it was hard to come to terms with the stillness of the usually teeming Dhaka city where the mass could barely have room to breathe comfortably.

The capital siege programme of the Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition combine stepped into its second day yesterday, adding to the public anxiety.

Besides, the day marked the end of Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. But millions of people bound for the city failed to reach the destination while those who were already on their way have been through terrible ordeal with the communications being disrupted.

The road links between Dhaka and the other districts were cut off, as the inter-district buses did not operate.

Bangladesh railway continued its services but the trains were forced to halt at different places including Khanabari, Brahmanbaria, Narsinghdi, Doulatkandi, Azampur, Ijhatpur, Bhawal and Gazipur, causing delays of no less than three hours.

Badamtolighat sources said the number of passengers using the waterways has been abnormally low in the last couple of days. "Steamer Ostrich that plies the route between Dhaka and Khulna has the capacity of carrying 800 passengers whereas it had only 200 on board last evening."

In Dhaka, Karwan Bazar, otherwise a buzzing kitchen market, remained desolate as both the traders and customers opted to stay home.

Most of the city streets were empty throughout the day. Only a few rickshaws plied the roads where there was hardly any public transport, let alone private cars.

The state-run banks and other commercial establishments worked for little time while private banks remained closed.

The education institutions extended the Eid vacation; shutters of shops were kept down. The shops at the bends of neighbourhoods continued their business on a very limited scale.

Gulistan, Bangabandhu Avenue and Purana Paltan stood silent, bearing the scars of Saturday's violence.

Chittagong too continued its deserted look. The non-stop hartal continued to paralyse the normal life and trade in the port city. Labours of Chittagong port ceased loading and unloading from 1:00pm. The AL-led 14 party and BNP held rallies in close proximity amid heavy deployment of police, Rab and BDR members.

The 14-party combine continued their agitation at Janatar Mancha at Laldighi Maidan defying the section 144 yesterday.

They held rallies also on the Darul Fazal Market premises and Olonkar intersection on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Pahartali.

Meanwhile, BNP-led four-party alliance held a rally at Gonotantra Mancha at Kazir Dewri intersection in the afternoon.

During hartal hours, there was little vehicular movement on the city thoroughfares.

Like the other landports, Benapole was inoperative. Sources said some 2000 trucks laden with goods were stuck in the border.

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[http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/index3.asp?cnd=10/30/2006&section\\_id=1&newsid=42027&spcl=no](http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/index3.asp?cnd=10/30/2006&section_id=1&newsid=42027&spcl=no)

## **10 more killed in third day's violence**

FE Report

10/30/2006

At least 10 more people were killed in the continuing political violence for a third straight day Sunday over the issue of caretaker government, raising the total death toll to 25.

Of them, four died in Noakhali, two in Banaripara of Barisal, two in Magura and one each in

Pirojpur and Narayanganj.

However, an uneasy calm prevailed in capital Dhaka Sunday after violent clashes between supporters of rival political parties Saturday left nearly a dozen people killed and over 2,000 injured across the country over the formation of a caretaker government.

In Noakhali, a BNP leader was hacked to death at Hatiya upazila Sunday. The local BNP leader was allegedly killed by Awami League supporters in Hatiya upazila Sunday morning. Sources said Awami League supporters waylaid Obaidul Haq, 55, joint-secretary of BNP Char Ishhar union, when he was going to uapzila sadar by a motorbike at about 11:30 am. They cut the throat of the BNP leader after taking him to a brickfield.

Police arrested four people. They have been identified as Rahem, 32, Nizam, 30, Nuruddin, 40 and Jasim, 25, in this connection.

Another injured supporter of BNP Heju Mia, who sustained injuries Saturday at Bandar Tila in Nijhum Deep in Hatiya, died Sunday. AL worker Abdul Mannan, who was injured during a clash at Nijhum Deep in Hatiya upazila Saturday, also succumbed to his injuries Sunday.

As the news of Mannan's death spread, angry AL supporters beat local BNP leader Henju Batainna (45) to death at Bandar Tila of Nijhum Dwip at mid night.

In Dinajpur, three people were killed in clashes between supporters of youth wings of BNP and AL -- Jubo Dal and Jubo League. Shiplu Islam, younger brother of Banaripara-unit BNP secretary Shahidul Islam and Islam's son-in-law Monirul Mollik were killed in the clash.

Another BNP activist Abul Kalam Azad, who was wounded Saturday, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Dinajpur Sunday morning.

The 14-party combine has enforced non-stop hartal in the port city of Chittagong and Comilla from 6pm Sunday. Activities of the country's two seaports -- Chittagong Port and Molgla Port -- were partially hampered Sunday.

In capital Dhaka, AL and its allies held rallies and demonstrations at the city's Bangabandhu Avenue and its adjoining areas for the third consecutive day Sunday, but there was no report of any untoward incident from any part of the city.

All public and private offices resumed operations Sunday after Eid-ul Fitr holiday and weekend, but attendance was very thin as officials and employees, who left the city to celebrate the Eid, could not return to the capital due to disruption in transportations.

Communications between Dhaka and the rest of the country have been disrupted since Friday night. As a result, thousands of people remained stranded at different parts of the country.

Authorities have tightened security at the city's strategic points, including the Secretariat, the National Press Club, Purana Paltan, Motijheel, Shahbagh and Farmgate.

Members of riot police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) were seen patrolling the city Sunday. Traffic was also thin in the city.

The political crisis has already sparked two days of rioting in the capital and other parts of the country.

Protesters blocked highways, burned vehicles, and attacked offices of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

In Keraniganj, over 50 people sustained rubber-bullet injuries as police fired on the activists of the 14-party combined opposition in Rohitpur area today (Sunday), the third day of road blockade enforced by them in the area.

Local sources said hundreds of 14-party activists blockaded Dhaka-Maowa road and Dhaka-Dohar-Nawabganj road at 10am.

Police fired over 100 rounds of rubber bullets to break up the squatters at Rohitpur about 1pm, leaving over 50 injured, ten of them critically.

A Shibir Shibir cadre, who was wounded by AL activists Saturday in Narayanganj, died at the Ibne Sinha Hospital in Dhaka Sunday. Earlier, the victim Farhad (20) was fatally wounded at Siddirganj in the district.

The Awami League led 14-party alliance Sunday held about 15km of Dhaka-Chittagong highway from Meghna industrial belt to Signboard area disrupting vehicular movement. Hundreds of commuters were seen walking long distance to reach their destinations.

Some shops and houses were plundered in stray incidents across the district when alliance activists moved in militant processions.

Two Jubo League and Jamaat activists, injured in separate clashes in Magura town Saturday, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital Sunday.

Chase and counter-chase between Jamaat and BNP and 14-party activists continued in Magura district Sunday in a backlash to Saturday's clashes.

BDR patrols have been deployed in the district to maintain law and order.

"Amid the raging violence, marauders damaged a number of houses and shops and set fire to a truck and a motorcycle," witnesses said giving a spot account of the rioting by rival political activists.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/31/d6103101011.htm>

## **Carry out 11 tasks within Nov 3 to prove neutrality**

*Hasina meets Iajuddin to spell out demands, She will declare next course of action from rally if he fails test*

Staff Correspondent

Awami League-led 14-party alliance leaders met President and Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday and demanded that he should perform 11 urgent tasks, including reconstitution of Election Commission (EC) and neutralisation of civil and police administrations, within November 3 to prove his neutrality.

The chief of the non-party interim government assured the eight-member delegation of the 14-party alliance led by Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina that all possible steps will be initiated for holding a free and fair election.

"If the chief adviser fails to prove his neutrality by this time, we will declare our next course of agitation programmes from a rally at Paltan Maidan on November 3," Hasina told newsmen after their meeting with Iajuddin at Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

"We categorically told the chief adviser that he will have to prove himself neutral through his activities," Hasina said. She urged people to get ready for launching agitation programmes if implementation of their demands goes otherwise.

President Iajuddin Ahmed assumed the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government on Sunday night ignoring severe opposition from the 14-party alliance. The AL-led alliance, however, neither welcomed nor rejected Iajuddin's new role.

Asked what Iajuddin told her at the meeting, the AL chief said, "The president assured us that he will maintain neutrality and look into our demands."

The president assured the 14-party alliance of "all possible steps on his part to stage a free and fair election" and said several steps have already been ordered towards that end, state-run news agency BSS reported quoting the president's Press Secretary Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury.

The 14-party leaders urged the president to play a "historic role" to ensure a free and fair election by recalling his background as a respected university teacher and teachers' leader.

"I believe we can stage a free and fair election joining our hands as we worked together in the pro-democracy campaigns when I was the president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association," the Bangabhaban spokesman quoted the president as telling the 14-party alliance leaders.

The atmosphere of the meeting was "very cordial" and the 14-party leaders wished the president good health and long life, Mokhles said.

Hasina, who visited the Bangabhaban for the first time in the last five years, placed the demands in writing before the caretaker government chief.

The 14-party alliance demanded immediate reconstitution of the EC through removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC), three other election commissioners and the EC secretary.

Their demands also include cancellation of the "political" appointments of upazila election officials and the controversial updated voter list, and introduction of transparent ballot box in the upcoming polls.

The 14-party alliance demanded depoliticisation of the civil and police administrations, state-run media, steps to end political harassment, fresh investigation into rise of militancy, cancellation of firearms licences given in the last two years, and ban on departure of corrupt former ministers, lawmakers and godfathers.

"We will remain rigid on our demands along with the previous proposals for reforms in the Election Commission and electoral laws," Hasina told reporters.

"If the chief adviser can prove his neutrality through his activities by November 3, we may welcome him," she said.

"People may have suspicion about him as he was elected the president by a political party. Moreover, his assumption of the office of chief adviser has compromised the basic concept of the non-party caretaker government. So, the president will have to remove all suspicion from the people's mind through his activities," the AL chief said.

The AL chief said the road blockade programme has temporarily been postponed, but agitations in the streets will continue.

On reconstitution of the EC, Hasina said the CEC and his other colleagues will follow the same path of former chief justice KM Hasan.

Terming Hasan's refusal to assume the office of the caretaker government chief "people's victory", Hasina thanked people who made the countrywide blockade programme from Saturday to Monday a success.

Along with senior leaders of the 14-party alliance, Hasina entered the Bangabhaban at 3:50pm and came out at 5:07pm. From there she rushed to the AL Dhanmondi office to brief newsmen.

The 14-party delegation included Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu. Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury also accompanied her.

Prior to their visit to the Bangabhaban, the 14-party leaders held two meetings to fix their strategy and discuss the legal aspects of their demands.



## **4 killed, 300 hurt as violence continues**

*Ex-JCD president beaten up in Faridpur*

Star Report

Four people died and around 300 people were injured following violence between activists of Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance and the BNP-led four-party combine at different districts of the country yesterday.

AL activists allegedly murdered a Jamaat-e-Islami leader at Ashashuni upazila of Satkhira Sunday night. The fourth consecutive day of clashes saw the death toll rise to 28 with an AL activist succumbing to his injuries in Netrakona yesterday.

The dead were identified as Arman, 32, Jubo League activist of Maij Char of Sadar upazila in Kishoreganj, Zobed Ali, 55, Jamaat president of Khazura union of Ashashuni upazila in Satkhira, Jamirul Islam Jamu, vice-president of Kushtia town Jubo League, and Mir Kashem, 35, AL general secretary of Mohanganj municipality, who died yesterday in the hospital after he was injured in a clash on October 28.

Local administration of a number of districts imposed section 144 to avert violence. Party activists, however, violated the order and locked into clashes.

Meanwhile, a mob yesterday beat up former president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Shahabuddin Laltu and four others at Bhanga upazila in Faridpur, a correspondent in Faridpur reports.

Witness said the mob halted Laltu's motorcade as it reached Shalildia of Maligram in Bhanga upazila around 5:30pm. He was heading for Dhaka from Bhola.

"Laltu fired a shot in the air to make his way through the mob which deteriorated the situation," a witness said.

The mob chased down the three four-wheel-drive vehicles of Laltu's motorcade as those tried to escape the blockade.

Laltu and his four companions jumped into a pond to escape the mob wrath but the mob caught them and beat them up with sticks. They also set fire to the three vehicles.

The injured five were rushed to Faridpur General Hospital and were being shifted to Dhaka as this report was being filed last night.

### **RAJSHAHI**

At least 100 people were injured in Rajshahi city yesterday when armed Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres attacked a 14-party coalition procession and police charged truncheons to stop the battling parties from fighting, our staff correspondent in Rajshahi reports.

The city's Shaheb Bazar, Kumarpara, Ganakpara, Mianpara, Sona Dighi square, and Hatim Khan areas turned into battlefields in the afternoon.

The battling parties traded around 50 shots and exploded 20 crude bombs. They also vandalised over 50 shops, offices and banks at Shaheb Bazar area. Law enforcers lobbed 70 tear-gas canisters and resorted to charging truncheons on them to quell the situation.

The clashes erupted when Shibir cadres hurled two crude bombs on a Workers' Party, a coalition partner of 14-party, procession near a police barricade set up to protect a Shibir rally at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point.

Workers' Party Politburo Member Fazle Hossain Badsha, who was leading the procession from Ganakpara, received splinter injuries in his leg.

Awami League (AL) activists rushed to the scene with oars in their hands following the attack. Shibir cadres then fled towards the Sona Dighi intersection area.

The Shibir cadres returned a little later and attacked the 14-party workers there. A large number of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men rushed to the spot and charged truncheons indiscriminately. Photojournalist Rumi and Adil, Rajshahi bureau reporter of Dainik Inqilab, were injured during the truncheon charge.

Over 100 Rab members and several hundred policemen cordoned off the area. They raided houses, shops, hotels and even the Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club following the clash.

Badsha told reporters that the Shibir attack on them was pre-planned.

Shibir Publicity Secretary Emajuddin Mondol, however, claimed that the 14-party men attacked the Shibir men and around 20 Shibir activists were injured in the incident.

Swachhasebak League Publicity Secretary Subhas Sarkar, Rajpara Moitree President Alfaz and Bangladesh Chhatra League worker Babu were treated at a city clinic while 15 others were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Additional forces of Rab and police were patrolling the city following the clash.

### **KISHOREGANJ**

One Jubo League leader was shot dead while 100 others were injured, eight critically, during a gun-battle between AL and BNP activists at Bajitpur upazila in Kishoreganj last evening.

Around 200 BNP men attacked the residences of AL activists leading to the clash that left Arman, the Jubo League leader, dead on the spot.

At least 30 AL and BNP activists were injured in a clash between the two parties at Koliarchar upazila in the district after BNP men attacked and looted about 30 more residences and establishments belonging to the AL workers and people of the minority communities.

In another incident, AL activists tried to attack the house of former education minister M Osman Farruk at Karimganj upazila and ransacked three shops owned by BNP men.

Meanwhile, villagers detained an alleged cadre of former BNP lawmaker Mojibur Rahman Monju with firearms and foiled his attempt to kill an AL leader in Bajitpur early yesterday.

### **SATKHIRA**

Awami League (AL) activists allegedly murdered a Jamaat leader at Ashashuni upazila in Satkhira Sunday night, our Satkhira correspondent reports.

The dead was identified as Zobed Ali, 55, of village Kapsanda and Jamaat president of the Khazura union of the same upazila.

Quoting locals, police said the assailants attacked Zobed and his son Abu Bakar in front of Gadaipur Primary School as they were returning from a party meeting in Ashashuni on a motorbike. The miscreants hacked them indiscriminately and left the scene.

Zobed was taken to Satkhira Sadar Hospital where on-duty doctor declared him dead around 12:30am.

Contacted, Ashashuni Upazila Jamaat leader Prof Abdus Sabur accused AL activists of the murder and demanded arrest and punishment of the killers.

However, Ashashuni upazila AL president and former lawmaker Mokhlesur Rahman and General Secretary Shahidul Islam Pintu refuted the allegation and demanded punishment to the killers after a neutral investigation.

Meanwhile, the incident triggered widespread violence in the town yesterday when Jamaat activists ransacked local AL office at Katia Bazar and several shops at New Market.

Section 144 was imposed in Parulia Bazar in Debhata upazila for an indefinite period after the BNP activists attacked and torched the Parulia union AL office. At least 30 AL activists were also injured in the attack.

Local AL unit held a meeting at Katia Bazar yesterday afternoon to protest the vandalism by the Jamaat activists.

#### **KUSHTIA**

Unknown men called Jamirul over telephone and asked him to go to a place known as Nishan Crossing. They gunned him down around 9:00pm last night.

AL claimed BNP men killed him for his role in the 14-party programmes during the last three days agitations.

#### **NETRAKONA**

At least 30 AL and BNP activists were injured in sporadic clashes between the parties at Durgapur upazila in the district from Sunday night to yesterday midday.

AL activists on Sunday night vandalised and looted at least 20 houses and 15 business centres owned by BNP leaders and activists at different places of Durgapur upazila.

#### **>TANGAIL**

Around 15 activists were injured, one motorcycle torched, 17 shops vandalised and burned during clashes between the AL and BNP supporters at different places in Tangail.

#### **NOAKHALI**

Around 10 activists of 14-party combine and four-party alliance were injured in a clash which triggered after AL leaders beat up a BNP activist at Chatkhil yesterday.

#### **THAKURGAON**

At least 10 people were injured in Pirganj upazila in Thakurgaon following a clash between BNP and Jatiya Party when BNP former minister Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir appeared to inaugurate a bridge in Pirganj.

## **1,000 held as security upped**

Staff Correspondent

About 1,000 people have been arrested since Sunday night in the capital after security was beefed up with the deployment of a large number of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members in addition to police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

Around 120 check-posts have been set up in the city, mostly at the entry points to the capital.

Law and order situation dipped in the capital although a large number of police and BDR men had been deployed since October 28.

Rab men have been searching vehicles and commuters at the check-posts. "We have also been instructed to catch vehicles plying without proper documents," said a Rab official at a check-post in Uttara. "Our special attention is on bikers," he added.

## **5 more killed as violence on**

Staff Correspondent

Five more people were killed and over 400 others injured on Monday as violence among rival political forces that erupted on Friday continued to rock the country.

With the new victims, the escalated violence claimed so far 30 lives during the last four days.

Monday's victims included two activists each from Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami.

An Awami Juba League leader, Arman, was shot dead at Bajitpur in Kishoreganj, while Awami League leader, Mir Kashem, injured in Sunday's clash, died at Netrakona hospital on Monday. A Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Saber Hossain, succumbed to his injuries in Nilphamari, a Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal leader, Rafiqul Islam Thandu, was killed in police firing at Kahalu of Bogra and another Jamaat leader Javed Ali Gazi died in Satkhira.

Although the siege programme of the opposition was called off Monday afternoon, clashes continued at different places across the country. The capital Dhaka looked calm on Monday after the three days' continued violence, but it was isolated from other parts of the country until the road communication restored in the evening.

In Rajshahi, at least 50 persons including police and journalists were injured as activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Shibir swooped on the 14-party alliance activists at Rajshahi Shaheb Bazar zero point area Monday afternoon.

Around one kilometre area between Manichattar and Panchabati and adjacent roads of the city turned into battle field for two hours.

Workers Party politburo member Fazley Hossain Badshah was among those who were injured in bomb attacks by Shibir cadres, witnesses said.

'I narrowly escaped an attempt on life. Jamaat-Shibir men planned to kill me but some policemen saved me,' Badshah said.

Jamaat Shibir cadres ransacked the Communist Party office at city's Ganakpara area.

Earlier, at around 3.30 pm, the Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir staged a protest rally at Shaheb Bazar in protest against murdering their several party men in Dhaka clash.

In Kishoreganj, the activists of Awami League and BNP locked in a clash with lethal weapons at Majchar area under Bajitpur upazila at about 4:30pm, killing Arman, 32, on the spot.

Over 100 activists of both the parties received injuries in the mayhem and condition of four of them was stated to be critical.

The rioting hordes looted valuables and set fire to some houses in the area.

Rival groups looted and set ablaze a number of shops at Dumrakanda bazar during a clash in the morning that also left 30 people, including five cops, injured.

In Bogra, police opened fire on a procession of BNP and its front organisations when they attacked the Kahalu police station in protest against Sunday's killing of a Juba Dal leader, Haider Ali. Thandu received bullet wound and died on the spot, while 30 others were also injured.

Meanwhile, the 14-party combine activists damaged the residence of BNP leader and former education minister Osman Farruk at Guzadia in Karimganj upazila.

They also ransacked Guzadia union BNP office and several shops in Guzadia bazar. Some 20 people received injuries during the attack.

In Sirajganj, around 25 people were injured in clashes between BNP and AL activists in two places of the district.

Thirteen of the injured were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital and different clinics.

In Bagerhat, at least 40 people were injured in separate clashes between Awami League and BNP activists in different areas of the town on Monday.

A BNP office and some 15 shops were damaged in Satgambuj area.

In Shariatpur, five people were injured in a clash at Bhederganj Bazar.

In Pabna, Awami League activists ransacked various government offices and removed portraits of immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia from these offices Sunday night.

In Satkhira, over 35 people, including a former AL lawmaker, were injured in a series of clashes in different places of the district during the last two days.

Meanwhile, the district administration imposed section 144 on Parulia bus-stand area in Debhata, prohibiting meeting or procession.

In Nilphamari, a militant procession of Awami League set fire to Jaldhaka bazar Monday evening. The fire gutted about 50 shops.

Witnesses said the Jamaat cadres tried to resist the procession, enraging the unruly activists to set ablaze the shops in the bazar.

In Lalmonirhat, at least 50 persons were injured in clash between the AL and BNP at three places on Sunday and Monday.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/10/31/index.htm>

## **Bangladesh bleeding**

The dust has finally settled. Over two dozen lie dead, and hundreds, if not thousands, have been injured in the clashes between the cadres of the rival political parties across the nation. And all for what? In the end, we have as chief adviser neither the nominee the BNP insisted it was so adamant on keeping, nor an individual with whom the AL is happy. If the end result has been the assumption of the office of chief adviser by the president, could this not have been accomplished without either death or destruction? The saddest reflection is that no one with the power to avert the bloodshed thought to ask this question when it might have made a difference.



Photo: Star & AFP



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[http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display\\_news.asp?section=World\\_News&subsection=Philippines+%26+South+Asia&month=October2006&file=World\\_News2006103181514.xml](http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/Display_news.asp?section=World_News&subsection=Philippines+%26+South+Asia&month=October2006&file=World_News2006103181514.xml)

## **Khaleda warns rival; Bangla riot toll 26**

Web posted at: 10/31/2006 8:15:14

Source ::: REUTERS

DHAKA • At least one person was killed and over 100 wounded in fresh political violence in Bangladesh yesterday as the outgoing prime minister said she would deal sternly with the opposition if it continued demands for reforms.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, who has a largely ceremonial role as president, took additional charge as chief adviser of a caretaker authority on Sunday to fill a political vacuum after Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia ended her five-year mandate.

At least 25 people were killed and hundreds wounded in rioting over the weekend after a former supreme court chief justice refused to take on the job as caretaker prime minister.

A man was killed in a south-western town and about 120 people were wounded in fresh clashes between rival activists across the country yesterday, raising the toll to 26 over the last four days, police said.

Speaking at a huge rally in the capital, Khaleda said she had had enough of the opposition's demands.

“The opposition will be dealt with a heavy hand if they try to disrupt the elections in the name of demands for electoral reforms,” she said.

The ex-PM said she had tolerated many excess and acts of anarchy by Awami League during her five-year rule but “no longer shall we treat them leniently.” The president began meeting top political leaders, including opposition leader Sheikh Hasina. He is to soon appoint a panel of 10 advisers to help him ahead of the elections and take charge of key ministries.

Opposition leaders said Hasina had placed a set of demands before the president on behalf of a 14-party alliance she leads, including reforms at the election commission and pruning of the civil administration ahead of the election. The opposition wants the president to remove Chief Election Commissioner M A Aziz and his deputies, accusing them of being biased towards the BNP.

“We cannot welcome him in his new role immediately,” Hasina said of Iajuddin. “We will closely watch his actions to see if he is acceptable.”

The president intervened after former Supreme Court chief justice K M Hasan declined to head the caretaker government in the face of violent opposition. He was to take over when Khaleda’s five-year term ended on Saturday.

Bangladesh introduced the caretaker system in 1991 after military president Hossain Mohammad Ershad was toppled through a people’s uprising led jointly by Khaleda and Hasina, who have however remained implacable foes since then.

The system, designed to prevent ruling parties from rigging polls, has worked generally well in three elections. But the Awami League now wants the system to be reformed to make it more efficient and reliable. The BNP is reluctant.

Yesterday, opposition activists continued to blockade highways linking Dhaka with the rest of the country. Some vehicles returned on the streets of the capital but most offices and businesses were closed. Awami League activists marched through Dhaka streets demanding immediate removal of the chief election commissioner and updating the voters’ list ahead of the election.

Khaleda’s Bangladesh Nationalist Party said its supporters would take to the streets now “in full force” to counter Awami-led protesters.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/nov/01/front.html#4>

## **857 arrested, rights violated**

*Most implicated in pending cases*

Staff Correspondent

Law enforcers on Monday cracked down on rickshaw pullers, roadside vendors, job seekers and people coming to Dhaka by so far arresting at least 857 to keep law and order before the next general elections.

The Rapid Action Battalion, Detective Branch, Special Branch and Armed Police Battalion personnel began the operation in entry points to the city from Sunday afternoon.

They picked up people at Kamalapur railway station, Tejgaon railway station, Gabtali, Mohakhali, Sayedabad and Gulistan bus terminals and Sadarghat launch terminal.

But leaders and activists of the Awami League alleged the law men raided houses of low-profile Awami League leaders and arrested more than 400 people having links with the Awami League in



three days.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman refused to call it a special drive.

'It is nothing new. We are carrying out routine raids to keep law and order during the transition period,' he told New Age.

'It is not a case of "blanket arrest." The law men started their drive against listed and suspected criminals and the police freed many of the detained after verification,' Mizanur said.

Faizul Monir Chowdhury, president of the Ramna unit Awami League, told New Age, 'The police conducted raids on the houses of Awami League leaders and activists after the Jammāt-e-Islami had filed cases with the Paltan police in connection with Saturday's vandalism.'

According to police release, the law enforcers arrested 857 people in the city from Sunday afternoon to early Tuesday.

On Sunday, the police detained 503 people. Of the detained, 297 were shown arrested in different cases filed earlier with the police in Dhaka. The remaining people were arrested under Section 54 and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Act. Only 70 were remanded on bail on Monday, court sources said.

The police arrested 184 on Monday. Of them, 128 were shown arrested in different. The remaining people were arrested under Section 54 and the DMP Act. Of them only 33 persons remanded on bail and released from jail

From Monday night to early Tuesday, the law enforcers arrested 170 people, of whom 108 were shown arrested in different cases. The remaining people were arrested under Section 54 the DMP Act. Only 21 of them were remanded on bail and released from jail.

The arrested suffered immensely as they were kept in court custody, crammed five to six times the capacity.

The police are also arresting people under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, ignoring the High Court directive that any arrest on suspicion is illegal.

They arrested 370 people under Section 54 in different parts in the city from Sunday to early Tuesday.

The High Court in its 15-point directive on April 7, 2003 asked police officers, magistrates, jail officials and sessions judges to ensure that human rights are not violated.

The directive, issued on a writ petition challenging the abuse of Section 54 and 167, said police will furnish the reasons for arrest to the people arrested in three hours of taking them to police station.

If people are not arrested from their residence or place of business, the police will inform the nearest relation of the detained over telephone, if any, or through a messenger within one hour of taking them to the police station.

But most of the victims said the police picked them up while they were on their way to work or house without informing their family members.

Mujibur Rahman, a lawyer, told New Age, 'Most of the victims were implicated in pending cases as they were not involved in any criminal activities.'

'One of my clients, Abbas, 55, a betel leaf seller of the Bhasantek slum, was arrested Sunday night at his shop and was implicated in a police assault case filed on September 28 with the Kafrul police. He was not remanded on bail.'

Jarina Begum, mother of Shamim, 20, a scraps vendor at Lalbagh, said the Rapid Action Battalion arrested her son at the Bakshibazar bus stand Monday afternoon when he was returning home.

'The law enforcers implicated my son in an arms and ammunition case as they claimed my son had been carrying used bullets. I could not understand why even a criminal would carry used bullets,' Jarina said.

Babu, 25, younger brother of rickshaw puller Khokon, 27, who remained missing from Sunday night on his way to home from Shah Ali Mirpur said he had come to know from a jail warden that his brother is in jail from Monday evening.

'We desperately looked for my brother in all possible places, even in hospitals as the police did not tell us about his arrest,' Babu told New Age.

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## **Two more killed as violence rages throughout the country**

Staff Correspondent

Despite postponement of the countrywide 'siege' programme by the Awami League-led combine on Monday, rival party activists continued fighting each other across the country, killing at least two more people and wounding many more on Tuesday.

Kazi Rubel, a BNP activist, was killed in fierce infighting between the party's two factions at Saidpur in Nilphamari, and an Awami League leader, Motahar, injured in Sunday's clash between his party and BNP in Bhola, died at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barisal on Tuesday.

The capital almost returned to normalcy after four days of political turmoil and violence. The movement of vehicles normalised to a great extent on Tuesday though the traffic is yet to regain the congestion that is normal in this over-crowded city.

Normalcy also returned to other divisional cities on Tuesday, but violence continued at different places including Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Patuakhali and Jhalakati, and rival parties brought out processions and counter-processions across the country.

In Nilphamari, the BNP lawmaker of the just dissolved parliament, Amjad Hossain Sarker, along with his followers attacked rival groups at Sepaiganj Haat in Saidpur at about 11:00pm on Monday, and the rival groups retaliated.

Amjad Hossain Sarker, along with his brother, Rashidul Alam Sarker, and 30 others were injured in the clash. Kazi Rubel, nephew of Amjad's rival, Mahfuzur Rahman — a member of the Public Service Commission — was also injured.

About 30 motorbikes, part of about 100 bikes in Amjad's convoy, were burnt during the clash.

About 10 of the injured were taken to the Rangpur Medical College Hospital where Rubel was declared dead on early Tuesday.

Protesting against the killing, about 20,000 villagers of Sipaiganj Haat and surrounding villages led by the relatives of Mahfuzur Rahman brought out a big procession on Tuesday noon. They demanded the trial of Amjad Hossain Sarker.

In Bhola, Motahar, a local Awami League leader, died at the Barisal Hospital on early Tuesday, a day after he was shot in a clash with BNP at Mazambazaar under Borhanuddin upazila.

Ten other people were injured in a clash between Awami League and BNP activists at Borhanuddin upazila on Monday night. At least 15 business establishments were damaged during the clash.

In Patuakhali, Rapid Action Battalion personnel arrested 20 suspected criminals, reportedly backed by both Awami League and BNP, from Boga Bandar in Bauphal upazila on Tuesday after a clash between the two rival parties that left 15 people injured on Monday night.

Police said the clash broke out when Awami League activists were resisted as they tried to attack the local BNP office at Boga on Monday night. At least eight shops were damaged during the clash.

In Jhalakati, the administration on Tuesday imposed Section 144 on Kathalia upazila headquarters as both the Awami League and BNP had arranged public meetings in the same venue.

In Lalmonirhat, at least 15 people were injured in a clash between AL and BNP at Patgram upazila town in Lalmonirhat district on Tuesday noon.

The injured activists are under treatment in local hospitals and health complexes at Patgram.

The offices of both the parties were ransacked and torched during the clash.

In Chittagong at least 10 people were injured in a triangular clash between Chhatra Dal, Chhatra League and police on the campus of the Government Commerce College on Tuesday.

Police said the trouble started when they intercepted Chhatra Dal activists while they were

marching towards the college campus in a procession at about 11:30am.

The Chhatra Dal activists soon regrouped, entered the campus and were immediately locked in a clash with Chhatra League workers, leaving ten injured.

In Khulna city the activists of Jubo League and Chhatra League reportedly smashed the portraits of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and late President Ziaur Rahman in different offices on Tuesday.

According to sources, a group of Jubo League activists, reportedly led by Shaheed Iqbal Bithar, at around 11:00am forced their way into the Khulna corporate branch of Agrani Bank and smashed the portrait of former President Ziaur Rahman in the CBA room of the bank.

The group then went to the Sir Iqbal Road branch of Rupali Bank, Khulna T&T office and Public Works Department office of the Khulna City Corporation, and smashed the portraits of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. The activists hurled abusive words at the officials during the incident, said sources.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/01/d61101011511.htm>

## **5 more killed, 50 hurt in political clashes**

Star Report

Five more people were killed and more than 50 injured in clashes yesterday as countrywide political violence continued for the fifth consecutive day.

Of the dead, three were Awami League (AL) activists and two from BNP.

The victims are Akkas Ali, 65, vice-chairman of AL's Namita union unit in Jhenidah, Motahar Hossain, 45, an AL activist of Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola, Kena Ram Das, 23, AL activist of Debhata upazila in Satkhira, Rabiul Islam Rubel, 32, a BNP activist in Nilphamari and Elahi Sarder, 40, a BNP activist of Sreepur in Magura.

In Nilphamari, a clash between two rival groups of BNP left Rubel dead at Kashiram Belbukur village Monday night. Fatally wounded in the clash, Rubel died on way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, reports UNB.

A dozen others injured in the clash were admitted to local hospitals.

In Jhenidah, BNP activists stabbed Akkas on his way to village Surjadia of Moheshpur upazila on Monday night. He died at a local hospital in the early hours yesterday.

Local AL blamed BNP for the killing as the attack was led allegedly by a BNP cadre Budo. But police said Akkas was killed following a land dispute.

Motahar Hossain, who sustained bullet wounds in a gunfight between AL and BNP at Mozom Bazar in Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola on Sunday, succumbed to his injuries at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital Monday night.

Meanwhile, 10 people were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists in Borhanuddin upazila on Monday night. At least 15 shops were damaged during the clash.

Kena Ram, who was injured in an attack by the BNP activists on October 29 at Parulia in Debhata upazila of Satkhira, succumbed to his injuries at a Khulna hospital yesterday.

In Patuakhali, 20 AL and BNP activists were arrested from Boga Bandar in Baufal upazila yesterday morning following a clash between the two rival parties on Monday night that left 15 people injured and eight shops ransacked.

In Bogra, three people were injured when Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal activists attacked a rally of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) in the town yesterday evening.

In Jamalpur, at least 10 people were injured and 12 houses ransacked in a series of clashes between the BNP and AL activists at Bhabanipur in Sarishabari upazila yesterday.

In Magura, BNP activist Elahi Sarder was killed in a clash between the BNP and AL activists at village Dosatina in Sreepur upazila yesterday evening.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/01/d61101011612.htm>

## **DMP drive brings back mass arrest memories**

*Over 2,000, mostly innocent, arrested in 2 days*

Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) picked up over 2,000 people in their drive to restore peace in the city during the last two days, reviving memories of mass arrest by the immediate past BNP-led alliance government.

However, the drive created panic among small-earning innocent people and activists of Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance, as mostly they were the ones who were picked up. These people were allegedly harassed at the police stations and later at the lower court by brokers.

Even though the number of people picked up was more than 2,000 in last 48 hours, police placed 483 and 170 people before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) on Monday and yesterday.

Most of those who were picked up allegedly managed to obtain their release by paying bribes at the police stations while the rest, who were sent to court, were seen bargaining with brokers on the CMM court premises in a bid to obtain release orders.

A number of 14-party men were also seen busy at the court trying to get release orders for their party-men.

### **HARASSMENTS**

A police team on Monday picked up Sumon Mohammad, 15, who sells chicken on the streets of Moulavibazar in Lalbagh, in front of his house in Shahidnagar.

His mother Moina Begum had sent Sumon, the lone earner of the family, to get some bread and banana Monday night, as the family had no food at home.

"They [police] demanded Tk 1,000 for his release," Moina told The Daily Star, adding that it drove her crazy as she had no money.

She could only manage Tk 70 from a neighbour and offered the amount to the police team, which only angered them, she said.

Sumon received a beating at the police station and was sent to the court yesterday morning, Moina said. She managed to release her son yesterday afternoon by paying Tk 450 to a broker working at the CMM court.

Akkas Miah claimed that his crime was that he attended an AL rally on Sunday. Police of Bhashantek police outpost asked him to go to the police station on Sunday evening. As he went there, he was arrested and sent to the court the following day.

His wife Jotsna Begum became bewildered finding her 50-year-old husband arrested. She was running after brokers at the court yesterday begging them to get a release order for her husband.

The family of Mohammad Shamim, 20, a Jubo League worker of Lalbagh area, is lucky as his party-men are paying the lawyer's fees.

Her mother Jarina Begum said Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men arrested Shamim, an employee of a scrap metal shop, in possession of a razor at Rahmatgaj of Bakshibazar in Lalbagh area.

Mohammad Liton, 23, owner of a small shop at Hazipara in Khilgaon, said police arrested him when he was talking to his customers around 8:30pm on Sunday night and placed him before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

The police stations of the city were crammed with family members of the arrestees and the people picked up. The stations were very busy with brokers working and police bringing in and releasing the picked-up people.

A similar picture was seen on the court premises. Hundreds of brokers were found hunting down innocent and poor parents, wives and family members of arrestees. A large crowd was also seen in front of Dhaka Central Jail waiting either for the release of arrestees or to meet the arrestees.

Meanwhile, a DMP press release said out of the 170 arrests made yesterday 25 people were arrested following warrants of arrest, 83 in regular cases, six under section 54 and the rest 65 under DMP Ordinance.



*A section of the people who were picked up and put behind bars at Lalbagh Police Station yesterday as the Dhaka Metropolitan Police continue to arrest people in the name of restoring peace in the capital. PHOTO: Focus Bangla*

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[http://www.agoravox.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=15147](http://www.agoravox.fr/article.php3?id_article=15147)

## **Les émeutes sévissent au Bangladesh, la capitale en état d'urgence**

AgoraVox - 2 nov 2006

**Bangladesh, dont la superficie ne dépasse guère un tiers de celle de l'hexagone, et dont les habitants vivant au-dessous du seuil de pauvreté comptent pour 47% de la population, est**

**actuellement en proie à un bouleversement politique et social inouï, avant ses élections législatives en janvier 2007.**

De violents affrontements politiques ont éclaté le 28 octobre au Bangladesh, ont provoqué la mort d'une vingtaine de personnes et fait plus d'un millier de blessés jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Le mandat de cinq ans du Premier ministre, Khaleda Zia, expiré, le gouvernement au pouvoir aurait donc à confier samedi les rênes à un gouvernement provisoire chargé d'organiser des élections législatives en janvier 2007.

Cependant, la violence ne venait de se déchaîner qu'à la suite de la nomination de K. M. Hasan, l'ex-président de la Cour suprême du Bangladesh, en tant que leader du gouvernement gardien, qui allait se faire assermenter avant d'entrer en fonction.

La situation actuelle est donc extrêmement explosive. Hier et avant-hier, les rues de la capitale, Dacca, ont été bousculées par de nombreux incidents sanglants entre les partisans de Zia et ceux du parti qui est leur adversaire principal, Awami Ligue .

Malgré le déploiement de milliers de policiers et l'usage abondant de gaz lacrymogènes pour rétablir la paix, la police a avoué avoir été complètement inefficace et impuissante devant cet accès de violence ; l'un des responsables de la force de l'ordre bangladaise pense : « Les incertitudes vont persister et la tension, s'accroître ».

Dans une déclaration faite au média national, Hasan a dit qu'il avait renoncé à assumer sa fonction dans le gouvernement par intérim, comme il n'avait pas réussi à se rendre crédible devant un certain nombre de partis politiques.

Le président du Bangladesh, Iazuddin Ahmed, après avoir vainement convoqué tous les partis politiques du pays pour discuter de la crise, avant-hier, s'est déclaré lui-même chef d'État en s'emparant de la fonction du Premier ministre, une décision qui a été aussi vivement soutenue par le parti de Khalida Zia que décriée par ses opposants, qui disent que l'action président est foncièrement inconstitutionnelle.

L'opposition exige en outre un droit de regard sur la composition de la commission électorale qui supervisera le scrutin de janvier 2007, jugée trop favorable au gouvernement sortant.

Depuis hier, la capitale du pays, effectivement en état d'urgence, est restée encerclée, empêchant le public et les transports d'en sortir ou d'y entrer librement. L'Inde, le plus proche voisin du pays, en

exprimant ses inquiétudes sur les instabilités du Bangladesh, et souhaitant que le prochain scrutin de janvier se déroule en paix, a néanmoins renforcé sa vigilance aux frontières des deux pays.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/04/d61104011711.htm>

## **43 hurt in AL, BNP clashes**

Star Report

Forty-three activists of Awami League (AL) and BNP were injured in clashes at Ghagra Bazar in Purbadhala upazila under Netrakona district and in Matiranga upazila under Khagrachhari district yesterday.

At least 40 people were injured as AL and BNP men got locked into a clash at Ghagra Bazar in Purbadhala upazila yesterday evening, reports our Netrakona correspondent.

BNP brought out a procession protesting the 'terrorist' activities of AL at Ghagra Bazar. AL men attacked the procession with sharp weapons, police and witnesses said.

During the hour-long clash that followed, at least 40 people of the two groups were injured.

Seriously injured Azizul Haque, Obaidul Haque, Golam Mostafa, Abul Kalam, Nazrul Islam of BNP and Lat Mia, Hira Akanda, Rukonuddin, Babul Akanda, Amirul Akanda and Enamul Haque of AL were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Additional police have been deployed at Ghagra Bazar as a tense situation is prevailing in the area.

Our Khagrachhari correspondent adds: Three AL activists were seriously injured and several business centres and houses ransacked and torched by BNP activists in different parts of Matiranga upazila in the district yesterday.

The injured AL activists are Mohammad Badal, 28, Mizanur Rahman, 20, and Mohammad Ali, 50.

Matiranga upazila BNP President Abdul Mannan Munnab led the attack, AL and security sources said.

Police arrested five people -- three of AL and two of BNP.

Clashes continued in different parts of the upazila as of filing this report in the evening.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/12/d6111201011.htm>

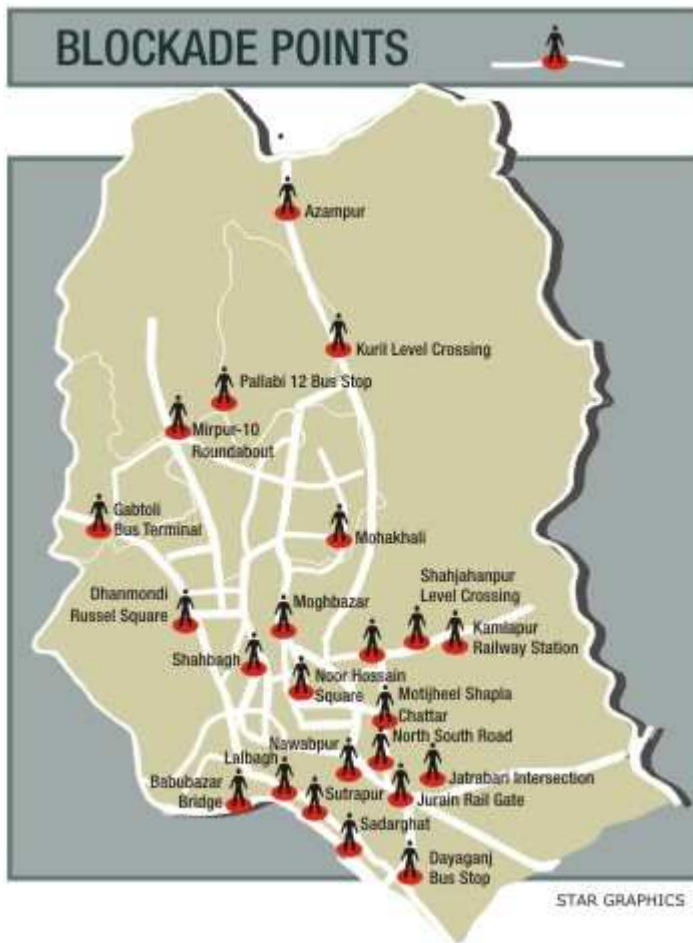
Front Page

## **Non-stop blockade begins amid massive security steps**

Hasan Jahid Tusher

A non-stop countrywide blockade enforced by the Awami League-led 14-party alliance begins today amid heightened tension as the extended deadline given to the president/chief adviser for implementing the alliance's 11-point task ended yesterday without meeting major demands.

## Non-stop blockade begins amid massive security steps



Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina formally declared the blockade programme last night and urged all to observe it peacefully. She also asked the president not to use the armed forces against people.

Terming the blockade programme "unlawful and unconstitutional", the non-party caretaker government directed the law enforcers to go tough during the blockade programme.

Police sources said even they have been directed to fire gunshots if the demonstrators attack them.

Fresh violence is apprehended as the 14-party has taken a hard-line in the streets and the DMP has banned political programmes carrying sticks and firearms.

All highways, rail and waterways will be blockaded; the capital will be isolated from other parts of the country; all ports will be shut down; and districts and upazila headquarters will be brought to a standstill from today, according to the 14-party.

The 14-party alliance will blockade at 22 points in the capital and plans to hold rallies and bring out processions in Dhaka and other parts of the country until its major demands are met.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will also be in the streets along with the 14-party. Key leaders of the LDP have also been maintaining close contacts with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil in this regard.



Dhaka Metropolitan Police last night was last night announcing the ban using loudspeakers at different parts in the capital and asked people not to observe the blockade and carry sticks, oars and poles.

Over 20,000 members of police, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will be deployed in the capital to ensure law and order.

"We will withdraw the blockades only when we see the caretaker government take effective initiatives to implement our demands to create a congenial atmosphere for a free and fair election," Hasina said at a crowded press briefing at her Dhanmondi office last night.

On the caretaker government press note, she said a non-party caretaker government cannot take stand against the countrymen and a peaceful programme of any political party.

The BNP urged the 14-party to withdraw its blockade programme, saying the AL will have to take the responsibilities for any untoward situation that foils the upcoming elections.

Seeing the deadline ended without implementation of the demands of the 14-party, police went on massive raids and mass arrest in the capital and other parts of the country. Police have so far arrested over 2,000 people from across the country, police sources said.

The AL president claimed the police so far arrested over 1,000 people of her party alone until 7:00pm and demanded their immediate release.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said her party would not hold any programme for the next two days to avoid confrontation.

Rumours ran high in the capital yesterday that the chief election commissioner (CEC) has resigned. Hearing the rumour, journalists rushed to the residence of CEC MA Aziz but he did not allow them.

Meanwhile, US Assistant Secretary of State of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A Boucher arrived in Dhaka yesterday. He met both the AL and BNP chiefs, asking them to resolve the deadlock through a constitutional process.

Boucher, who was believed by politicians and general people to play a vital role in resolving the current political stalemate, is scheduled to meet President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed today and may request him to reconstitute the Election Commission (EC), sources said.

### **14-PARTY MEETINGS**

To make the blockade programme a success, the 14-party alliance held a series of meetings yesterday while its senior leaders visited different districts adjacent to the capital. Rallies were also held at different places across the country.

The central and Dhaka city committees of the alliance held separate preparatory meetings, accusing Iajuddin of conspiring to meet the political agenda of the immediate past BNP-led four-party alliance government.

While briefing newsmen after a meeting of the 14-party alliance at the AL Dhanmondi office, its Coordinator Abdul Jalil also accused the president of pushing the country towards confrontation by "taking stand against the countrymen".

Jalil, also AL general secretary, said their movement will continue until a neutral environment is created to hold a free and fair election.

He said the National Democratic Institute, European Union and Commonwealth have stressed the need for reconstitution of the EC and a correct voter list to hold a free and fair election.

Senior 14-party leaders Tofail Ahmed, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haque Inu, Abdul Mannan, Abdur Rahman, Nurul Islam, Pankaj Bhattacharya, among others, were present at the briefing.

Hasina on behalf of the alliance placed an 11-point charter of demands to President Iajuddin on October 30, urging him to prove his neutrality by meeting the demands by November 3. Following requests from all quarters, the 14-party alliance later extended the deadline up to November 11.

The AL-led alliance's demands include reconstitution of the EC, removal of the CEC and three other election commissioners, correction and revision of the updated voter list, cancellation of political appointments of 300 upazila election officers and all contractual appointments, and withdrawal of all officials loyal to BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami from both civil and police administration.

### *Exemptions*

Emergency transports of hospitals and fire brigade, and vehicles carrying journalists and newspapers will remain outside the ambit of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance's countrywide non-stop blockades beginning today.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at a press briefing yesterday evening asked her alliance leaders and workers not to obstruct the movement of emergency transports.

She said hospitals, pharmacies, hotels and restaurants will also be out of the influence of the blockade programme.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/12/d6111201108.htm>

### **Blockade**

#### **22 hot spots in Dhaka**

Staff Correspondent

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance enforces indefinite road blockade at 22 points in Dhaka from today as part of its countrywide protest demanding removal of the chief election commissioner and reforms in the Election Commission.

Dhaka city unit leaders of 14-party finalised the spots at a meeting yesterday and said they would hold "peaceful" gatherings in the areas, but retaliate if attacked or obstructed. The meeting was held at the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The spots are: Gabtoli Bus Terminal, Mirpur-10 roundabout, Pallabi-12 Bus Stop, Dhanmondi Russell Square, Azampur, Kuril level crossing, Mohakhali, Moghbazar, Jurain Rail Gate, Jatrabari intersection, Dayaganj Bus Stop, Sadarghat, Raisa Bazar intersection in Sutrapur, Babu Bazar Bridge under Kotwali, Kamalapur Railway Station, Motijheel Shapla Chattar, Shahjahanpur level

crossing, Noor Hossain Square in Gulistan, Shahbagh intersection, Lalbagh Kella intersection, Nawabpur and North South Road.

Senior leaders of the alliance asked their workers to remain alert against any move to sabotage the programme.

"We will observe the programme peacefully and our leaders and workers have been instructed in that way. But, we apprehend that a vested quarter may try to create a volatile situation," City Unit Coordinator of 14-party Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told newsmen following the preparatory meeting.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/12/d6111201033.htm>

## **Military intervention won't help elections**

Boucher says CG & EC must act neutrally  
Diplomatic Correspondent

The United States yesterday said a military takeover would not help conduct a free and fair election in Bangladesh and urged the caretaker government and Election Commission (EC) to act neutrally to ensure each vote is counted and results are trusted.

"The situation here is difficult but the goal is [to hold] a free and fair election. I don't think a military takeover would contribute to that goal. That will be a bad thing to do," US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher told a press conference at the American Club.

Boucher who arrived in the capital yesterday to assess the pre-election ground situation also called on the political leadership to lower the level of tension and violence and hold peaceful demonstrations so that voters get educated about elections.

"The voters need a fair choice. They need to make their decision through free and fair elections where each vote is counted and respected," he said.

Faced with a volley of questions on the chief election commissioner (CEC), he said he would not talk about any particular individual. As a whole, the EC has a very important role to play in ensuring the elections are acceptable, he added.

"Our view is.... a great responsibility lies with the Election Commission and they need to exercise that responsibility fairly but carefully in accordance with the constitution and avoid any outside influence so that people trust their decisions and election results," he said.

Richard Boucher, who will meet President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed today, said the caretaker government must carry out its task in a neutral manner so that any of its decisions does not favour any particular political party.

There are a lot of issues to be settled by the caretaker government that needs more time to set up the groundwork for a free, fair, peaceful and credible election, he noted.

When asked about his meetings with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, he said both the leaders want free and fair elections and it would be better for them to reach a consensus on the issues respecting the constitutional process.

Asked how the election could be credible without participation of AL that seeks resignation of the CEC, the visiting US official said he hopes all political parties would participate in the polls and the EC should make sure that the people trust its decisions.

Boucher said both the political parties have a lot of experience in politics and they could easily settle many of the controversies.

He said the US would send observers to monitor the upcoming general election.

Terming the Dhaka-Washington relations excellent, he said his country would continue co-operating with Bangladesh, no matter what party gets elected to power in future.

He said despite Republican debacle in the midterm elections, the US government would carry on its efforts to strengthen democracy, healthcare and economic progress.

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-11-12T190954Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-275957-1.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-11-12T190954Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-275957-1.xml&archived=False)

## **Bangladesh to deploy army to quell protests**

Sun Nov 12, 2006 7:22 PM IST

By Anis Ahmed

DHAKA (Reuters) - Bangladeshi authorities said on Sunday they would use troops to help keep order after protesters demanding the removal of controversial election commissioners paralysed much of the country with a violent transport blockade.

The home ministry issued a note to district administrations stating: "The government has decided to deploy the army to assist civil administration in the wake of the current law and order situation in the country." Officials in a district southeast of Dhaka confirmed receipt of the note to Reuters.

President Iajuddin Ahmed met army commanders in Dhaka last week as a 14-party alliance led by Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina announced plans to paralyse the country through transport blockades and other protests unless Iajuddin removed Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz and his deputies before Nov. 12.

The alliance alleges the commission officials are biased towards the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Begum Khaleda Zia, whose term as prime minister ended last month.

The BNP denies the officials are biased, and has accused the Awami League of trying to push the country into anarchy and sabotage elections due in January 2007.

President Iajuddin is heading the interim administration that will run the country until the elections.

The transport blockade began on Sunday, following the expiry of the Awami League's deadline, cutting off the capital, Dhaka, from the rest of the country, shutting ports and paralysing the main cities, police and witnesses said.

## PROTESTERS DEFY BAN

Activists set fire to at least five railway carriages and a bus on the outskirts of Dhaka, where hundreds of protesters gathered despite an indefinite ban on demonstrations or rallies.

"We have instructed our followers to paralyse the country ... including ports, buses, trains and ferries," Awami general secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters.

A Dhaka bus driver was taken to hospital with head injuries after his vehicle was pelted with stones, a witness said. Vehicles were also torched or stoned in several districts in the east and north of the country.

Protesters also burned effigies of Aziz, the chief election commissioner, who has rejected calls to step down. He told reporters on Sunday that his officials "are working at full swing to hold the election in the stipulated time."

The Awami League said the blockade had been a success and vowed to continue it in a peaceful manner until the interim administration fired the election officials.

Former army chief Hasan Mashud Chowdhury, a government adviser, said on Sunday he hoped the crisis "will be resolved in three days." He did not elaborate.

Iajuddin has made no public comment on the Awami League demand.

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<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2006/11/12/bangladesh.html>

## **Dozens hurt in Bangladesh political violence**

Last Updated: Sunday, November 12, 2006 | 11:55 AM ET

CBC News

Bangladeshi authorities warned they would use troops to help keep order after protesters demanding electoral reform paralyzed much of the country on Sunday with a violent transport blockade.

A man was killed and 50 others were injured during the first day of the blockade, which has shut ports, paralyzed major cities and cut off the capital, Dhaka, from the rest of the country.



*A man jumps off a train after a group of protesters attack and set fire to a passenger train near Tongi station on the outskirts of Dhaka.  
(Pavel Rahman/Associated Press)*

Protesters set fire to a passenger train and blocked tracks at Tongi station near Dhaka. An Associated Press photographer said they started fires in at least five carriages.

The blockade, which has seen activists blockading all the entry points into the city by road, rail and waterway, is being spearheaded by a 14-party alliance, which is calling for the removal of the chief election commissioner and his deputies.

The main opposition party, Awami League, says the commission officials are biased toward the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party or BNP.

The BNP denies the officials are biased. It has accused the alliance of trying to push the country into anarchy in a bid to sabotage an election due in January 2007.

On Saturday, the caretaker government of President Iajuddin Ahmad announced that rallies and protests were banned and beefed up the presence of security forces.

*With files from the Associated Press*

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<http://www.bangkokpost.com/printthis.php>  
[12 nov.]

## **Bangladesh violence injures hundreds**

Dhaka (dpa) - The army was called out in Bangladesh Sunday to help the civil administration in quelling violent anti-government protests, an official announcement said.

A statement from the Presidential Palace said troops would be deployed across the country, currently gripped by political turmoil.

The announcement came on the first day of an opposition-sponsored indefinite blockade of Dhaka, isolating the capital from the rest of the country. Up to 500 people had been wounded in clashes with police in cities and big towns across the country, witnesses said.

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Previous story:

Dhaka (dpa) - Hundreds of protesters were injured Sunday as political violence flared across Bangladesh on the first day of an opposition-sponsored blockade isolating Dhaka from the rest of the country, officials and witnesses said.

Trains were set on fire, buses stoned and ferry services disrupted as riot police shooting teargas and rubber bullets battled with protesters on the streets of the capital.

Nearly 20 people were injured when an inter-city train came under attack by protesters in nearby Tongi town, a spokesman for the state-run railways said.

The caretaker government banned rallies and protests in Dhaka as more than 15,000 security forces were called out ahead of an opposition plan to impose an indefinite blockade of the city.

The restrictions on the movement of people were also enforced as the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine warned of reprisal attacks if their peaceful protests were foiled by police.

"We do not expect any major outbreak of violence during the protests, but we are not taking any chances," said Dhaka Police Commissioner Bazlur Rahman, adding that the law enforcers had strict orders to protect the security of the common people.

The opposition announced the siege of Dhaka to put pressure on the caretaker government of President Iajuddin Ahmad to fire Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz for alleged partisan decisions, and to accept demands for reforms in the election commission.

The siege of Dhaka was enforced by opposition activists blockading all the entry points into the city by road, rail and waterway, senior Awami League leader Tofail Ahmad said.

About 20 people had been reported killed in political violence across the country last month.

The 14-party combine under opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and the Nationalist-Islamist coalition of outgoing prime minister Khaleda Zia are the main contenders for office in the parliamentary polls expected by mid-January.

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<http://www.indiaenews.com/bangladesh/20061112/28480.htm>

## **Hundreds injured as Dhaka blockade turns violent**

Sunday, November 12, 2006

Hundreds of protesters were injured and many were missing Sunday as political violence flared up across Bangladesh on the first day of an opposition-sponsored indefinite blockade of Dhaka, cutting off the capital from the rest of the country.

Trains were set on fire, buses stoned and ferry services disrupted as riot police shooting teargas and rubber bullets battled with protesters in the capital, officials and witnesses said.

Witnesses claimed some 500 people were injured in clashes with police in cities and big towns.

Opposition parties said more than 1,000 activists were arrested by security forces during the weekend. Official figures on detainees were not available. At least six people were reported missing after the clashes.

Nearly 20 people were injured as an inter-city train came under attack by protesters in Tongi town near Dhaka, a spokesman for the state-run railways said.

Ports and factories in the southern business hub of Chittagong were also shut down.

Earlier, the country's caretaker government banned rallies and protests in Dhaka as more than 15,000 security forces were called out ahead of an opposition plan to impose an indefinite blockade.

Restrictions on the movement of people were also enforced as the Awami League-led opposition combine warned of reprisal attacks if their peaceful protests were foiled.

'We do not expect any major outbreak of violence during the protests but we are not taking any chances,' said Dhaka Police Commissioner Bazlur Rahman adding that the law enforcers had strict orders to protect the common people.

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The 14-party combine under opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and the Nationalist-Islamist coalition of outgoing prime minister Khaleda Zia are the main contenders for office in the parliamentary polls expected in January.

- *By DPA*

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<http://www.indiaenews.com/bangladesh/20061112/28482.htm>

## **Army deployed as Bangladesh protests turn violent**

Sunday, November 12, 2006

Bangladesh's caretaker government Sunday night deployed the army in major cities to maintain law and order after a day-long siege by the 14-party opposition alliance resulted in widespread violence that disrupted normal life.

The Daily Star newspaper's website said the government had 'decided to deploy the army across the country'. It said the move was aimed at helping the civil administration maintain law and order.

'It is still not clear when the army will roll onto the streets,' the report said.

However, reliable sources in the government said the deployment had begun in the capital and other major cities late in the evening.

There was no formal announcement by the caretaker government of President Iajuddin Ahmed.

Earlier, hundreds of protesters were injured and many were missing as violence flared up across the country on the first day of an opposition-sponsored indefinite blockade of Dhaka, cutting off the capital from the rest of the country, DPA reported.

Trains were set on fire, buses stoned and ferry services disrupted as riot police fired teargas and rubber bullets to contain the protesters in the capital, officials and eyewitnesses said.



They claimed some 500 people were injured in clashes with police in cities and big towns.

Opposition parties said more than 1,000 activists were arrested by security forces over the weekend. Official figures on detainees were not available. At least six people were reported missing after the clashes.

The caretaker government had banned rallies and protests in Dhaka as more than 15,000 security personnel were called out ahead of an opposition plan to impose an indefinite blockade.

The opposition announced the siege of Dhaka to put pressure on the caretaker government to fire Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz for alleged partisan decisions and accept demands for reforms in the Election Commission.

The possibility of the army deployment had been in the air after the opposition led by Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League and 13 other parties launched a countrywide stir early Sunday.

Political circles in Dhaka have expressed apprehension of a military takeover, a prospect that the diplomatic corps actively monitoring the developments and meeting various political leaders had firmly sought to discourage.

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher, who arrived here Saturday to assess the pre-election situation, had made it clear that a military takeover would not help conduct a free and fair election in Bangladesh and urged the caretaker government and Election Commission (EC) to act neutrally to ensure each vote is counted and results are trusted.

'The situation here is difficult but the goal is (to hold) a free and fair election. I don't think a military takeover would contribute to that goal. That will be a bad thing to do,' Boucher told a press conference at the American Club.

Boucher, who met the president Sunday, also called on the political leadership to lower the level of tension and violence and hold peaceful demonstrations so that voters get educated about elections.

'The voters need a fair choice. They need to make their decision through free and fair elections where each vote is counted and respected,' The Daily Star quoted him as saying.

Faced with a volley of questions on the chief election commissioner (CEC), he said he would not talk about any particular individual. As a whole, the EC has a very important role to play in ensuring the elections are acceptable, he added.

'Our view is.... a great responsibility lies with the Election Commission and they need to exercise that responsibility fairly but carefully in accordance with the constitution and avoid any outside influence so that people trust their decisions and election results,' he said.

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[http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/11/13/asia/AS\\_POL\\_Bangladesh\\_Politics.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/11/13/asia/AS_POL_Bangladesh_Politics.php)

INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

**Bangladeshi police clash with protesters over electoral reform; one dead**  
The Associated Press

Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse thousands of stone-throwing protesters demanding electoral reform in Bangladesh's capital Monday, and one demonstrator died when a police van ran over him.

Dozens of police and protesters have been injured at the violent demonstrations that started Sunday in support of a strike, called by an alliance of 14 political parties, to press for the resignation of elections officials.

The alliance has demanded the removal of Chief Election Commissioner M. A. Aziz and his three deputies, accusing them of favoring former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's coalition government. Aziz denies the allegations and has refused to step down.

The alliance, led by the Awami League, which was the main opposition party during Zia's tenure, also says the caretaker government headed by President Iajuddin Ahmed has failed to take steps to ensure elections due in January will be free and fair.

On Monday, Ahmed asked four advisers to talk to the Awami League's alliance and the four political parties of Zia's coalition government to end the standoff, government spokesman Mahbubul Alam said.

"The government wants an early resolution to the crisis," Alam said.

Nevertheless the alliance threatened to stretch the strike into a third day.

"We will continue the strike program unless our demands are met," Awami League spokesman Abdul Jalil told reporters Monday.

The Awami League's main rival, Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party, meanwhile announced it also will hold rallies Tuesday.

"We will hold peaceful demonstrations across the country to protest the alliance's undemocratic, violent protests," said party spokesman Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

On Monday, slogan-chanting activists rallied on the streets of Dhaka and halted public transportation except for tricycle pedicabs.

Baton-wielding police clashed with about 5,000 demonstrators in the capital after they started throwing stones and smashing vehicles for defying the strike.

Police used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse protesters who attacked vehicles in Narayanganj town near Dhaka. At least 25 people, including two policemen, were wounded in the melee, the United News of Bangladesh news agency reported.

At Savar industrial zone outside the capital, pro-strike workers damaged 11 buses, the news agency said.

Two demonstrators were injured when a police van knocked them over as it sped away to avoid a mob, Dhaka Metropolitan Police said in a statement. One of the two later died in a hospital, the statement said.

United News of Bangladesh said the police van was chasing the demonstrators.

Police will investigate the incident and those responsible will be punished, the police statement said.

Also Monday, at least 50 passengers were injured, five seriously, when a train derailed in Mymensingh, 110 kilometers (70 miles) north of Dhaka, UNB reported, quoting railway sources. The report said protesters had removed parts of the track.

Demonstrators converged on highways leading into and out of the capital, cutting off Dhaka from the rest of the country, ATN Bangla TV station reported.

The shutdown also hampered activities at the country's main sea port in Chittagong, 220 kilometers (135 miles) southeast of Dhaka, and halted goods trucks at five checkpoints on the border with India.

On Sunday, protesters set fire to a train and attacked public transport workers who defied the strike call. One man died in Sunday's violence. The government denied domestic media reports that it planned to deploy the army to quell any unrest.

AP correspondent Parveen Ahmed in Dhaka contributed to this report.

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<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print.asp?id=12825>

The News - International, Pakistan - Nov 13, 2006

## **One dead, many injured amid protest demonstrations in Bangladesh**

DHAKA: A man was killed and several people were injured Monday after Bangladesh riot police used tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse stone-throwing protesters in the capital.

The clash came on the second day of a nationwide transport blockade organised by opposition parties to force the resignation of an election official accused of trying to rig national polls in January.

Emdad Hossain, a doctor at the emergency department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said that police handed over the body of the dead man, who appeared to have been run over by a vehicle.

A senior Dhaka police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the protester died under the wheels of a police van and that at least 10 others were treated at the hospital.

Twenty more, including a former lawmaker, were taken to Dhaka's Shomorita Hospital with non-life threatening injuries, a member of the medical staff was quoted as saying.

The main opposition Awami League and its allies have accused chief election commissioner M.A. Aziz of drawing up a voters' list that contains 10 million fake voters.

They said free and fair elections could not be held with him in place.

The opposition, which argues he favours the outgoing administration led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), has threatened to boycott the polls unless a string of demands, including his sacking by the interim administration, are met.

Thousands of opposition supporters chanting "Sack Aziz and save the country" again staged demonstrations and blocked highways nationwide, said police.

A mob enforcing the transport blockade smashed at least 11 buses at Savar, 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Dhaka, the private UNB agency reported.

The roads were empty of cars and many offices and schools remained closed in the capital and other major cities. Deliveries to and from the country's main port in southeastern Chittagong also remained suspended, and rail services were disrupted, officials said. Meanwhile, the BNP announced its own protests for Tuesday.

At least 25 people died in four days of violent clashes between rival party activists from October 27 when the BNP-led government's five-year mandate expired.

The clashes began when the opposition staged mass protests that led former Supreme Court judge K.M. Hasan to decline to continue as head of a caretaker government in late October. The opposition accused him of being politically biased in favour of the BNP. After talks between the BNP and Awami League to find a compromise candidate broke down amid spiralling violence, President Iajuddin Ahmed installed himself as head of the temporary administration on October 29.

The Awami League later called off its protests, saying it wanted to give the president time to show he could be non-partisan in his role as head of the caretaker government, which is tasked with holding fair elections.

On Saturday, however, it announced a resumption of protests and an indefinite nationwide road, rail and river blockade.

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<http://lcn.canoe.com/lcn/infos/lemonde/archives/2006/11/20061113-103624.html>

Mise à jour: 13/11/2006 10:36

Bangladesh

## **Une manifestation tourne au vinaigre**

LCN



LCN

Une manifestation a viré à l'émeute dans les rues de Dakha, la capitale du Bangladesh.

Le tout a commencé quand des milliers de protestataires ont défilé dans les rues pour réclamer des changements politiques avant les élections prévues en janvier.

Des partisans de l'opposition ont alors bloqué les transports publics. Les violences ont éclaté quand la police a tenté de déloger les protestataires.

Des manifestants ont mis le feu à des véhicules ainsi qu'à deux wagons de train.

L'opposition accuse l'administration en place d'avoir ajouté les noms de plus de 10 millions de faux électeurs sur les listes électorales en prévision des prochaines élections, afin de conserver le pouvoir.

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[http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2006/11/14/protests\\_in\\_bangladesh\\_paralyze\\_country?mode=PF](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2006/11/14/protests_in_bangladesh_paralyze_country?mode=PF)

## Protests in Bangladesh paralyze country



Bangladeshi opposition activists set fire to an effigy of chief election commissioner during a protest in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2006. The alliance of 14 political parties, led by the main opposition Awami League party, began an indefinite, nationwide strike Sunday for the removal of election officials they call biased to ensure balloting set for January will be free and fair. (AP Photo/Pavel Rahman)

By Parveen Ahmed, Associated Press Writer | November 14, 2006

DHAKA, Bangladesh --Widespread protests calling for the removal of election officials in Bangladesh paralyzed the country for a third day Tuesday, angering business leaders who fear it will damage an already fragile economy.

The capital of Dhaka was virtually cut off from the rest of the country, as tens of thousands of demonstrators have blocked main roads and rail lines since Sunday. Sea ports have also been shut by the demonstrations, which were called by an alliance of 14 political parties demanding the removal of four election officials who they say will prevent free and fair balloting in January.

A delegation of business leaders met Tuesday with President Ahmed Iajuddin to urge him to do something to end to the impasse, saying the impoverished country was teetering on the brink of collapse.

A caretaker government headed by Ahmed is running the country until general elections.

"We have asked him to take immediate political decisions to end the deadlock," Mir Nasir Hossain, leader of the delegation, told The Associated Press after the meeting with Ahmed. "Our economy can't afford such an anarchic situation for long."

Shipments in and out of Chittagong, a southeastern port city that handles about 75 percent of Bangladesh's sea cargo, have been hampered since Sunday, port official Shahadat Hossain said by phone.

The textile industry, worth about \$8 billion a year and which accounts for 75 percent of Bangladesh's annual export earnings, has been among the hardest hit sectors.

S.M. Fazlul Haque, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said their target to increase the export earnings to \$15 billion this year has been shattered by the blockade.

Haque said hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses were being tallied every day.

Four advisers to the caretaker government, meanwhile, held meetings Monday and Tuesday with representatives of all major parties to find a solution to the latest political standoff.

"There are a lot of differences between the political parties," government spokesman Akbar Ali Khan told reporters Tuesday. "The aim of the talks is to close the gap and hold elections on time."

The advisers said they would report back to their colleagues and hold further talks with the political parties, if necessary, to reach a consensus.

The alliance has demanded the removal of four top Election Commission officials, accusing them of bias toward the former coalition government led by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia who completed her five-year term as prime minister Oct. 28. The commissioners deny the allegation and have refused to resign.

On Tuesday, nearly 20,000 supporters of the alliance rallied in the capital for a third day before dispersing at nightfall -- vowing to return to the streets early Wednesday.

Several thousand supporters of Zia countered with their own protest Tuesday in Dhaka.

The demonstrations were mostly peaceful, although two dozen protesters were hurt when riot police used batons to disperse rival supporters who battled on the streets of Chittagong and Mymensingh, AP correspondents in the areas said.

Since the protests began Sunday, two people have been killed and dozens injured in the violence. One demonstrator died in Dhaka Monday when a police van trying to avoid a mob crushed him, police said.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/13/d6111301022.htm>

## **Blockade stops life in mid-track**

*Peaceful demonstrations mark first day of indefinite programme*

Star Report

Normal life and business activities came to a standstill as an indefinite blockade programme enforced by the 14-party alliance demanding implementation of its 11-point task started yesterday across the country. The first day's blockade passed off almost peacefully.

In general, the activists of the Awami League-led alliance followed the police ban on carrying sticks and oars at rallies and gathering. A few places, however, witnessed defying of the ban.

The capital was cut off from the rest of the country on the first day of the countrywide blockade.

The demonstrators damaged train carriages and buses at different places of the country.

However, as both demonstrators and law enforcers did not resort to any extreme measures, no major incidents of violence were reported except for a few stray ones, including a firing in Bogra that left six bullet-hit.

Activities at the Chittagong and Mongla ports came to a total halt. No activities were also seen at any of the land ports.

Dhaka Stock Exchange remained closed although Chittagong Stock Exchange was open. Transactions at the banks were insignificant.

The government and semi-government offices remained open but presence was thin.

The countrywide blockade is the first ever demonstration against a caretaker government.

AL President Sheikh Hasina on Saturday declared the blockade programme on behalf of the 14-party alliance observing that Chief Adviser to the present caretaker government President Iajuddin Ahmed has failed to prove his neutrality since assuming office.

The alliance asked its activists to cut the communication over road, rail and river to paralyse the country. The alliance leaders said they will continue the blockade until their demands are met.

Six persons, including three BNP men and two AL adherents, received bullet injuries in a clash between the two parties in front of Sonatola AL office in Bogra yesterday afternoon.

The clash ensued when someone from a passing procession of the BNP threw brickbats on a 14-party rally at about 4:30pm. During the chaos, fires were shot and several crackers were blasted that left the six bullet-hit.

The injured are BNP activists Badsha, 40, Zahedul, 45, and Mukul, 40, Jubo League activists Helal, 28, and Rabbani, 30, and a pedestrian.

In Kishoreganj, three persons were injured when BNP and Jamaat workers locked in clashes with 14-party activists. The police intervened to bring the situation under control.

## THE CAPITAL

A festive mood was seen among the 14-party leaders and activists gathering at Paltan, Muktangan, Noor Hossain intersection, and Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital during the blockade yesterday. Participants sang folk songs during intervals between speeches while many youths with red bands tied around forehead were seen dancing.

The demonstrators dominated the streets in Mirpur, Pallabi and Gabtoli since morning.

The first day's blockade passed off almost peacefully in the capital except for incidents of vandalising glasses of two buses and the windshield of a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) pickup van.

Demonstrators assembled at the Mirpur-10 roundabout, Pallabi bus stand and Mazar Road in the morning. They held rallies and sang patriotic and party songs.

The Gabtoli Bus Terminal remained idle all day long with no buses leaving or arriving. No vehicles except rickshaws were seen on the Dhaka-Chittagong and Kanchpur-Narsingdi highways.

Two persons--Rokonuzzaman, 26, a Jatiyatabadi Samajtantrik Dal activist, and a pedestrian--suffered burn injuries while setting fire to an effigy of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz.

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Jahangirnagar University set fire to a passenger bus on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway in the morning.

The police picked up three BCL activists for picketing on the highway but released them later. A Rab member beat up an on-duty security guard for not being able to identify who set ablaze the law enforcement agency's vehicle.

**THE COUNTRY** Activities at the Chittagong Port came to a total halt yesterday afternoon while all road communications to and from Chittagong also remained snapped.

Some loading and unloading of cargoes took place at the port jetties until around 3:30pm when workers loyal to the 14-party alliance forced others to stop all kind of operations inside the port.

Administrative activities, however, were quite normal at Bandar Bhaban although presence was less than usual.

Tension arose when Rab men tried to escort three truckloads of goods to Dhaka but ultimately retreated in the face of strong resistance from hundreds of 14-party activists at Olonkar Intersection.

The 14-party activists laid blockade in front of the Bandar Bhaban, on connecting roads to the port, at jetty-3, Nimtola, Agrabad Barik Building crossing, Olonkar Intersection at Pahartoli, Kalurghat and both ends of the Shah Amanat Bridge. They also damaged a few vehicles at City Gate and Barik Building crossing and set fire to some tyres.

The railway authorities cancelled the schedule of the Dhaka-bound Subarna Express although other trains left the Chittagong Railway Station with small number of passengers.

In Brahmanbaria, demonstrators pelted brickbats at a Bhairab-bound local train at the Poyertala outer signal of Brahmanbaria Railway Station, damaging several windowpanes and forcing the train to return to the station. All trains on the Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Noakhali routes remained halted at different points in and out of the station.

Train service from Sylhet remained suspended after Dhaka-bound Jayontika Express left the district at 7:30am.

Demonstrators damaged a truck and a private car at Jagannathganj and in Jamalpur town while some others damaged a pickup van at Maijdee Bazar in Noakhali.

In Nilphamari, 14-party workers stopped four trains at two rail stations of the district in the morning. They stopped the Khulna Mail at Nilphamari Old Station at dawn while Khulna-bound Rupsha Express and Rocket Mail and Rajshahi-bound Barendra Express were detained by agitating railway workers at the Saidpur Station.



In Moulvibazar, the engine of Sylhet-bound Jalalabad Express that started from Chittagong Saturday night derailed near Longla Railway Station in Kulaura upazila at 10:00am as the 14-party men uprooted railway slippers. No causality was reported.

The 14-party activists gathered at Kulaura junction station to put barricade, but resisted by the law enforcers, they attacked the station building and damaged door and window glasses.

In Sirajganj, 17 persons were injured at two places while a band of pickets vandalised two trucks at Nalka and a few compartments of a Dhaka-bound train at Ullapara.

Activities at Hili and Biral land ports in Dinajpur and Banglabandha land port in Panchagarh came to a standstill while the blockade completely paralysed the entire Khulna city and all activities at the Mongla Port.

In Munshiganj, the BNP announced counter blockade programmes. Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was deployed to avert any untoward situation.



*14-party in support of their blockade programme brings out a procession, left, from Cherag Ali shopping centre in Tongi yesterday that marched towards Tongi Railway Station; Activists of 14-party stopped a train at Tongi Rail Gate and set fire to one of its seats.*

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/14/d6111401011.htm>

## **Mayhem at peaceful Karwan Bazar**

*Police truck runs over 14-party men, killing 1 on second day of blockade; rail line uprooted in Mymensingh, train derails injuring 50; sporadic clashes elsewhere*  
Star Report

An Awami League (AL) activist was killed and 50 others were injured, including one critically, when a police van drove through a group of 14-party coalition activists at Karwan Bazar in the capital on the second day of the countrywide programme of an indefinite blockade by the coalition yesterday.

The activists reigned over the streets across the country to enforce the blockade yesterday to press home their 11-point charter of demands.

The killing, reminiscent of a similar killing of two Dhaka University students at Fulbaria in February 1983, happened a few minutes after police had doused the demonstrators mercilessly with hot water using a water cannon, and beat them up while they were holding a rally peacefully blocking the street at Saarc Fountain intersection.

Police fired teargas shells and also allegedly fired live ammunition as the demonstrators clashed with the law enforcers there, turning the important business hub of the city into a battlefield.

In another clash between demonstrators and police at Tarabo in Narayanganj, police fired teargas shells to disperse a mob, which vandalised vehicles on Kanchpur-Narsingdi road, leaving 20 people injured.

AL-led 14-party activists disrupted road and rail communications by stopping buses and trains and by uprooting railway sleepers at different train stations across the country. At least 50 people were injured when a passenger train was derailed due to uprooting of 126 feet of railway tracks in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh.

No other major incident of violence occurred in the rest of the capital, and similar reports came from elsewhere in the country while normal life and business activities remained disrupted.

Activities at all courts across the country including the Supreme Court also remained suspended for the second consecutive day yesterday.

Business at Chittagong and Mongla ports and all land ports also remained virtually suspended for the second consecutive day.

Delivery of goods, and container handling inside Chittagong port remained suspended causing 54 vessels, including 23 carrying containers, to sit idle at different jetties and at the outer anchorage of the port.

### **THE CAPITAL**

Residents of the capital woke up to find the entire city blockaded and its streets free of everyday traffic jam yesterday as 14-party activists took to the streets to enforce the blockade.

Blocking the city streets at different points, the activists were singing patriotic songs at intervals of speeches by their leaders to keep the tempo up standing on makeshift podiums.

As the blockade was going ahead peacefully in the capital, unlike other traditional violent political demonstrations, suddenly Karwan Bazar erupted into violence around 11:30am.

Led by AL leader HBM Iqbal, 14-party activists were holding a rally at Saarc Fountain intersection blocking the busy street. The leaders were delivering speeches from a truck used as a makeshift stage.

All of a sudden, a police truck fitted with a water cannon started jetting hot water from the direction of Panthapath on the activists who were singing songs at intervals of the speeches without provoking any violence.

Members of police and Armed Police Battalion started to club the demonstrators mercilessly prompting the demonstrators to retaliate with brickbats.

Dispersed, the demonstrators attacked the law enforcers while police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to scare the demonstrators away.

As the whole area turned into a battlefield, a police truck from the direction of Farmgate drove through the activists at Saarc Fountain and sped away towards Bangla Motor critically injuring two blockade supporters, one of whom was identified as Waziullah, 40, AL publicity secretary of unit 2 of the party under ward no 37.

Enraged by the incident, the demonstrators set fire to a police van in front of TK Bhaban there.

As the situation gradually calmed down, police took the injured two to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Waziullah dead.

AL leader HBM Iqbal was taken to Samorita Hospital with injuries.

Leaders of 14-party coalition alleged that police deliberately drove the van through the crowd to create a situation for army deployment.

"It was a totally peaceful rally until police doused us with water, clubbed us and fired teargas canisters at us," said Delwar Hossain, a folk singer who was singing songs on the podium. Several others echoed Delwar.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, Deputy Commissioner (Tejgaon) Kohinoor Mian admitted to ordering the police to turn water cannon on the demonstrators. "I gave the order to disperse the demonstrators for clearing the busy street after the demonstrators had refused to free the street despite repeated requests," he said.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authorities formed a three-member committee headed by Deputy Commissioner (Motor and Transport) Faruq Ahmed to investigate yesterday's violence at Karwan Bazar and the incident of driving a police van through the crowd.

"Punitive measures will be taken against those responsible for the incident as per the recommendations of the inquiry committee," said a news release issued from the public relations section of the Detective Branch of police.

The release claimed that the two demonstrators were injured when a police truck unintentionally hit them while it was being driven to a safer place towards Bangla Motor from Farmgate area after being attacked during chase and counter chase between police and 'illegal public'.

A case was lodged with Tejgaon police station in this connection, the release added.

In Mirpur, law enforcers and demonstrators locked in a clash at Mirpur-10 roundabout when police charged batons and chased some demonstrators who were vandalising an auto-rickshaw there at 11:00am. The demonstrators threw stones at the law enforcers.

Normalcy was restored in a few minutes after intervention by 14-party leaders and top police officials.

Demonstrators broke windshields of some auto-rickshaws also on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

In Savar, hundreds of activists gathered at different points. They vandalised 15 vehicles at Savar Bazar bus stop.

## **COUNTRY**

In Narayanganj, at least 20 people were injured when 14-party activists clashed with police on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Tarabo point under Rupganj upazila around 11:00am.

As police obstructed an AL procession at Tarabo, the pickets threw brickbats, breaking the windshield of the vehicle of Police Superintendent Shahabuddin Khan.

Police clubbed the pickets, lobbed 20 teargas canisters and sprayed 70 rubber bullets, leaving 20 people injured.

In Mymensingh, at least 50 passengers were injured when three compartments along with the engine of Seven-up, a Bahadurabad Ghat bound passenger train from Dhaka, derailed and fell into a

roadside ditch at Golabari village between Mashakhali and Kawridh railway stations at 2:15am yesterday.

The train derailed as 126 feet of railway tracks had been uprooted at Golabari, railway sources said.

Fifteen of the injured were rushed to Gafargaon Upazila Health Complex for treatment.

Rescue trains from Dhaka and Mymensingh reached the spot at 8:00am and reinstalled the damaged railway tracks and train compartments at 1:30pm.

In Netrakona, 11 people were injured in two incidents. At Gotora on NetrokonaKalmakanda road, pickets threw stones leaving five injured while six people were wounded as a passenger bus was torched at Razur Bazar.

In Brahmanbaria, pickets threw stones at the Bhoirab bound Balla local train at Poyertala outer signal of Brahmanbaria Railway Station. At about 10:00am, they stopped Dhaka bound Mahanagar Express. Later, all the services were cancelled.

Meanwhile, Akhaura land port remained paralysed.

In Rajshahi, demonstrators stopped Titumir and Modhumoti intercity trains at Arani of Bagha upazila. Goods-laden trucks remained stranded at Sona Mosque land port.

In Sylhet, activists forced Dhaka bound Joyontika Express train to a halt at Longla Station of Kulaura upazila. They vandalised the train until police brought the situation under control.

In Khagrachhari, pickets vandalised a vehicle of a pharmaceutical company at Alutila and beat up the staff. They also vandalised a truck at Bhaibonchhara and later set fire to an effigy of the chief election commissioner.

The blockade programme was observed peacefully in other parts of the country, report our correspondents.

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[http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181\\_1844266,0012.htm](http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_1844266,0012.htm)

HindustanTimes.com » Editorial » Story

## **Democracy undone**

November 14, 2006

The escalating violence in Bangladesh is disturbing. Reports speak of at least one demonstrator killed when a police van ran him over in Dhaka on Monday, and riot police firing rubber bullets and tear gas to break up thousands of stone-throwing protestors demanding electoral reform. The 14-party political alliance launched the indefinite strike that has crippled public transportation across the country in order to seek the resignation of election officials. The Awami League-led opposition group has been agitating for a neutral caretaker government to replace former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's four-party coalition and for changes in administration. For a brief while, it did look as if the controversy would end when President Iajuddin Ahmed took upon himself the role of chief advisor to the caretaker government. But the move seems to have worsened the situation and thrown the country into even more turmoil.

The opposition allegation of a government conspiracy to thwart the prospect of free and fair elections seems credible. Of course, it was the Khaleda government's prerogative to find an alternative before handing over power to the caretaker government. But then that should have been done in accordance with the Bangladesh Constitution, which has elaborate provisions for deciding on the chief advisor to the caretaker government. The ruling coalition, though, sidestepped this procedure to install the President. For this was evidently the very last option in the Constitution — and should have been followed only after exhausting all the other alternatives.

At this point, it's doubtful if Sheikh Hasina's alliance and other political parties would accept President Ahmed's invitation to hold talks for ending the stand-off. The only way for the caretaker government to regain public confidence is to work out a solution to the problem of political reform through democratic means. Reconstituting the Election Commission is a good first step. It will ensure fair polls, and prevent excessive political violence. The alternative could be more political uncertainty, which in turn would feed extremist forces, leading to more chaos.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/15/d6111501033.htm>

## **Blockade continues to cripple life**

Star Report

The third day of the countrywide indefinite blockade enforced by 14-party coalition passed peacefully yesterday, unlike on Monday, continuing to cripple normal life for three consecutive days in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Trading was on, albeit on a smaller scale, in Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges, and a little activity was noticed inside the Chittagong port.

Except some minor stray incidents of confrontations, Awami League (AL)-led 14-party coalition activists reigned on the streets with marches and rallies almost without any challenge at 22 points in Dhaka city demanding immediate realisation of their 11-point charter of demands.

But tension was mounting as fear of violence ran high at several points in the city and elsewhere in the country as BNP-led four-party alliance held rallies to counter AL demonstrations.

The capital still remains cut off from the rest of the country and land ports are still inactive due to the blockade.

Meanwhile, Mongla port still remains inactive, while no goods were transported at Chittagong port although there was a little bit of activity inside the port.

Train communication was disrupted in different places due to the blockade, while a very few launches left Sadarghat Launch Terminal due to low number of passengers.

The railway control room last evening told The Daily Star that 10 trains could not leave Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday while about 10 other trains were stopped on the tracks by blockaders across the country.

### **THE CAPITAL**

Activists of 14-party coalition brought out marches, held rallies, burnt tires and effigies of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz at different points across the capital just like the previous two days of the blockade.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and several non-political groups and organisations yesterday expressed their solidarity with the coalition enforced programme.

Apart from the tension arising from BNP's counter programmes, the blockaders were found to be in a festive mood.

They kept performing skits on the present CEC, sang folk songs and danced at intervals of speeches from makeshift stages on truck beds decorated colourfully with banners and placards.

Meanwhile, several crackers were blasted at an open space near North South Road yesterday evening close to a 14-party rally triggering tension among the ralliers.

The blockaders vandalised several vehicles at Badda yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, our correspondents roaming the capital yesterday reported that the number of blockaders increased yesterday at different points.

The numbers of rickshaws and auto-rickshaws were very low on the streets during the day hours which in the afternoon saw an increase.

The coalition leaders in their speeches yesterday protested the police killing of one of their men and police attacks on many others, and criticised President Iajuddin Ahmed for bringing his press secretary into the council of advisers despite allegations against him.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday imposed a ban on mass gatherings and processions all over the city leaving only a few spots out of the ban for demonstrations.

## **THE COUNTRY**

In Chittagong, several persons were injured in a clash between 14-party and four-party activists.

In Mymensingh, at least 25 activists of the rival alliances were injured in a clash at Ram Babu Road in the town yesterday.

The clash ensued when a four-party procession from a BNP office came face to face with a 14-party procession at Ganginarpar area at 5:00pm.

They got locked in a clash which left 25 injured. Police fired 30 teargas shells to bring the situation under control. Fifteen of the injured were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. Seven of them were admitted there.

In Pabna, the district administration yesterday imposed section 144 banning political gatherings in the district headquarters following announcement of political programmes at the same place by the rival alliances.

As 14-party men put up a blockade at Singa bypass road on Dhaka-Pabna highway, BNP men brought out a march on the highway. Police however put up a barricade in front of a Jamaat-e-Islami office preventing its leaders and activists from bringing out any procession from there.

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### **Related Story**

#### **➔100 vehicles damaged, 30 hurt in Ctg**

The supporters of the four-party alliance clashed with the activists of Awami League (AL)-led 14-

party combine at Barik Building crossing in the port city yesterday afternoon, damaging about 100 vehicles,



*A tiny girl gets tired waiting at Zia International Airport yesterday as hundreds of incoming passengers had to wait for hours due to lack of transports on the second day of the 14-party blockade. PHOTO: STAR*

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[http://www.atb-e.com/default.asp?id=leer\\_mas&logo=&TemaAct=&fh=20061115100324](http://www.atb-e.com/default.asp?id=leer_mas&logo=&TemaAct=&fh=20061115100324)

## **Al menos 20 heridos en el norte de Bangladesh en enfrentamientos entre facciones rivales**

DACCA, 15 (EP/AP)

Al menos 20 personas resultaron heridas hoy como consecuencia de los enfrentamientos entre los partidarios de la ex primera ministra, Jaleda Zia, y los de la también ex primera ministra y líder de la opositora Liga Awami, Sheikh Hasina, en la localidad de Sylhet, en la zona de Chondi Pool (noreste), según informaron testigos presenciales.

El enfrentamiento comenzó cuando un grupo de partidarios de Zia atacó a varios manifestantes que habían bloqueado la principal estación ferroviaria de la ciudad, situada a 192 kilómetros al oeste de la capital, Dacca, según las mismas fuentes. Los enfrentamientos coincidieron con la cuarta jornada de manifestaciones para reclamar una reforma de las normas electorales.

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[http://www.chinapost.com.tw/i\\_latestdetail.asp?id=42454](http://www.chinapost.com.tw/i_latestdetail.asp?id=42454)

## **Fresh violence clouds political scene in Bangladesh despite businessmen's warnings (5:18 p.m.)**

2006/11/15

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)

Rival activists clashed in a northeastern Bangladesh city, leaving at least 20 people injured, as widespread protests to force electoral reforms crippled Bangladesh for a fourth day Wednesday, witnesses said.

The violence occurred between supporters of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in Sylhet city's Chondi Pool area, a witness, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, told The Associated Press by telephone from the scene.

The clash erupted after Zia's supporters attacked protesters who were blocking the city's main railway station, 192 kilometers (120 miles) northeast of the capital, Dhaka, Chowdhury said.

Zia's supporters set seven motorcycles on fire belonging to the protesters and damaged another 10 parked near the scene, said another witness, Abdul Baten.

The political scene remained tumultuous Wednesday despite warnings from business leaders about damage to the country's economy and efforts by a caretaker government to end the impasse.

Dhaka, the capital city of 10 million people, has remained cut off from the rest of the country since strikes, blockades and demonstrations started on Sunday.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators blocked main roads and rail lines across the country, while there has been practically no trade at any of Bangladesh's sea or land ports.

An alliance of 14 political parties, led by the Awami League, began the indefinite, nationwide strike and blockade in an effort to force the removal of election officials they call biased ahead of January elections.

The alliance has demanded the removal of four top Election Commission officials, accusing them of bias toward the former coalition government led by Khaleda Zia who completed her five-year term as prime minister on Oct. 28. The commissioners deny the allegation and have refused to resign.

A caretaker government headed by President Iajuddin Ahmed is running the country until the elections.

In Dhaka, the protesters burned effigies of Aziz at several demonstrations.

The paralyzing protests disrupted supplies of essential commodities like rice, fish and vegetable to the capital, raising the prices by at least 30 percent, business leaders said Wednesday.

"We fear the prices will jump further if the strike continues," said Abdur Razzaque, who runs a wholesale rice store in Dhaka.

Protesters who returned home during the nightfall were back on the streets Wednesday in Dhaka. The streets were still empty of traffic except tricycle rickshaws that were allowed by the protesters to operate.

Many commuters either used the pedicabs or walked to their work.

Most stores and schools remained closed.

About 15,000 security forces have been deployed in Dhaka to prevent any violence. There were no reports of unrest Wednesday.

On Tuesday about two dozen protesters were hurt when riot police used batons to disperse rival supporters who fought pitched battles on the streets of Chittagong and Mymensingh, AP correspondents at the scenes said.

A delegation of business leaders met President Ahmed on Tuesday to urge him to do something to bring an end to the political impasse, saying the impoverished country was teetering on the brink of collapse.

"Our economy can't afford such an anarchic situation for long," Mir Nasir Hossain, leader of the delegation, told the AP after the meeting.



Shipments in and out of Chittagong, a southeastern port city that handles about 75 percent of Bangladesh's sea cargo, have been hampered since Sunday, port official Shahadat Hossain said by phone.

Four advisers to the caretaker government, meanwhile, held meetings Monday and Tuesday with representatives of all major parties to find a solution to end the latest political standoff. They were set to meet more politicians Wednesday.

Two people have been killed and dozens injured in the violence since the weekend protests.

Bangladesh has a history of political violence. The impoverished South Asian nation has witnessed two presidents slain in military coups and 19 other failed coup attempts since it gained independence from Pakistan in 1971.

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<http://24hour.startribune.com/24hour/world/story/3420460p-12560020c.html>

## **Alliance calls off strike in Bangladesh**

By PARVEEN AHMED, Associated Press Writer Associated Press

November 15, 2006



*Bangladeshi riot police officers baton charge an opposition 14-party political alliance supporter during a rally in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Monday, Nov. 13, 2006. One demonstrator was killed when a police van ran him over in Dhaka Monday, a news report said, as riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to break up thousands of stone-throwing protesters who demanded electoral reform.*  
AP Photo/PAVEL RAHMAN

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) - An opposition alliance said Wednesday it would suspend a strike that paralyzed Bangladesh for four days but promised to return to the streets if their demand for election reforms goes unmet.

Fourteen parties began the strike Sunday, calling out tens of thousands of demonstrators to block roads, rail lines and sea ports to force the removal of four election officials who they accuse of favoring former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's coalition. The officials deny the allegations and refused to resign.

During the blockade, clashes broke out between rival factions and two people were killed and dozens injured. Most stores and schools closed and supplies to the capital were disrupted, causing food prices to increase by as much as 30 percent.

The 14-party opposition alliance, led by the Awami League, said the caretaker government has failed to take steps to ensure the January elections will be free and fair. Zia's coalition has candidates on the January ballot.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina said the protests would be halted beginning Thursday, but would resume Monday unless the government removed the four election officials.

Business leaders welcomed the suspension of the strike, which they said was inching the impoverished country's economy toward collapse.

"We definitely appreciate the decision. It's good for the country and the economy," said Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Under the Bangladeshi constitution, the prime minister must step down three months before new elections and hand power to a nonpartisan interim government - a process intended to guarantee that elections are fair and without undue political influence.

Bangladesh has a history of political violence. The South Asian nation has witnessed two presidents slain in military coups and 19 other failed coup attempts since gaining independence from Pakistan in 1971.

AP correspondents Farid Hossain and Julhas Alam contributed to this report.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/16/d6111601011.htm>

## **Blockade postponed**

*14-party pins hope on advisers' efforts, gives chief adviser 4 more days to do 11 tasks*

Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday postponed its ongoing countrywide blockade up to Sunday and asked the chief adviser again to meet its demands, including reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC), by this time.

The blockade will resume on Monday if the alliance's 11-point demand is not met within Sunday, Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina warned President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed.

"We are giving the president and chief adviser time until Sunday evening to realise our demands. If he fails to prove his neutrality and does not meet the people's demands by this time, the indefinite countrywide blockade programme will resume on Monday," Hasina told at a crowded press conference at her Dhanmondi office.

"We have postponed our blockade programme considering people's sufferings and having confidence in the sincerity of the advisers to the caretaker government as a discussion is going on over reconstitution of the Election Commission between them and the political parties," she said.

Prior to the press conference the AL chief held meetings with the leaders of her party and alliance and decided to postpone the blockade programme.

At the press conference, Hasina announced agitation programmes during these three days as part of the ongoing movements.

The 14-party will hold mourning processions wearing black badges today across the country to protest the killing of Wajiullah and a rally in front of Nabisco in Tejgaon in memory of Wajiullah tomorrow.

Special prayer will be offered at all mosques, churches and other places of worship tomorrow for a congenial atmosphere for a free and fair election. A countrywide demonstration will be held on November 18 to press home the demands of the alliance.

"We can feel the people's sufferings due to the blockade programmes, but we have no alternatives," Hasina said. She held President Iajuddin Ahmed responsible for all the sufferings as he did not take any steps to meet the nation's demands.

Hasina urged both Iajuddin and CEC MA Aziz not to increase people's sufferings and meet the demands to create a congenial atmosphere for a free and fair election.

The chief adviser must act neutrally, Hasina said, adding, "If the president fails to function as the chief adviser without directives from a special quarter, then he must appoint a non-partisan person in the post."

She said all political parties--except BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami--and people from all walks of life have reached a consensus that a free and fair election is not possible unless the CEC resigns and the EC is reconstituted. She asked the CEC for whose interests he has been sticking to his position.

The AL president demanded immediate exclusion of the 1.40 crore fake voters from the updated voter list and inclusion of eligible persons in it, arrangements for transparent ballot box, and withdrawal of 300 politically appointed upazila election officers.

She demanded arrest and punishment of the corrupt persons and those responsible for all grenade and bomb attacks in the last five years.

She also demanded immediate removal of the officials loyal to and benefited by the immediate past BNP-Jamaat alliance government from both the civil and police administration and filling the posts with honest, eligible and deprived officials.

Hasina alleged that the chief adviser has been following directives of a certain quarter rather than fulfilling the people's expectation through his activities in the last 15 days.

She asked why and upon whose direction the decision of the caretaker government advisory council to transfer the home secretary was suspended.

She said the 14-party alliance has still been showing patience even after 24 of its leaders and workers have been killed since October 26. She warned of bad consequences if any more of their leaders is killed or tortured.

Asked if the 14-party alliance will accept any reconstitution of the EC by keeping the CEC and appointing more election commissioners, Hasina said, "...then it has not been reconstituted."

She said as the BNP-Jamaat coalition knows very well that people will not vote them in the next election, they are conspiring to rig the election with the help of the CEC and the politically appointed election commissioners and election officers.

Any move by the BNP-Jamaat coalition to rig the next election will be resisted, she said, urging the countrymen to be united to protect their democratic rights of franchise.

Hasina described the five-year rule of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government as a "complete failure" that witnessed skyrocketing price of essentials, unbridled corruption, rise of militancy, acute shortage of power, politicisation, political and extra judicial killings, and looting of public wealth.

Senior 14-party leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader, Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu were present at the press conference.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/16/d6111601022.htm>

## **100 hurt outside Dhaka on day 4 of blockade**

Star Report

The fourth day of the blockade yesterday, enforced by Awami League-led 14-party coalition, was marked by sporadic clashes in different districts across the country while the capital remained peaceful.

More than 100 activists of rival 14-party and 4-party alliances were reported injured in the clashes in Sylhet, Khagrachhari, Rajshahi and elsewhere in the country, while 50 vehicles were burnt and vandalised during the blockade.

Like on Tuesday, trading was on yesterday too in Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges on small scale, and a little activity was noticed inside the Chittagong port.

The capital remained cut off from the rest of the country and land ports were inactive.

Mongla port also remained inactive, while no goods were transported at Chittagong port although there was a little bit of activity inside the port.

Train communication was disrupted in different places while a very few launches left Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital.

### **THE CAPITAL**

The capital, like on the previous days of the blockade, remained peaceful. Activists of 14-party coalition as usual ruled over the streets of the city.

Defying a police ban, the activists continued demonstrating and held rallies at the previously announced 22 points.

They also set fire to tyres and burnt effigies of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz at different points.

A taxicab was vandalised and set on fire on Panthapath yesterday afternoon, but no one was injured.

The blockaders also vandalised a CNG-run three wheeler at Sayedabad point, while some activists vandalised a covered van loaded with vegetables. They also allegedly looted a cell phone and cash from the van driver.

## **SYLHET**

About 20 activists of the blockading coalition sustained injuries as 4-party men attacked them at Chandipul area on Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday.

The attackers also set fire to at least 10 motorbikes belonging to the blockaders and vandalised 10 more, which were parked at a nearby filling station. Two inter-city trains had left Sylhet station but were stopped by the blockaders on the tracks before they could reach their destinations.

The blockaders burnt some tyres and held a brief rally before putting up a barricade for the Chittagong bound inter-city train Paharika Express at 10:45am. However, after some time, Paharika Express departed Sylhet at 11:00am, 40 minutes behind schedule.

The activists and leaders of 14-party also brought out a truck procession in the city.

Later, in the afternoon, the blockaders again went to the train station and stopped Dhaka bound inter-city Parabat Express on the tracks.

## **KHAGRACHHARI**

Three activists of the student front of BNP were injured yesterday afternoon when a group of AL activists attacked them while they were pasting posters at Zia Nagar in the district headquarters.

Police later arrested some AL leaders and activists including its district unit labour affairs secretary Nur Hossain, Dilu, Rafiq and Ismail in that connection.

To protest the arrests, AL leaders and activists laid siege to Khagrachhari Sadar police station in the evening and were agitating there till filing of this report at 7:30pm.

In another incident in Ramgarh upazila, nine leaders and activists of AL and BNP were injured when they clashed in Guimara area yesterday evening.

Earlier on Tuesday fifty people including Officer-in-charge (OC) of Manikchhari police station and leaders and activists of BNP were injured when BNP men clashed with law enforcers.

According to sources, workers of Manikchhari upazila BNP attempted to bring out a march towards Manikchhari Main Road where AL and its front organisations were holding a meeting on Tuesday night.

As police intercepted the march to prevent untoward incidents, BNP men hurled brickbats at policemen injuring Manikchhari OC Santosh Barua.

The law enforcers went into action to disperse the BNP marchers leaving 50 injured.

## **RAJSHAHI**

At least 20 men were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists at Shibpur under Puthia police station Tuesday night, while the law enforcers opened eight blank fires to disperse the mob.

Local people said a land dispute between a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Babu and an AL activist Rezaul Karim turned into a battle leaving 20 of both the groups injured.

## **MOULVIBAZAR**

Activists of 14-party coalition yesterday damaged around 10 buses and six three wheelers in Kusumbazar area of Moulvibazar district town.

## **SAVAR**

14-party demonstrators yesterday damaged around five vehicles while vehicular movement on Dhaka-Aricha, Nabinagar-Kaliakoir, and Baipail-Dhaka highways remained suspended.

## **CHITTAGONG**

The blockade in Chittagong passed peacefully yesterday keeping the port city detached from other parts of the country for the fourth consecutive day.

With delivery of goods remaining suspended due to the blockade, an unprecedented congestion of containers was created inside Chittagong port.

## **KHULNA**

Rupsha inter-city train that left Khulna Railway Station at 7:55am yesterday came under attack of blockaders at 8:10am at a level crossing leaving the train damaged and disrupting train communication for the day.

But blockades at 22 points in the city passed peacefully. The blockading coalition erected makeshift podiums at nine of the 22 points.

## **BRAHMANBARIA**

A human hauler was damaged and railway sleepers were uprooted in Brahmanbaria. There was no vehicular traffic on Brahmanbaria-Dhaka, Brahmanbaria-Chittagong, Brahmanbaria-Mymensingh, and Dhaka-Agartala highways. Akhaura land port and Ashuganj river port also remained inactive. Brahmanbaria town was totally under control of the blockaders till noon



*Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Shibir set fire to several motorcycles of 14-party men at Chondipul in South Surma, Sylhet, on the fourth day of blockade yesterday.*

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-11-18T203753Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-276826-2.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-11-18T203753Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-276826-2.xml&archived=False)

## **New Bangladesh blockade looms in election row**

Sat Nov 18, 2006 8:46 PM IST

DHAKA (Reuters) - One of Bangladesh's main parties threatened to resume an economic blockade as President Iajuddin Ahmed tried to decide on Saturday whether to remove or retain controversial election officials ahead of polls in January.

Thousands of workers and supporters of a 14-party alliance led by Sheikh Hasina, chief of the Awami League, rallied in the capital Dhaka, urging Iajuddin to remove Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz and his deputies by Sunday.

"Otherwise we will paralyse the country by re-enforcing a nationwide transport blockade and other protests," senior Awami leader Tofayel Ahmed, a former minister, told the rally.

But the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Begum Khaleda Zia, who ended five years as prime minister in October, and the Jamaat-e-Islami party allied with her say that to fire the officials would be unconstitutional and a threat to democracy.

The president met 10 advisers entrusted with finding a solution to the political crisis, and their talks were due to resume later in the day.

"We hope to be able to give you something concrete and good soon, maybe after tonight's meeting," Mahbubul Alam, adviser in charge of the information ministry, told reporters.

Khaleda was also due to see the president, who heads the caretaker government organising the election, later on Saturday, party officials said.

Hasina accuses the election officials of bias towards Khaleda and her party.

Iajuddin, a former Dhaka University teacher who underwent open-heart surgery in July, has appeared to be leaning towards Khaleda, who appointed him president in 2002.

Security has been tightened ahead of Sunday, the second deadline that Hasina has set the president since late last month to sack the officials, police said.

If he fails, the country will be shut down again from Monday, Hasina told reporters.

Two people were killed and hundreds injured in clashes with police and between rival activists during a four-day transport blockade last week that paralysed ports and industry.

The blockade was suspended on Wednesday following intense lobbying by the business community.

Previous Bangladeshi elections have been marred by violence and charges of rigging and voter intimidation, but analysts say the run-up to the vote has never before been so volatile.

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[http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/articlenews.aspx?storyid=2006-11-19T101111Z\\_01\\_SP214306\\_RTRUKOC\\_0\\_UK-BANGLADESH.xml&type=worldNews&WTmodLoc=World-C3-More-4](http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/articlenews.aspx?storyid=2006-11-19T101111Z_01_SP214306_RTRUKOC_0_UK-BANGLADESH.xml&type=worldNews&WTmodLoc=World-C3-More-4)

## **Panic grips Bangladesh ahead of transport blockade**

Sun Nov 19, 2006 10:11 AM GMT

DHAKA (Reuters) - Bangladeshis are fleeing the capital Dhaka ahead of a countrywide transport blockade from Monday, the second in less than a week.

Schools are trying to finish annual tests, banks are working extra hours, while many are buying tickets out of Dhaka, witnesses said.

Even weddings are being rushed.

A Dhaka community centre said it had received several requests to speed up the bookings for wedding parties that had been scheduled for next Thursday and Friday.

"The country is up for another crippling shutdown of buses, trains and ferries -- and also for violence that could be widespread," a senior police officer said on Sunday.

Two people were killed and hundreds injured in clashes with police and between rival activists during the previous stoppage.

The crippling blockades are organised by a 14-party alliance determined to boot out poll officials ahead of national elections in January.

The alliance is led by Sheikh Hasina, chief of the Awami League, who accuses the election officials of being biased towards her rivals, particularly the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and its leader Begum Khaleda Zia.

Several students were injured in clashes on Sunday between supporters of Hasina and Khaleda at Dhaka University, police said.

Authorities earlier extended a campus holiday and suspended all examinations at the 50,000-student university until November 26 because of the volatile political situation, officials said.

Khaleda stepped down last month at the end of her five-year term and the country is now being run by an interim administration headed by the president.

Hasina believes her alliance will win January's parliamentary election if the poll officials step aside.

During Khaleda's term, Hasina and her alliance led dozens of nationwide strikes and protests. Last week's four-day blockade shut everything from schools to ports for four days.

Abdur Rouf and his ailing father were among the many fleeing Dhaka on Sunday. He whisked his father out of hospital and boarded a bus out of the city.

"I cannot really wait and see what happens," said Rouf, who came from the eastern district of Brahmanbaria after doctors referred his father to Dhaka for better treatment.

"We must go back while the roads are open," he told Reuters.

The BNP and ally Jamaat-e-Islami party called for rallies in the capital and other cities on Sunday to demonstrate their "resolve to counter the Awami offensive, including the transport blockade".

Witnesses said thousands of chanting activists marched into the capital to join the rally in the afternoon.

(Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed)



Posted on Mon, Nov. 20, 2006

## **Huelga política paraliza Bangladesh**

PARVEEN AHMED

Associated Press

DACCA - El gobierno interino de Bangladesh indicó que la crisis política nacional, que ocasionó paros masivos y bloqueó el transporte público antes de los comicios nacionales de enero, será solucionada en dos días, dijo el lunes un vocero.

Los enfrentamientos del lunes causaron por lo menos 25 heridos. Decenas de vehículos resultaron dañados.

"Creo que hemos encontrado la forma de solucionar el problema nacional. Creo que veremos resultados en uno o dos días que beneficiarán a todos", afirmó el asesor del gobierno provisional Mahbubul Alam, en una conferencia de prensa dada el lunes, tras reunirse con el director de la comisión electoral.

Alam indicó solamente que "no lo anunciamos ahora, por que de lo contrario quizá no tenga éxito". Una alianza de 14 partidos, encabezada por la Liga Awami, reanudó el lunes una huelga nacional de duración indefinida tras no acatar el gobierno interino el plazo que expiró el domingo para cesar al Comisionado Electoral M.A. Aziz y sus tres lugartenientes, por considerar que tienen prejuicios contra una antigua coalición gobernante.

El presidente Iajuddin Ahmed, que encabeza un gobierno provisional, envió el lunes a tres asesores, entre ellos Alam, a reunirse con Aziz.

Dacca, la capital de 10 millones de personas, fue aislada del resto del país después que los manifestantes de la alianza integrada por 14 partidos desafiaron la prohibición de la policía de efectuar concentraciones políticas emitida el domingo.

Los manifestantes bloquearon las carreteras de acceso a la ciudad, y evitaron la circulación de autobuses y vehículos.

Los enfrentamientos del lunes ocurrieron entre los partidarios de la Liga y sus principales rivales, el Partido Nacionalista de Bangladesh, dijo la emisora de televisión Bangla Vision.

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El redactor de Associated Press Farid Hossain contribuyó en Dacca a este artículo.

## **Blockade to continue until Aziz, Zakaria quit, says Jalil**

Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led alliance on Monday vowed to continue the countrywide road-rail-waterway blockade until the caretaker administration reconstituted the Election Commission to ensure a free and fair election.

'Our stand is clear. The blockade will continue until the CEC, MA Aziz, and commissioner Zakaria, quit, the Election Commission is re-structured, the voters' roll is updated and the appointments of 300 upazila-level election officers are cancelled,' the coordinator of the alliance, Abdul Jalil, told a press briefing at the AL chief's Dhanmondi office after the first day's blockade.

Jalil, also general secretary of the AL, said the programmes of the Armed Forces Day today would be kept out of the purview of the blockade.

'Despite repeated deadlines given by the alliance, the president and chief adviser has failed to reconstitute the EC forcing us to go for the indefinite agitation,' he said adding that the alliance had

no option but to continue the blockade to realise the voting rights of the people.

Admitting the immense sufferings of the common people caused by the blockade, the AL general secretary appealed to the people to endure the 'temporary' ordeal for the greater interest of establishing their democratic rights.

He renewed his call on the president to take concrete measures immediately for reconstituting the Election Commission shrugging off his 'loyalty to the BNP-Jamaat alliance' to uphold democracy.

Jalil accused the interim administration of failure to bring neutrality in the administration and said the official order for removing the portrait of Khaleda Zia from government offices was yet to be implemented.

In this context he said that the portrait of the immediate past prime minister was still hanging at the office of the chairman of the University Grants Commission and Bogra municipality.

The AL general secretary also said that the government had failed to cancel all contractual appointments and transfer the law secretary, DGs of NSI and DGFI which proved its partisan role.

He warned against any move to announce election schedule before re-structuring the EC, saying that no such action would be accepted keeping Aziz and Zakaria in the commission.

'The Election Commission during the last caretaker regime announced the election schedule only 37 days ahead of the end of its tenure and the present government has 69 more days,' Jalil said adding that the present EC had no right to announce the polls schedule as it had lost all credibility.

He said the BNP chairperson was pressing for announcement of election schedule as she wanted polls to be held under the present CEC.

Jalil said that the student wings of the BNP-Jamaat alliance were unleashing terror in educational institutions and urged the caretaker administration to arrest the armed Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir men to restore congenial atmosphere at the institutions.

Senior leaders of the AL and its allies were present at the briefing.

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## 50 injured on first day of renewed blockade

*Gunfight at Natore leaves 16 injured*

Staff Correspondent

More than 50 people, including four lawmen, were injured in gunfight and clashes between the activists of the BNP-led alliance and the Awami League-led combine in Natore, Bagerhat and Netrakona on the first day of the countrywide indefinite blockade on Monday.

A fierce gun battle between the activists of the two opposing political camps in Natore town left at least 40 people injured, 16 of them with bullets, during the blockade the AL-led combine enforced demanding reconstitution of the Election Commission.

The newly-launched Liberal Democratic Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Zaker Party, a faction of the Islami Oikya Jote and the Bangladesh Tariqat Federation also joined forces with the AL-led alliance in the movement.

The first day of the third round of the blockade disrupted business and economic activities across the country. Road, rail and river links remained almost snapped while operations at major land and seaports came to a halt.

Train communications across the country, mostly in the western zone, were badly affected as the AL-led alliance activists put up barricades on railway tracks.

Trains on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes in the eastern zone moved although 7 or 8 trains remained stranded due to barricades at Satkhamar, Sreepur, Manik Khali, Sarishabari and Gouripur stations, officials at the Kamalapur railway station said.

In the western zone, demonstrators halted trains at Khulna, Abdullahpur, Syedpur, Santahar, Teesta and Dinajpur railway stations, the sources said.

Ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia, Mawa-Charjanajat and Muktarpur in Munshiganj were



halted.

In Natore, witnesses said, gunfight erupted when activists of the BNP and its allies attacked a rally of the AL-led combine at Chhayabani cinema crossing at about 12:30pm in bid to drive their rivals away.

The BNP activists, a number of them on motorbikes, attacked the rally from different directions triggering the clashes.

The feuding groups fought running battles and exchanged gunfire. People ran for covers as clashes spread to adjacent areas. Supporters of the AL-led alliance set fire to four motorbikes at Puratan bus stand.

Locals and police said more than 500 rounds of shots were exchanged during the hour-long battle, leaving 16 persons from both the camps bullet-hit.

Of the bullet injured, BNP district unit general secretary, Shahidul Islam Bachchu, Matin, Afraz, Tofazzal, Monirul, Azizul, Jibon, Momin, Shaukhin, Afsar, Sultan, Milon, Majedul, Sohel, Omar Ali and Abu Taher were admitted to Natore sadar hospital. Matin and Afraz were shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

A small contingent of police deployed there remained silent until reinforcements arrived about an hour later, lobbed tear gas canisters and fired in the air to disperse the warring groups. Later the Rapid Action Battalion joined the police and brought the situation under control. Tension was prevailing in the town.

In Bagerhat, clashes between the rival political groups left at least 12 activists from both sides injured.

Witnesses said activists of the AL-led combine and the BNP-led alliance hurled abuses at each other at Rampal Road of Kashimpur Bazar at about 10:00am and at one stage, they locked in clashes using sharp weapons. The clash left 12 people injured. Three of the injured, Nilu, Sajib and Hahib, were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

In the capital, activists of the AL-led alliance started pouring into the streets since early in the morning like the previous blockades paralysing life, but no untoward incidents were reported excepting one at Kalabagan.

The alliance, however, failed to take control of Muktangan as the Dhaka Metropolitan Police imposed a ban on holding gatherings there and closed the road leading to the venue.

The police also forced Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir activists to leave the spot on the previous night. Earlier they announced sit-in there to protest against the 'anarchy' of the AL-led alliance.

Leaders and activists of the AL-led alliance took control of the Zero Point, Bangabandhu Avenue, and Russell Square where they held rallies and cultural functions setting up temporary dais on trucks. They demanded immediate resignation of the chief election commission and his deputies.

A festive mood prevailed in the area as students, youths, cultural activists and volunteer wings of the AL and its allies set up a 'Bijoy Mancha' there from which the alliance leaders addressed and artistes performed.

The alliance leaders warned that their peaceful agitation would turn into a tougher movement if their demands were not met. They asked the activists to remain on the streets until the demands were realised. They said the blockade would be lifted the moment the caretaker government accepted the demand for reconstitution of the Election Commission.

The combine also held rallies and staged demonstrations at places like Malibagh crossing, Mohakhali, Uttara, Badda, Jatrabari and Mirpur.

Different professional groups like Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Supreme Court Bar Association and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad also joined in the programme. The activists of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Bangladesh also took to the streets.

About 300 physicians of the Awami League-backed Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad held a rally at Battala of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. The SCP secretary general, Dr Iqbal Arsalan, and its president, Dr Azizul Haque, spoke at the rally.

The alliance activists blocked all roads and highways, cutting off the capital city from the rest of the country. Rickshaws and auto-rickshaws ruled the city streets as heavy vehicles remained off.

Most of the city's business centres remained closed due to the blockade while private and autonomous offices operated partially and attendance in the government offices was thin.

The alliance activists damaged a number of vehicles at Chandna square in Gazipur, and Kanchpur in Narayanganj halting traffic.

In Barisal, pickets were hardly seen during the blockade. No untoward incidents were reported from any places in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Jessore, Rangpur, Patuakhali, Noakhali and Moulvibazar, according to the New Age correspondents.

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<http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2006-11-21&hidType=TOP&hidRecord=138137>

### **300 injured, vehicles set ablaze: Violence, clashes mark yesterday's blockade**

Tuesday November 21 2006 08:24:39 AM BDT

Incidents of violence and sporadic clashes between the activists of the Awami League-led 14-party combine and BNP-led four-party alliance marked the first day of the third spell of the countrywide siege programme injuring over 300 people across the country. (The New Nation )

Activists of both the major political rivals—BNP and Awami League—clashed at Natore injuring over 100, including Natore district BNP General Secretary Shahidul Islam, wounded by bullet while 30 others were injured at Bagerhat as the activists of the two parties locked in clashes.

Unruly pickets set fire to huge number of vehicles in the capital and elsewhere in the country yesterday.

The siege programme, enforced by Awami League-led 14-party alliance since ending of the tenure of the four-party alliance government on October 28, paralysed the economic activities and transportation.

The siege programme also disrupted normal civic life causing untold sufferings to them. However, despite the siege programme after a four-day break, activities in Chittagong and Mongla ports remained normal yesterday.

The second day of the non-stop siege programme will be relaxed to facilitate the Armed Forces Day today (Tuesday).

The pickets created blockade at different parts of the country and halted movement of transports on the long routes and waterways isolating the capital from other parts of the country.

Train communication, mostly in the western zone, came to a halt during the programme, the 14-party activists put up barricade on different rail stations.

The 14-party alliance called the non-stop siege programme to press home implementation of its 11-point demands including removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz along with his deputies.

As per the programme announced earlier, the siege programme would be continued till the 11-point demands of the alliance were realised.

Our Natore Correspondent said, over 100, including, Natore district BNP General Secretary Shahidul were wounded by bullets as Awami League and BNP activists fought with guns and bombs in the town.

Police and eyewitnesses said the gunfight was took place when activists of both the parties who faced other near Chhayabani cinema crossing started shouting slogan against each other.

Police fired several shots to drive away the street rioters and thus controlled to violence. The injured were admitted to the local hospital.

Our Bagerhat Correspondent said, leaders and activists of Awami League and BNP yesterday locked in clashes at Kashempur Bazar, 8km off the town, leaving at least 12 people of both sides injured.

Of the injured, Nilu Tarafdar, Sajib Tarafdar and Habibur Rahman were rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital while Rintu Kazi, Mohan Kazi and Tariqul Islam were admitted to the Bagerhat Sadar Hospital.

Correspondents informed that baring some stray incidents the first day of the siege programme was observed peacefully in other parts of the country including, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Kurigram, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Pabna Narayanganj and Gazipur.

In the capital city, leaders and activists of the 14-party alliance yesterday took to the streets to make the siege programme a success. They brought out processions and held rallies at different points of the city.

Leaders and activists of the LDP and Tarikat Federation yesterday also took to the streets over the issue.

The activists of 14-party alliance held rallies and brought out processions at least at 23 places including Bangabandhu Avenue, Noor Hossain Square, Kadam Fountain Square, Russel Square and Mirpur areas.

A number of motor vehicles were damaged or burnt by the violent pickets in different places in the city.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) blocked all roads to Muktangan after banning rallies and processions there.

Earlier, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of the BNP and Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, withdrew their sit-in programme from Muktangan at midnight Sunday as DMP imposed section 144 there.

Though movement of motor vehicles was thin, a large number of rickshaws were plying on the city streets.

Thousands of office goers including female employees and officials suffered a lot due to shortage of transports caused by the siege programme.

Most of the shopping centers and educational institutions remained closed while transaction in government's banks was partial.

Attendance was also thin in the Secretariat and different government and semi-government and autonomous offices.

A huge number of law enforcers including members of the elite force Rapid Action Battalion and

paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles have been deployed at different strategic points in the city to maintain law and order during the siege programme.

The New Nation

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<http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=DHA228697&WTmodLoc=World-R5-Alertnet-4>

## **Fifty hurt in clashes over Bangladesh blockade**

Tue 21 Nov 2006 7:53:32 GMT



DHAKA, Nov 21 (Reuters) - At least 50 people were injured in clashes between rival activists on Tuesday as a transport blockade, called to force the ouster of contested election officials, paralysed Bangladesh for a second day.

Demands for the exit of Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz and his deputies ahead of a January election were bolstered after government advisers negotiating a way out for the poll officials said they could now "see light at the end of the tunnel".

Speculation was rife that Aziz would meet President Iajuddin Ahmed on Tuesday to give his decision -- whether to quit or go abroad on leave.

The blockade was called by a 14-party alliance led by Sheikh Hasina, chief of the Awami League, which says January's vote cannot be free and fair under the current election officials.

Thousands of alliance activists thronged the streets of the capital, Dhaka on Tuesday, dancing and singing.

But followers of Hasina and her arch rival, Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), fought pitched battles at Dhaka University in which several students were injured, police said.

In Bogra town, 250 km (156 miles) north of Dhaka, police fired teargas and rubber bullets to disperse stick-wielding and stone-throwing rival activists. More than 40 people were injured. At least 100 people were injured, including 12 in gunbattles, in fighting between rival activists when blockade began on Monday. Two people were killed and hundreds were hurt during a similar four-day stoppage last week.

The blockade continued to paralyse transport, ports, businesses and schools across the impoverished South Asian country of 140 million people, witnesses and officials said.

Hasina alleged that Iajuddin, who also heads a caretaker administration that would oversee the election, had not yet proved his neutrality and was being dictated to by Khaleda.

The alliance accuses Aziz and his deputies of being biased towards Hasina's rivals, particularly Khaleda and her BNP. Khaleda stepped down as prime minister last month at the end of a five-year term.

The BNP has refuted the alliance's charge. It has asked the president not to listen to Hasina and has also demanded the immediate announcement of a timetable for the election.

The president on Monday sent three of his advisers to the election commission to seek a way out of the impasse.

"We see a light at the end of the tunnel and hope a solution is possible within 24 to 48 hours from now," Mahbubul Alam, adviser in charge of the information ministry told a news conference late on Monday. (Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed)

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/nov/22/front.html#2>

## **Life at a standstill as blockade continues**

*70 injured in clashes across country*

Staff Correspondent

Stray clashes between the activists of the two rival political alliances and the police at different places marked the second day of the renewed countrywide blockade on Tuesday as the capital remained cut off from the rest of the country crippling life and economic activity.

The clashes left more than 70 people injured in Dhaka, Chittagong and Bogra.

The Awami League-led 14-party combine enforced the blockade across the country demanding reconstitution of the Election Commission including resignation of the chief election commissioner, MA Aziz, and commissioner, SM Zakaria.

The newly-formed Liberal Democratic Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Zaker Party, a faction of the Islami Oikya Jote and the Bangladesh Tariquat Federation joined forces with the AL-led alliance to realise the demands.

The Jatiya Party led by former president, HM Ershad, also took to the streets on Tuesday to push the same demands.

Road, rail and river links remained almost snapped while major land and seaports of the country remained inoperative.

Train communications across the country, mostly in the western zone, were badly affected on Tuesday as pro-blockade activists put up barricades on tracks at different railway stations.



Ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia, Mawa-Charjanajat and Muktarpur in Munshiganj were halted.

In the capital, the police charged batons on the activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal as the two rival student organisations locked in clashes on Dhaka University campus in the morning.

The clashes erupted when the JCD activists attacked a procession of the BCL, heading for Bangabandhu Avenue, from behind near the Doel Chhattar. Some crackers were exploded during the clash.

Baton-wielding police swung into action to disperse the warring groups leaving three persons injured.

The trouble on the DU campus apart, a festive mood prevailed among demonstrators on the streets across the city including Malibagh, Moghbazar, Badda, Uttara, Nabisco crossing, Mohakhali, Mirpur and Jatrabari. Activists of the AL-led alliance staged demonstrations, held rallies and cultural functions on Bangabandhu Avenue and in Russell Square all day.

Activists of the Zaker Party paraded the city streets in a large procession expressing solidarity with the movement for reconstitution of the Election Commission.

Different professional groups like the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, the Supreme Court Bar Association and the Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad also joined demonstrations.

Most of the city's business centres remained closed due to the blockade while private and autonomous offices operated partially and attendance in the government offices was thin. The country's premier bourse, Dhaka Stock Exchange, witnessed some trading.

In the port city of Chittagong, at least 30 people, including four police men, were injured in a violent clash between the activists of the JCD-Shibir and the Chhatra League on the second day of the blockade.

Witnesses said the clash erupted at around 2:00 pm when activists of the BNP-led alliance hurled stones at a rally of the AL-led combine from a truck procession on their way to the port area.

In retaliation the angry activists of the AL-led combine demolished a stage set up by their rivals and at least 30 persons sustained injuries in the clash that ensued.

Nine of the injured, identified as Islami Chhatra Shibir leader Jahidul Islam, Jubo Dal leader Mahub, BNP activists Rafique, Rakib and Mintu, Awami Swechhasebak League leader Mohammed Idrish, Chhatra League leaders Sajid, Pavel and Delwar, were undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College and Hospital while the rests were released after first aid.

A number of vehicles and roadside shops were vandalised during the clash before police arrived and brought the situation under control.

Inter-district buses and trucks stayed off the roads, cutting off communications between the port city and other parts of the country. However, rail and river communications were almost normal on the second day of the indefinite blockade.

Demonstrators blocked the roads at Nimtali crossing, AK Khan Gate and Barik Building crossing to ensure that no transports approach or leave Chittagong port.

At the northern Bogra town, fierce clashes between the activists of the AL-led combine, the BNP-led alliance and the police left at least 30 people injured.

The police said the clash broke out when processions of the rival political alliances came face to face at about 11:00am.

During the fighting, rival groups hurled stones at each other and exploded crackers leaving a police man, an ansar and three journalists injured.

At one point, activists of the AL-led combine retreated, but the BNP activists locked in a clash with the police who tried to disperse them.

The police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets leaving 22 BNP activists injured. Demonstrators damaged and set fire to three motorbikes during the hour-long battle.

Twenty of the injured were admitted to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital.

In Comilla, train services on the Dhaka-Chittagong route were disrupted on Tuesday morning as activists of the



AL-led combine put up barricades on Shashangachha level-crossing.

The Sylhet-bound Paharika express train from Chittagong remained stranded at Comilla station due to the barricade.

Agitators also put up barricade on different places in Brahmanbaria snapping rail links on Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Chittagong routes, railway sources said.

In Sylhet, the blockade disrupted train and road communications but no untoward incidents were reported.

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## **Two killed in BNP-LDP clash in Ctg**

Staff Correspondent . Chittagong

Two persons were killed and 20 injured in a clash between the newly formed Liberal Democratic Party and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party men at Patiya in Chittagong on Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Shah Alam, 23, of Banigram under Banskali and Naser Ahmed, 27, of Kushumpur under Patiya. Both the LDP and the BNP claimed the dead to be their activists. The police said the clash erupted at around 3:30pm at Badamtali of Manoshertec area when the BNP men intercepted a bus procession of the LDP, which was heading for a reception ceremony accorded to its executive president Oli Ahmed at the upazila headquarters.

Local sources said the buses of the LDP procession, which was coming from Paschim Patiya, knocked a band of BNP men, who blockaded the road to intercept the procession, leaving two persons injured. Both the sides were locked in a clash after the incident, leaving 20 others injured, said the sources, adding that 10 of the injured had been rushed to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital, where the doctors declared two of them dead.

Oli Ahmed, in his speech at the reception, claimed the dead to be LDP men and held former BNP lawmaker from the Patiya constituency Gazi Shahajahan Jewel responsible for the killings.

Meanwhile, the leaders and workers of BNP, led by president of district (south) BNP Ahmad Khalil Khan, went to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital at about 8:00pm and took away the bodies of the victims, claiming them to be their activists after autopsy.

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<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200611221750.htm>

International

## **Bangla blockade turns violent, scores injured**

Dhaka, Nov. 22 (AP): Violent clashes between rival political activists left one man dead and several others injured in Bangladesh on Wednesday during a crippling nationwide strike over electoral reforms, witnesses said.

The man was stabbed to death after three homemade bombs exploded near a rally of anti-strike activists in a town north of the capital, Dhaka, witness Hasibur Rahman said. The activists allegedly caught the man with an unexploded bomb and stabbed him, Rahman said.

No one was hurt in the explosions in Bogra, 176 km north of Dhaka.

The activists belonged to former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party, but details of the victim were not known immediately.

In Dhaka, the clashes occurred between the supporters of Zia and the activists of former military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad, said an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

Ershad's Jatiya Party is participating in a nationwide strike to demand the resignation of election officials. Zia's supporters are opposing the shutdown.

The violence broke out when several hundred supporters of Zia's four-party coalition gathered close to a rally of Ershad's supporters.

Riot police used batons to quell the fighting.

The clashes came as a nationwide strike to force election reforms paralyzed traffic and business in Bangladesh for the third straight day Wednesday, after violent clashes left two demonstrators dead and dozens injured on Tuesday.

The violence occurred despite an interim government's pledge that it was nearing a solution to the impasse over election commissioners installed by the former prime minister. A 14-party alliance says the commissioners are biased and want them ousted.

Thousands of slogan-chanting protesters choked the streets and highways leading into the capital, Dhaka - cutting the city of 10 million people off to the rest of the country. Similar disruptions have been reported in more than 60 other cities and towns, ATN Bangla TV station reported.

On Tuesday, armed partisans of Zia attacked a procession of former supporters who broke away to form a new party in southeastern Chittagong city, said Mohammad Ali, a spokesman for the breakaway faction.

A statement issued by Zia's party denied responsibility for the attack.

Two supporters of the breakaway Liberal Democratic Party were badly beaten and died later in a state-run hospital in Chittagong, said a doctor there, Ajoy Deb.

The Liberal Democratic Party is not part of the 14-party alliance led by Sheikh Hasina, but has extended support for the strikes.

The attack in Chittagong left 25 people hurt, including four policemen, as rival activists fought with rocks and sticks.

In Bogra, north of Dhaka, police used tear gas and rubber bullets to break up a fight between rival supporters that injured about 25 people, the domestic United News of Bangladesh news agency said.

Also on Tuesday, supporters and opponents of the strike briefly clashed at the Dhaka University campus, ATN Bangla network reported. At least three homemade bombs \_ explosives in small tin pots \_ went off during the melee. No one was hurt.

Schools and stores remained shut Wednesday, and demonstrators continued to barricade rail stations, disrupting train services, and blocked cars and public buses.

The 14-party alliance, led by Hasina's Awami League party, resumed an indefinite nationwide strike Monday after the interim government failed to meet a Sunday deadline to remove Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Aziz and his three deputies over the bias allegations.

Zia's coalition held power until October before handing over power to an interim government, headed by President Iajuddin Ahmed, to oversee the elections in January. Hasina was the main opposition leader during Zia's five-year tenure.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/nov/23/front.html#2>

## **Blockade cuts off communications for third consecutive day**

*Juba Dal activist killed in Bogra by fellow party-men*

Staff Correspondent

An activist of the Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal was killed in Bogra by fellow party-men and over 30 people were injured in sporadic clashes elsewhere as the nationwide blockade continued for the third consecutive day on Wednesday.

A speeding bus ran over a transport worker, who the demonstrators claim was involved in picketing, at Mirpur in the capital on Wednesday.

The blockade, enforced by the Awami League and its allies to underscore the demand for electoral reforms and resignation of the chief election commissioner, Justice MA Aziz, cut off the capital and port city of Chittagong from the rest of the country for three days.

Countrywide communications were badly hampered due to the blockade.

The significant incident of the third day's programme was the participation of Jatiya Party, led by former dictator Hussein Muhammad Ershad, in the movement for the ouster of the chief election commissioner.

The newly-formed Liberal Democratic Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Zaker Party, a faction of the Islami Oikya Jote and Bangladesh Tariquat Federation also joined the movement.

Business in Chittagong Port, Mongla Port and all the land-ports were halted for the third consecutive day.

Tension prevailed in the capital throughout the day as the BNP-led alliance set up a dais at Muktangan — only about 100 yards away from the venue of the 14-party combine's rally.

The 14-party combine's leaders alleged that it was a 'provocative act' and urged Dhaka city's police commissioner to cancel the allotment of Muktangan to the 4-party alliance.

The riot police and Bangladesh Rifles personnel tackled the situation effectively by keeping the rival parties apart.

At Bijoy Nagar, the JP workers staged a demonstration in front of their office, but were attacked by the activists of Sarbadaliya Chhatra Oikya — a combine of the student fronts of the 4-party alliance — when their procession was passing through the area at about 1:15pm.

They chased the JP leaders and activists and beat them up indiscriminately. They damaged the temporary stage and confiscated the mikes used for the rally.

At least 20 leaders and activists were injured and 13 of them were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, claimed the party leaders.

At Mirpur, Babu Mollah, a minibus driver, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding microbus near the roundabout in Section 10 at about 10:30am.

He was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead at about 11:30am.

There was no other untoward incident reported from anywhere else in the capital.

Thousands of enthusiastic workers crowded the designated venue for the AL-led combine on Bangabandhu Avenue on Wednesday. They sang and danced the whole day during the rallies which were addressed by central and local leaders.



The pro-blockade leaders vowed not to leave the streets until their demands were met.

The 14-party combine's workers also staged demonstrations in 22 other places including Russell Square, Badda, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Jatrabari, Uttara, Nabisco crossing and Mohakhali.

The Liberal Democratic Party staged a demonstration in front of Century Arcade at Moghbazar.

The Sarbadaliya Chhatra Oikya also staged a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the morning, and another big rally at Muktangan in the afternoon in protest against the blockade. The activists demanded immediate announcement of the election schedule.

Normal life could not be restored and business concerns in the capital remained inoperative for the third consecutive day. Educational institutions were closed and most cars and buses stayed off the roads, but rickshaws and auto-rickshaws ruled the city streets.

A number of small shops were seen open in different areas.

In Bogra, Mohan Sheikh, a local Juba Dal leader, was hacked to death mistakenly by fellow party-men during a rally of the BNP-led 4-Party alliance in Shatmatha Zero Point on Wednesday.

Witnesses said that the angry Juba Dal activists encircled Saptapadi Market and damaged a number of shops when some crackers were exploded on its rooftop at about 12:30pm.

The explosions took place when a rally of the alliance was proceeding towards Zero Point. Angry 4-party workers allegedly blasted the crackers.

The Juba Dal activists beat up Mohan severely and hacked him with sharp weapons before clearly knowing his identity as they thought Mohan had exploded the bombs, said eye-witnesses.

Mohan was then taken to the Mohammad Ali Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Later, the 4-party activists at a rally in the afternoon blamed the 14-party activists for the killing, which was straightway refuted by the latter.

The AL-led combine's leaders said that they had held their programme at Banani, 4 kilometres away from the venue of the 4-party rally, to avert clashes.

In Natore, at least 10 Chhatra Dal and Juba Dal activists were injured in an attack, allegedly by Awami League's activists, near the Eidgah on Wednesday when they were going to join a BNP rally.

Witnesses said Awami League activists attacked the processions of Juba Dal and Chhatra Dal at about 4:30pm, leaving 10 of them injured.

In Brahmanbaria, the pro-blockade agitators put up barricades at different points of the railway track, halting train communication on the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes.

In Netrakona, businessmen and workers staged demonstrations at Khaliajuri on Wednesday due to non-delivery of the goods from the boats which have been anchored there for the last three days.

There was no untoward incident reported from Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet, Jessore, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Jamalpur, Gazipur, Moulvibazar, Sirajganj, Pabna, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/nov/24/front.html#3>

## **4th day of blockade passes off amid festivity**

Staff Correspondent

Thousands of activists of the Awami League-led combine staged demonstrations, danced and sang on the streets in the capital and elsewhere on Thursday, the fourth day of the countrywide blockade, celebrating what they called their partial victory in the movement for reconstitution of the Election Commission following the decision of the CEC, MA Aziz, to go on a three-month leave.

A number of other political parties, including the newly-formed Liberal Democratic Party, the Jatiya Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Zaker Party, a faction of the Islami Oikya



Jote and the Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, joined forces with the AL-led combine in the road-rail-waterway blockade.

The AL-led combine announced suspension of the blockade from 5:00pm Thursday as MA Aziz went on a three-month leave.

The blockade, which paralysed life and economic activity across the country in the last four days, caused enormous sufferings to the people as road communications remained snapped, train services were badly affected and businesses ground to a halt, before the country, including the capital, started coming to life after sunset Thursday.

Train services in the western zone were badly affected on the fourth day of the blockade, but it was almost normal in the eastern zone, railway sources said.

Ferry services on Paturia-Doulatdia and Mawa-Charjanajat routes also remained suspended.

In the capital, like the previous three days, activists of the AL-led combine started pouring into the streets at different places including Bangabandhu Avenue, Russell Square, Malibagh, Badda, Mohakhali, Uttara, Nabisco crossing, Jatrabari and Mirpur since early in the morning.

They held rallies and marched down the streets with the leaders addressing demonstrators and artistes entertaining crowds from truck-mounted daises all day till the announcement came that the blockade had been postponed at 5:00pm.

The police cordoned off Mukhtangan, one of the designated places for public meetings in the capital, putting up barbed wire fences on both ends of the road at Paltan crossing and Noor Hossain Square and did not allow anyone to enter there.

Rickshaws and auto-rickshaws occupied the city streets, but other motor vehicles also came out in an increased number on the day compared to the previous three days. However, long-route transports stayed off the streets.

Small shops and kitchen markets were open, but shopping malls started opening late in the afternoon following the suspension of the blockade.

Outside the capital, the pro-blockade pickets staged demonstrations at Savar, Dhamrai and Tongi in Gazipur halting traffic on Dhaka-Aricha, Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Tangail highways. Movement of vehicles was also stopped on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet highways as pickets staged demonstrations at Kanchpur in Narayanganj.

In Chittagong, operations at the country's main seaport resumed after the president's address to the nation on Wednesday night. The other seaport at Mongla also started functioning.

No untoward incidents were reported from anywhere in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Jessore, Rangpur, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Pabna, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Dinajpur and Noakhali, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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<http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=DHA274004&WTmodLoc=World-R5-Alertnet-5>

## Clashes flare in Bangladesh amid feuding over poll

Sat 25 Nov 2006 12:28:00 GMT



(Adds business leader's comments, details)

By Anis Ahmed

DHAKA, Nov 25 (Reuters) - Two people were killed and nearly 50 injured as clashes intensified between Bangladesh political rivals over elections due in January.

Police said the clashes involved activists of the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Begum Khaleda Zia, both former prime ministers.

One of the victims died in Chittagong port city and the other in the coastal Patuakhali district. At least 10 people were hurt in clashes there, witnesses said.

Several home-made bombs went off at Dhaka University as Awami and BNP students sought to tighten respective control on the 50,000-strong campus. Police said no one was hurt but tension was high.

Some 40 students were injured in fighting between rival groups at Jagannath University, in the crowded old Dhaka area, witnesses said.

Police foiled a bid by a pro-Awami Jubo (youth) League to hold protests outside Dhaka's presidential palace on Saturday.

Witnesses said about 5,000 protesters gathered around the palace but riot police prevented them from moving closer. The protesters dispersed peacefully, a Reuters cameraman said.

A 14-party alliance led by Hasina and a United Front which included dissidents of the BNP have called for a siege to force the country's interim government to fire key election commission officials, including acting chief Mahfuzur Rahman.

Rahman took over this week after his boss, chief election commissioner M.A. Aziz, went on three months' leave to defuse mounting pressure from Hasina's alliance for his dismissal.

The Awami League and its allies said on Saturday they would not take part in an election under Rahman.

"We want Mahfuzur Rahman and his cronies removed immediately to create a congenial atmosphere for people to exercise their franchise in an absolutely free and peaceful manner," said Awami general secretary Abdul Jalil.

"Unless it is done, we will launch a bigger movement to force President Iajuddin to resign as chief adviser of the caretaker authority," he told reporters.

#### APPEAL TO KEEP PORTS OPEN

Bangladesh's business community expressed concern over fears of more violence after 10 people were killed and hundreds injured in clashes between political rivals during a four-day transport blockade this week.

The blockade forced transports and ports to close, along with schools and many factories.

"We strongly appeal to all parties to keep business, ports and vehicles carrying export cargo out of strikes and shutdowns aimed to settle political scores," S.M. Fazlul Hoque, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, told a news conference on Saturday.

"Political parties should also promise this in the manifestoes ahead of the January election," he said.

Garments are Bangladesh's principal export, earning the impoverished South Asian country of 140 million people, around \$8 billion annually. Garment factories employ 2.2 million workers, mostly women.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, secretary-general of the BNP, said on Saturday: "The stage is now set for the election and all (parties) should participate in it to strengthen democracy and uphold people's right to choose their government."

The BNP has also announced plans to hold rallies and marches across the country, including Dhaka, on Monday and Tuesday "to pressure the election commission to announce poll schedules immediately". Bhuiyan asked his party followers to avoid clashes with their opponents.

(Additional reporting by Ruma Paul)

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/nov/26/met.html#1>

### **30 hurt as JCD, BCL clash at Jagannath University**

Staff Correspondent

At least 30 students were injured in a clash between rival student groups at Jagannath University in Old Town of Dhaka on Saturday.

The clash took place after an activist of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal entered into an altercation with an activist of Awami League's student front Chhatra League in the classroom of mathematics department.

Chhatra League activists claimed that Chhatra Dal activists with the help of hired goons attacked them without any provocation, in which more than 25 of their activists were injured, who were admitted to Sumona Clinic and National Hospital.

The Chhatra Dal activists also claimed that Chhatra League leaders and activists attacked them, injuring 7 of their activists, who were admitted to Sumona Clinic.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when Arif, a Chhatra Dal activist, hit his classmate Parimal, an activist of the Chhatra League, with a pen during the class hour at around 11:30am.

'Hearing the news, I rushed to the classroom and stopped the clash after talking to both of them and they assured me that both of them had reached an understanding,' Gazi Abu Sayeed, general secretary of the university BCL, told New Age.

'After the incident, the JCD activists, aided by outsiders, took position at different strategic points of the campus and hurled stones and brickbats on us,' Sayeed added.

Soon after the incident, the JCD leaders and activists brought out a procession and chased the BCL activists at the Abakash Corner as the BCL activists retaliated by hurling brickbats, triggering a fierce clash between two groups at around 12:45pm.

In a chase and counter-chase between the two groups, the campus turned into a battlefield for one hour.

Police deployed on the campus played the role of observers during the clashes.

At one stage, the JCD activists dragged out BCL activist Bayejid from the mosque and beat him up.

Hearing Bayejid screaming, hundreds of BCL activists, led by the university unit BCL president, Kamrul Hasan Ripon, rushed to the spot and rescued him after ousting the JCD activists.

'The JCD leaders and activists, aided by hired goons, swooped on us without any provocation to show their muscle power,' Kamrul said.



The university unit JCD president, ABM Pervez Reza, told New Age, 'The BCL leaders and activists attacked on our peaceful rally.'

'The situation is under control now and we tried to deploy more law enforcers on the campus to avoid any untoward incident,' Sirazul Islam, vice-chancellor of the university, told New Age.

A huge contingent of law enforcers was deployed on the campus as a tense situation was prevailing there.

No case was filed until 7:30pm in this connection.

Earlier, Shibir activists had a fierce clash with Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League activists, leaving 50 students injured at Jagannath University on March 9, 2005.

Later, the Chhatra Dal and Shibir leaders had a meeting to mitigate the conflict. Former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas mediated the meeting.

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<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DHA291171.htm>

## **Bangladesh protesters set fire to election office**

28 Nov 2006 06:28:15 GMT

### **Source: Reuters**

DHAKA, Nov 28 (Reuters) - A group of political activists set fire to an election commission office in southern Bangladesh on Tuesday, as a 14-party alliance began a new campaign to force the ouster of top election officials over charges of bias.

The protests came a day after the election commission set parliamentary elections for January 21, defying calls by the Awami alliance to delay announcement of poll schedules until the commission was reorganised and the voters' list was updated.

Riot police stopped thousands of slogan-shouting activists of the Awami League alliance, led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, as they marched toward the heavily guarded election commission headquarters in the capital Dhaka.

"Protesters are still converging towards the EC headquarters, but police appears determined to hold them back," a Reuters cameraman said.

Earlier on Tuesday, suspected alliance supporters set fire to a district election office in the southern coastal town of Barisal, and hundreds of documents were burnt, police said.

"We are investigating but suspect it was an act of those who try to disturb the election process," an office said. On Monday, another election office and a court building were set on fire in the southwestern town of Khulna.

A U.N. official said overnight that Secretary-General Kofi Annan was sending a top aide to Bangladesh ahead of January elections to help ensure they are peaceful and transparent.

Craig Jenness, director of the world body's Electoral Assistance Division, will be in Bangladesh from Wednesday through Friday to meet with the head of the caretaker government and other senior officials, election authorities, political party representatives and various interest groups, U.N. spokeswoman Marie Okabe said.

The Awami alliance accuses the election commission of a bias toward the main rival Begum Khaleda Zia, who ended her five-year term as prime minister in October, and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The alliance has threatened to step up protests including a new transport shutdown if the election commission went ahead with its poll schedule.

"Unless the election commission cancels the schedules by next Saturday, we will launch a new wave of protests, including an indefinite transport blockade from Sunday," Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the Awami League, told reporters.

At least 40 people were killed and hundreds injured in similar blockades and other protests since late October over the alliance's demand for restructuring of the poll commission.

(Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed)



## **Five election offices torched**

Shahiduzzaman

Five election offices in Khulna, Barisal, Munshiganj, Jhinaidah, and Brahmanbaria districts were torched within less than 24 hours of the announcement of the election schedule.

The arson attacks on election offices in different parts of the country started at about 11pm Monday night, a few hours after announcement of the polls schedule, when the deputy election commissioner's office in Khulna was set on fire.

The perpetrators, who could not be identified, torched the election offices at Barisal Sadar upazila, Sirajdikhan upazila of Munshiganj and Jhinaidah Sadar upazila in the early morning on Tuesday, hours after the Khulna incident.

The Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila election office also came under an arson attack on Tuesday night that burned the doors of two of its rooms.

The Election Commission announced the schedule on Monday afternoon, while the Awami League-led combine rejected the schedule and declared fresh agitation programmes including countrywide siege for indefinite period from Sunday demanding cancellation of the schedule and reconstitution of the commission.

Some unknown people set fire to the Barisal Sadar upazila election office, some 40 yards off the office of the police super and that of the deputy commissioner of the district. They also smashed the windowpanes of the office.

According to locals and fire service sources, the arson took place between four and five in the morning. Seeing smoke rising from the building, some neighbours called in the fire brigade, who rushed to the spot, entered the office breaking through three locked doors, and doused the blaze by 6:30am.

The voters' lists and unused ballot papers of the 1998 union parishad election, window curtains, and some office furniture and stationery were burnt or damaged by the flames, the upazila election officer, M Maniruzzaman, told the Barisal correspondent of New Age.

Maniruzzaman lodged a general diary with Barisal Kotwali police station in this connection.

Divisional and district officials of the civil and police administrations and election officials visited the spot and law enforcers have already started an investigation into the attack.

The same morning, another group of unidentified people set fire to the Sirajdikhan upazila election office housed in an old court building. Some important documents and furniture were burned in the incident.

Seeing flames and smokes coming out of the office, the local people came forward and brought the fire under control by pouring water themselves, our Munshiganj correspondent wrote quoting witnesses.

The deputy commissioner and returning officer of Munshiganj, Moniruddin, confirmed the details.

Earlier, at about 11:00pm on Monday, a group of people torched the three-storey office of the deputy election commissioner in Sher-e-Bangla Road in Khulna city reportedly in presence of police and two staff in the office.

According to witnesses, the assailants sprinkled with petrol two first-floor rooms of the office where ballot boxes were kept and then set the rooms on fire.

Witnesses said, pedestrians and neighbours raised alarm seeing the blaze and asked the police constables on duty at the office to extinguish it. As the policemen did not pay heed to them, the pedestrians themselves fetched water from an adjacent pond and the neighbours from their houses, and together they poured water on the flames and managed to douse the fire after a while.

The on-duty police constables however sprang to action when a group of the Kotwali police

arrived at the spot, the witnesses said, adding that by the time a contingent of fire fighters reached the place the fire had already been put out. Four to five ballot boxes were burnt in the fire.

The Jhenidah Sadar upazila election office was torched by some unidentified attackers at about 2:30am on Tuesday, damaging some furniture.

The United News of Bangladesh quoting an employee of the office of the Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila nirbahi officer said in a report that a group of people soaked a jute bag in petrol, set it ablaze and then hurled it to the Sadar upazila election office at about 7:45pm on Tuesday. The attackers then quickly fled the scene.

Employees of the office doused the fire fast enough before it could make any major damage.

The upazila election officer filed a case with the local police station in this connection.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/01/front.html#4>

## **AL, allies stage sit-in around Bangabhaban**

Staff Correspondent

Several thousand activists of the Awami League-led alliance and other political parties staged sit-ins around Bangabhaban on Thursday to push for resignation of the president from the post of chief adviser, reconstitution of the Election Commission and cancellation of the polls schedule.

During the four-hour sit-ins beginning from 10am, the leaders and activists of the parties gathered at 11 points around Bangabhaban and held rallies and cultural functions.

The Liberal Democratic Party, Zaker Party, Bangladesh Tariqat Federation and a faction of Islami Oikya Jote also held sit-ins simultaneously with the AL-led alliance.

The leaders and activists of the alliance started gathering at the spots—Muktangan, Zero Point, Paltan, Dainik Bangla crossing, stadium gate, Bangabandhu Avenue, Golap Shah Mazar, Nowabpur Road, Joi Kali Temple, Ittefaq crossing and Shapla Square—with processions from different parts of the city chanting slogans demanding resignation of the chief of the caretaker administration.

They renewed the call for reconstitution of the Election Commission including removal of the controversial persons from the commission, update of the voters' roll and cancellation of the hastily announced polls schedule.

Leaders addressed the demonstrators and artistes entertained the crowds from truck-mounted daises as the sit-ins passed off amidst festivity.

The police put up barricades around Bangabhaban and no untoward incidents took place during the agitations.

The main gatherings were held at Noor Hossain Square at Zero Point, Muktangan, Paltan crossing, Golap Shah Mazar and south gate of the Bangabandhu Stadium and by 11am the areas turned into a human sea.

Activists of the Liberal Democratic Party and Tariqat Federation gathered at Muktangan, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal in front of the GPO, Communist Party at Paltan crossing and Zaker Party at Shapla Square where they held separate rallies to press home the demands.

Addressing the rallies senior leaders of the AL-led alliance said a countrywide indefinite blockade would begin from Sunday if the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, did not relinquish the office of the chief of the caretaker administration by the Saturday deadline.

The leaders and activists of the alliance expressed their anger as the news of the suspension of the verdict on the writ petitions against the president's taking over as chief of the caretaker government reached the rally venues.

The AL presidium member, Tofail Ahmed, said that the Chief Justice had suspended the verdict before its announcement and termed the action unprecedented.

The BNP was closing all avenues of democratic protests using the partisan president, Iajuddin Ahmed, he said.

'We have no options but to wage a one-point movement to compel the BNP-loyalist president to resign as the chief of the caretaker government', Tofail said.

Chaired by the city coordinator of the alliance, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the rally on Bangabandhu Avenue, was addressed, among others, by the Workers Party president, Rashed Khan Menon, the AL presidium member, Matia Chowdhury, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal president, Hasanul Haq Inu and the NAP general secretary, Enamul Haque.

The Workers Party general secretary, Bimal Biswas, led the siege programme at Ittefaq crossing.

The gatherings disrupted traffic in Gulisthan, Motijheel and other areas of the city for more than six hours.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/02/front.html#10>

## **Blockade begins tomorrow if demands not met by today**

Staff Correspondent

The activists of the Awami League-led alliance will stop vehicle movement to and from Bangabhaban during the indefinite blockade beginning Sunday.

The Dhaka city coordinator of the alliance after a preparatory meeting on the blockade programme in the central Gana Forum office said they would stop vehicle, except for security cars, from entering and leaving Bangabhaban on Sunday.

The alliance selected 32 city points in the capital city where the alliance leaders and activists would also be stopping vehicles. The alliance will begin the indefinite blockade if their 11-point charter of demands is not met by Saturday.

'There is no option for us but to wage a greater movement to push for our demands that include removal of Iajuddin Ahmed as chief adviser to the caretaker government,' the Awami League's joint general secretary Obaidul Quader said at the meeting.

Chaired by the Dhaka city Gana Forum president, Mostafa Mohsin Montu, the meeting was also addressed by Gana Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Dhaka city Awami League's acting president Omar Ali, Workers Party politburo member Anisur Rahman Mallik, city unit Ganatantri Party president Nurur Rahman Selim and city unit Workers Party secretary Quamrul Ahsan.

The city unit will hold another preparatory meeting on the blockade in the central Awami League office at 3:00pm Saturday.

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<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L02139446.htm>

## **B'desh president meets party chiefs in deadlock**

02 Dec 2006 19:22:24 GMT

### **Source: Reuters**

(Updates after Hasina meets president, adds quotes and byline)

By Nizam Ahmed

DHAKA, Dec 2 (Reuters) - President Iajuddin Ahmed met with the leaders of Bangladesh's two main political parties on Saturday to discuss a deepening political crisis ahead of parliamentary elections in January.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief Begum Khaleda Zia met the president first followed by the head of the Awami League Sheikh Hasina, a spokesman for the presidential palace said.

"Khaleda Zia has urged the president to take strong steps to hold the election on schedule and ensure that Awami League and its allies withdraw planned transport blockade to restore order," Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, secretary general of BNP told a news conference.

"Sheikh Hasina demanded restructuring of the election commission and updating of flawed voters list," Abdul Jalil, general secretary of Awami League, told reporters, adding "the planned blockade will continue until the demands are met."

A decision from the presidential palace over the meetings and the political impasse is expected on Sunday after examining opinions of the rival leaders, officials said.

Khaleda and Hasina were invited by the state president, who heads an interim government in charge of conducting the polls.

The two women, who have ruled the country by turn for the last 15 years, have not spoken to each other for about 10 years.

Iajuddin's invitation came a day before a transport blockade that is likely to paralyse much of the country -- the third in three weeks.

Previous blockades have often been violent and at least 40 people have been killed in fighting between rival groups since Khaleda ended a five-year term as prime minister in October.

The warring party leaders are crossing swords over Bangladesh's Election Commission, which has set a voting date for January 21.

The constitution says a new election must be held within three months of the end of the previous government's tenure.

Khaleda ended her five-year tenure as prime minister late in October, handing power to the caretaker administration.

Hasina, chief of Awami League, rejected the poll date and related schedules, saying they were announced in haste. She also has said voter lists were riddled with false names.

A U.S.-based election monitor said the voter list in the country of 137 million people contains 12.2 million false names. (Additional reporting by Anis Ahmed and Masud Karim) (Editing by Michael Roddy; Reuters Messaging: anis.ahmed.reuters.com@reuters.net; +880-2-8614088)

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-03T104859Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-278769-1.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-03T104859Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-278769-1.xml&archived=False)

## **Security forces on alert for Bangladesh blockade**

Sun Dec 3, 2006 10:57 AM IST

DHAKA (Reuters) - Security forces went on high alert on Sunday to avert trouble as Bangladesh was hit by a countrywide transport blockade -- the fourth in as many weeks -- amid a deepening political crisis ahead of elections in January.

Witnesses said road links between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong, as well as other main cities, were paralysed as the blockade took hold early on Sunday, a working day in mainly Muslim Bangladesh.

Few vehicles moved in Dhaka, where groups of chanting activists from a 14-party alliance led by Sheikh Hasina, head of the Awami League, gathered at key points.

Riot police and paramilitary troops patrolled the streets and guarded key buildings in the city of 10 million people.

Hasina's alliance said late on Saturday the blockade and other protests would be peaceful "unless the police or rival political activists resorted to any excess".

"We want to hold the blockade and other protests peacefully. And we hope that no one will try to use force or violence against us," said Obidul Kader, a senior Awami leader.

The alliance demands a complete restructuring of the election commission, changes to the election schedule including the voting day the commission set for Jan. 21, and the resignation of President Iajuddin Ahmed as head of an interim government in charge of conducting the polls.

Hasina and her main rival Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) met the president and his council of advisers late on Saturday. But they failed to resolve the stalemate.

Khaleda ended her five-year tenure as prime minister late in October, handing over power to a caretaker authority. The constitution dictates the election must be held within three months of the change over.

Previous blockades have turned violent and resulted in the deaths of at least 40 people

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-03T212727Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-278769-3.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-03T212727Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-278769-3.xml&archived=False)

## **More violence as blockade again grips Bangladesh**

Sun Dec 3, 2006 9:40 PM IST

DHAKA (Reuters) - Clashes broke out between rival political activists across Bangladesh again on Sunday as the fourth transport blockade in as many weeks gripped the country just weeks ahead of elections.

One man was killed and 30 were injured in the latest spate of violence.

President Iajuddin Ahmed called his council of advisers to a special meeting to try to resolve the stalemate between longtime rivals Sheikh Hasina, head of the Awami League, and Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"The meeting has been convened to consider demands of the two major alliances," a spokesman for the presidential palace said.

Adviser Mahbubul Alam, head of the information ministry, said "we expect to evolve a deal acceptable to both camps".

Hasina and Khaleda met the president and his council of advisers late on Saturday. But they failed to resolve the stalemate.

Hasina's 14-party alliance demands the removal of controversial election officials and says voting lists for the January poll are flawed.

A U.S.-based election monitor said on Saturday the voters' list contained 12.2 million false names.

"This is incorrect," acting chief election commissioner Mahfuzur Rahman told U.S. envoy Patricia A. Butenis when she met him on Sunday to discuss the issue.

"Some adjustments (in the list) may be required ... if (false names) can be detected specifically," Rahman added.

Khaleda ended her five-year tenure as prime minister late in October, handing over power to a caretaker authority. The constitution dictates a general election must be held within three months of the change over.

Witnesses said road links between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong, as well as other main cities, were paralysed as the latest blockade took hold early on Sunday, a working day in mainly Muslim Bangladesh.

Riot police and paramilitary troops patrolled the streets and guarded key buildings in the city of 10 million people.

One man was killed and 20 injured in clashes in Biswanath, near Sylhet city 350 km northeast of Dhaka, witnesses said.

At least 10 people were hurt when police used clubs to disperse activists attacking vehicles in Dhaka's Paltan area.

(Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed and Raju Ahmed in Sylhet)

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/04/front.html#3>

## **Blockade shuts capital from outside**

*One killed, over 100 injured*

Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed in Sylhet and more than 100 people were injured in clashes between the activists of the Awami League-led combine and the BNP-led alliance and in police action in the capital and elsewhere in the country on Sunday, the first day of the fourth phase of the blockade.

At the end of the day, the AL's general secretary, Abdul Jalil, at a press briefing in Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi office on Sunday evening said that the blockade would continue until their demands were met.

The AL-led combine began the indefinite blockade to underscore its demand for the resignation of the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, from the post of chief adviser, and electoral reforms including



updating the voters' list, removal of controversial persons from the Election Commission and cancellation of the polls schedule.

The blockade almost paralysed civic life, disrupted financial activities and halted communications, virtually cutting off the capital Dhaka from the rest of the country for the whole day.

Activities in Chittagong Port and Benapole and Sonamasjid land-ports were suspended, while Mongla seaport operated only partially on the first day of the blockade.

The pro-blockade picketers stopped a number of trains at Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Nilphamari, and Poradah in Kushtia, disrupting train communications in both the eastern and western zones.

In Sylhet, Fajez Ahmed Anu, religion affairs secretary of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's Biswanath upazila committee, was killed and at least 50 persons were injured in a clash between the Awami League and the BNP.

Witnesses said the clash began after an unanticipated attack, allegedly by the BNP and its front organisations, on an Awami League procession at the Biswanath upazila headquarters on Sunday.

They said BNP activists loyal to Ilias Ali, former lawmaker of the party, fired at least 20 bullets during the two-hour-long clash between BNP and AL supporters, and the police lobbed about 50 teargas shells to bring the situation under control, said police and local sources.

The police arrested four Jubo League leaders from a residence at Notun Bazaar in Biswanath during the clash.

Local sources said that BNP activists arranged a discussion meeting at the Zia Shishu-Kishor Sangathan at Notun Bazaar in Biswanath upazila headquarters on Sunday, where Mozahid Ali, president of the BNP upazila unit, was present as chief guest.

Armed activists of the BNP and its front organisations attacked a truck procession of the Awami League activists, loyal to the former upazila chairman and AL leader Muhibur Rahman, in front of the office of ZSKS at Notun Bazaar at about 12 noon when they were going to Rashipur on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway to participate in the party's countrywide blockade programme, said sources.

In the capital, the pro-blockade picketers damaged a number of vehicles at Mirpur Section 1 and Section 10 roundabouts and Mohakhali, and set fire to a car on Road No 8 in Dhanmondi in the afternoon.

The Rapid Action Battalion's members and policemen went into action during the vandalism at Mirpur, leaving over 10 people, including a policeman, injured.

The pro-blockade leaders and activists took to the streets at different areas in addition to the 30 spots fixed earlier, which included Paltan, Muktangon, Bangabandhu Avenue, Zero point, Russell Square, Mirpur 10, Gabtoli bus terminal, Pallabi road no 12 bus stand, Azampur, Kuril rail crossing, Mohakhali, Moghbazar, Jurain rail gate, Jatrabari crossing, Dayaganj bus stand, Sadarghat, Raisa Bazar crossing in Sutrapur, Babu Bazar bridge at Kotwali, Motijheel Shapla Square, Shahjahanpur rail crossing, Kamalapur Railway Station, Lalbagh Fort, Nawabpur and North-South Road, where they held rallies and cultural programmes, demanding immediate resignation of the president from the post of chief adviser.

The area turned into a mela as students, youths, cultural artistes, Sechchasebak, wings of the AL and its alliance set up separate daises from where the AL-led alliance leaders addressed the blockaders. The agitators and artistes sang parodies and danced.

Different professional groups like the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Supreme Court Bar Association and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad also joined the agitators.

The activists of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Bangladesh also took to the streets.

The senior leaders of the AL and its allies visited these spots and addressed the rallies.

The speakers asked the activists to remain on the streets until the demands were met. They said the blockade would be lifted only if the government accepted the five demands placed before the caretaker government in order to ensure a free and fair election.

The examinations at all the educational institutes and movement of the Hajj pilgrims were kept out of the blockade's purview, so vehicular movement was much higher yesterday compared to that

of the previous blockades.

Road and railway links between the capital and the rest of the country were cut off.

The number of heavy motorised vehicles was low, but a huge number of CNGs and rickshaws dominated the roads.

Most of the city's business centres remained closed due to the blockade while private and autonomous offices operated partially, and attendance in the government offices was thin.

In Barisal there was no picketing by the anti-blockade elements in the city. However, the pro-blockade supporters brought out stray processions in different parts of the city and blocked the roads and highways at Amtala, Goriarpar and Rupatali entrance points. Movement of riverine vessels, including launches plying the Barisal-Dhaka-Barisal route, was more or less normal.

In Rangpur, five people were injured in a clash between the pro- and anti-blockade activists on the Dhaka-Rangpur highway in the evening.

In Shariatpur at least 20 people, including five policemen, were injured in a clash between police and picketers when 14-party activists attacked the district election office at about 12:00 noon.

In Nilphamari the pro-blockade activists and railway workers detained the inter-city trains, the Rajshahi-bound Barendra Express and Khulna-bound Rupsha Express, at Saidpur Railway Station.

The police dispersed the feuding groups of pro- and anti-blockade activists who were locked in a clash at Kishoreganj, which left at least five people injured.

No untoward incident took place anywhere in Chittagong, the three hill districts, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Comilla, Khulna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jessore, Barisal, Barguna, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Jhenaidah, Kushtia, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Sirajganj, Pabna and Naogaon, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DHA240175.htm>

## **Bangladesh takes steps to resolve political stalemate**

04 Dec 2006 17:12:04 GMT

Source: Reuters

(adds suspension of blockade, quotes and details)

By Nizam Ahmed



Para military troops stand guard at the Tongi railway station, 30 km (19 miles) from the capital Dhaka, December 4, 2005, on the 2nd day of the fourth nationwide transport blockade in as many weeks called by the 14 party alliance. Witnesses said road links between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong, as well as other main cities, were paralysed as the blockade took hold early on Sunday, a working day in mainly Muslim Bangladesh.

REUTERS/RAFIQUR RAHMAN





Odd job labourers wait for jobs at Gazipur, 50 km (31 miles) from the capital Dhaka, December 4, 2005, on the 2nd day of the fourth nationwide transport blockade in as many weeks called by the 14 party alliance. Witnesses said road links between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong, as well as other main cities, were paralysed as the blockade took hold early on Sunday, a working day in mainly Muslim Bangladesh.

REUTERS/RAFIQUR RAHMAN

Trishaws ply through a highway at Tongi, 30 km (19 miles) from the capital Dhaka, December 4, 2005, on the 2nd day of the fourth nationwide transport blockade in as many weeks called by the 14 party alliance. Witnesses said road links between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong, as well as other main cities, were paralysed as the blockade took hold early on Sunday, a working day in mainly Muslim Bangladesh.

REUTERS/RAFIQUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, Dec 4 (Reuters) - Bangladesh's interim government announced changes on Monday to the supervision of next month's parliamentary polls after rival political groups exchanged gunfire that killed three and wounded 50.

The interim government asked the election commission to set a new election date and clean up the rolls of voters.

That was a key demand of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, the opposition party for the past five years, which had organised a transport blockade that paralysed the country for two days.

The Awami League and its allies suspended the blockade, imposed for the fourth time over the past month, after the decision of the interim government.

"In the wake of the latest development we hereby declare suspension of the transport blockade, but will reimpose it if the election commission fails to act accordingly," Hasina told a news conference. But she said her alliance would hold a protest near the election commission on Tuesday to press for a new election timetable.

Political violence has mounted in the impoverished country of 140 million people ahead of the elections.

A gunbattle on Monday between Awami League supporters and Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) -- whose five-year term expired in October -- raged for an hour on Maheshkhali island, 350 km (220 miles) southeast of capital Dhaka, senior administrative officer Aminul Islam said.

The bullet riddled body of an abducted tribal leader of the BNP, was found on Monday at a spot near Rangamati hill town, 380 km southeast of Dhaka.

## **IMPARTIALITY**

The interim administration that is running the country during the election period to try to ensure poll impartiality asked the election commission to announce a new polling schedule and purge fraudulent names from the lists of voters, said Mahbubul Alam, the interim head of the information ministry.

The commission earlier set the voting date for Jan. 21, the last day for filing nominations as Dec. 10 and withdrawal of applications on Dec. 19.

"BNP will have no objection if the steps of the interim government are within the provisions of the constitution," said M. Morshed Khan, senior BNP leader and former foreign minister told reporters.

The interim authority has also decided to shuffle some senior government officials to further "neutralise the administration ahead of the election" and discussed restructuring the election commission, Alam told reporters, without giving details.

An overhaul of the elections commission was another key Awami demand. It was expected that seven or eight officials would be moved to more junior posts to try to stem accusations of bias towards Khaleda.

The latest moves came as U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of the State Department for South Asian Affairs, John A. Gastright, held talks with government officials on the political situation.

"We offered our strong support to the caretaker government in its efforts to move forward with a free, fair and non-violent election," he told reporters.

Khaleda handed over power to the caretaker authority at the end of her term in late October. The constitution dictates a general election must be held within three months of the change over.

Officials say 44 people have been killed in five weeks of political unrest and hundreds injured. (Additional reporting by Nurul Islam)

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<http://www.yorkshiretoday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=55&ArticleID=1911819>

## **MAN DIES IN RIOT OVER ELECTIONS**

**clashes between rival political activists and police left one man dead and about 65 people injured, as a major political alliance in Bangladesh staged a nationwide transport blockade to force electoral reforms, police said.**

The clashes between supporters of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, the chief of a 14-party political alliance, occurred in north-eastern district of Sylhet.

One man was killed and about 50 others were injured in the clashes in Sylhet, 120 miles north-east of the capital, Dhaka. Separately, at least 15 people suffered injuries after police clashed with Hasina's supporters in Shariatpur district, 35 miles west of Dhaka.

Meanwhile, more than 20,000 protesters poured into Bangladesh's capital and were met by roughly equally large numbers of security officials.

In central Dhaka, protesters set fire to a car whose driver defied the strike.

Transport and businesses ground to a halt after protesters erected barricades on major highways, cutting off the capital from the rest of the country.

Areas around the presidential palace in central Dhaka were the main protest venue, as President Iajuddin Ahmed met members of an interim government to try to end the political impasse.

The indefinite, nationwide protest came after last-minute efforts by Ahmed failed to resolve a political deadlock threatening elections next month.

04 December 2006

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/12/05/d6120501022.htm>

Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW

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**Front Page**

Second Day Blockade

**3 die in AL-BNP gunfight**

Staff Correspondent

At least three people were shot dead and 50 wounded in a fierce gunfight between BNP and Awami League (AL) men in Moheshkhali Island under Cox's Bazar district yesterday as the renewed transport blockade enforced by the 14-party combine entered the second day.

The dead were identified as local leader of BNP's youth front Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal Jainal Abdein Badainna, 22, Jubo Dal leader Abdul Goni, 28, and local Jubo League (AL's youth front) leader Mozammel Hossain, 28, -- all from Kalarmarchara union in Moheshkhali upazila.

Rajib Barua, a sub-inspector of Moheshkhali Police Station, was bullet-hit in the leg while three other policemen were also critically injured in the clashes that started at 1:00pm.

The injured were admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar hospital, Moheshkhali Upazila Health Complex and Chakaria Upazila Health Complex. At least 20 houses and 10 shops were also ransacked during the clashes.

The two-hour-long gunfight ensued after a BNP procession came under attack by their rivals at Kalarmarchora Bazar of Moheshkhali upazila at about 1:00pm, reports our Cox's Bazar correspondent referring to the police and locals.

In separate rallies in Cox's Bazar town yesterday evening, BNP and AL blamed each other for the clash.

The transport blockade yesterday hampered normal life and businesses in Dhaka and elsewhere.

The AL-led 14-party combine began the indefinite blockade to realise their demand for the resignation of President Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser of the caretaker government, and electoral reforms including updating the voter list, removal of controversial persons from the Election Commission and cancellation of the polls schedule.

The transport blockade virtually cut off capital Dhaka from the rest of the country and hampered normal life and businesses for the second consecutive day yesterday. Activities in the country's premier Chittagong seaport and land ports in Benapole and Sonamasjid remained suspended while Mongla seaport operated partially.

In the capital, the pro-blockade leaders and activists took to the streets in different areas including Paltan, Muktangon, Bangabandhu Avenue, Noor Hossian Square, Russell Square, Mirpur-10, Gabtoli bus terminal, Kuril rail crossing, Mohakhali, Moghbazar, Jurain rail gate, Jatrabari crossing, Dayaganj bus stand, Sadarghat, Babu Bazar bridge, Motijheel Shapla Chattar, Nawabpur and North-South Road.

As on the previous day, the 14-party leaders addressed the gatherings from temporary podiums on open trucks while agitators and artistes sang parodies and danced to inspire the activists and participants.

The speakers demanded immediate resignation of President Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser.

Iajuddin is working in favour of BNP and Jamaat, they said.

Different professional groups like the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Supreme Court Bar Association and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad also joined the agitators in the capital.

Former president HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party yesterday staged demonstrations in the city supporting the blockade. Activists of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Bangladesh also took to the streets.

As the examinations at all the educational institutions and movement of the Hajj pilgrims were kept out of the purview of the blockade, vehicular movement was much higher compared to that of the earlier blockades.

A large number of rickshaws and CNG-run vehicles dominated the roads.

However, the number of heavy motorised vehicles was low.

Most of the city's business centres remained closed due to the blockade.

There was partial work in private and autonomous offices and attendance in the government offices was thin.

Our staff correspondent reports from Chittagong: Chittagong Divisional Coordinator of Awami League-led 14-party combine ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury vowed to keep the country's premier seaport standstill until the ongoing political crisis ends.

“All operations barring the loading and unloading inside Chittagong Port and delivery to and from it will remain suspended until the 14-party combine's demands are met,” Mohiuddin Chowdhury, who is also the Chittagong city mayor, said while addressing rallies at different places.

At the pro-blockade rallies held at AK Khan Gate, Nimtala, Barik Building Intersection and Anderkilla, AL Presidium Member Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser and other 14-party leaders addressed.

The city mayor threatened to besiege the office of National Grid of Power Development Board (PDB) at the city's Khulshi area and force suspension of its operation for indefinite period from tomorrow if the PDB authorities there fail to ensure uninterrupted supply of power to the city and its dwellers by today.

Meanwhile, the BNP-led four-party alliance held a rally at Kazir Dewri Intersection yesterday afternoon where former minister and BNP Joint Secretary General Abdullah Al Noman and other leaders spoke.

Noman denounced Mohiuddin Chowdhury for speaking in 'provocative language' on a regular basis and trying to disrupt the port activities.

“His [mayor] role now goes against the people and the greater interest of the country,” Noman said.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: At least 15 people were injured in a clash between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal -- student fronts of Awami League and BNP -- at Thakurgaon Government College yesterday noon, police said.

The clashes erupted when JCD activists hurled brickbats at a procession of BCL that was passing by the Arts Building of the college at 1:30pm, sources said, adding that earlier a BCL leader came under attack by JCD activists.

Shortly afterwards, the activists of JCD and BCL gathered at Chowrasta Moar of Thakurgaon town and engaged in clashes again.

Panic spread among people as chase and counter-chase between the two groups continued for about an hour, witnesses said.

Some 15 people were injured during the clashes as leaders and activists of the rival groups used hockey sticks and traded brickbats and stones.

Later riot police and Rapid Action Battalion brought the situation under control. Police patrol has been increased as a tense situation is prevailing on the college campus and in Thakurgaon town.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/05/front.html#3>

### **Three killed in clash during blockade**

*Pickets try to besiege president's village home*

Staff Correspondent

A fierce gunfight between the activists of Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party resulted in the death of at least three persons and injured 50, including five policemen, at Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar during the countrywide blockade that paralysed normal life and hampered business activities for the second consecutive day on Monday.

Over 50 people were also injured in clashes between the pro- and anti-blockade elements in Jessore and Jamalpur. However, there were no incidents of violence elsewhere in the country on Monday.

The capital remained cut off from the other parts of the country for the second day of the fourth phase of the blockade enforced by the Awami League-led combine, whose demands include resignation of president Iajuddin Ahmed from the post chief advisor, electoral reforms including updating of the voters' list, removal of controversial persons from the Election Commission and cancellation of the polls schedule.

Chittagong and Mongla seaports and Benapole, Sonamasjid, Hili and Burimari land-ports were inoperative for the second consecutive day.

Ferry service on the Paturia-Daulatdia and Mawa-Charjanajat routes was forced to come to a halt, and the pro-blockade picketers stopped a number of trains at Rajshahi, Nilphamari and Khulna stations, disrupting train communications in the western part of the country.

In Cox's Bazar, police and witnesses said that a band of armed men, reportedly led by local BNP leader Nurul Islam came to Kalarmarchara Bazaar from Chittagong in the morning and attacked and damaged shops of Osman Gani, ex-chairman of local union parishad and a relative of local Awami League leader Syed Noor at about 10:00am.

After getting news of the incident, the followers of Noor reached the spot with lethal weapons and a fierce fight erupted there.

Both the groups used sticks, rods, daos and firearms, including rifles, during the fight that continued till 2:00pm. Two Juba Dal activists, Joynal and Gani, were stabbed and Juba League activist Mozammel was shot during the fight.

The three casualties were identified as Juba Dal activist Joynal Abedin, 28, son of late Bazal Ahmed, and Abdul Gani, 27, son of Nurul Islam, and Juba League activist Mozammel Hoque, 28, of Mohammad Shaghona village under Kalarmarchara union. All of them died on the way to the hospital.

On receipt of the information, the Moheshkhali police went to the spot and tried to stop the clash by standing between the feuding groups, but the fight continued and more than 50 people, including

five policemen, were injured.

They were admitted to hospitals in Moheskhalia and Cox's Bazar and the Chittagong Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Aminul Islam, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, admitted that three persons had died.

Local people alleged that the BNP activists had damaged several hundred houses of AL activists after the 2001 national election, forcing them to leave the area. They returned to their homes after the caretaker government assumed office on October 29.

In the capital the pro-blockade picketers took to the streets at different places including Bangabandhu Avenue, Russell Square, Mirpur, Shyamoli, Mohakhali, Uttara, Badda, Nabisco crossing, Moghbazar and Jatrabari since the morning.

The picketers in Purana Paltan, Mukhtangan, Zero Point, Gulistan and Bangabandhu Avenue were in a festive mood, and artistes sang and danced and staged dramas to keep the picketers on the streets.

The artistes sang revolutionary and patriotic songs to attract the audiences.

The leaders at the rallies demanded complete reconstitution of the Election Commission and cancellation of the announced election schedule.

The blockade will be continued until the demands are fulfilled, said Awami League presidium member Motia Chowdhury at the Nari Mancha rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh, a faction of the Jatiya Party, Liberal Democratic Party, Zaker Party and Ganamukti Andolon held separate rallies and processions.

Hundreds of political activists from different parts of the capital carrying colourful banners and placards took part in the protest programmes.

The examinations of all the education institutes and movement of the Hajj pilgrims were kept out of the blockade's purview, so there were far more vehicles on the roads than there were on the first day of the fresh spell of blockade. Shops at different places were also found open on Monday.

In Munshiganj the Awami League activists tried to besiege the village home of President Iajuddin Ahmed at Nayapara on Monday, demanding that he step down as chief adviser to the caretaker government.

The police intercepted the activists so they blocked the Munshiganj-Mukhtarpur road. They held a meeting on the road and staged demonstrations.

In Jessore, at least 20 people were injured in a clash between the Awami League and BNP activists at Sharsha upazila headquarters.

The clash erupted when the pro-blockade picketers tried to vandalise a vehicle in the upazila headquarters on Monday morning, and continued for about 2 hours.

The police managed to bring the situation under control later. The injured were rushed to different hospitals and clinics.

In Jamalpur a clash between activists of the BNP and Awami League left at least 30 people injured at Melandah Bazaar in the morning. The injured were admitted to the local health complex.

In Netrakona, the pro-blockade picketers damaged a number of boats anchored at Kalmakanda in the morning.

The plying of riverine vessels was also halted at Narsingdi during the blockade.

No incidents of violence were reported from Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Sirajganj, Pabna, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Natore, Jhenaidah, Kushtia, Patuakhali, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi, Comilla and Noakhali by New Age correspondents.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/11/front.html#e2>

**Army deployment unjust: Hasina**

Bdnews24.com . Dhaka

The Awami League president, Sheikh Hasina, Sunday described president Iajuddin Ahmed's unilateral decision to roll out army as unjust and unconstitutional.



'The situation was not grave enough to deploy army. What the president has done is unjust. He has violated the constitution,' Hasina, the 14-party alliance chief, told a press conference at her Dhanmondi office.

She warned that Iajuddin would be 'tried in future' for the callout, which means people would confront him.

She however did not demand pullout of the army.

'It's army's duty to guard the country, not thieves,' she said.

'If you arrest terrorists and corrupt people, and seize illegal arms, people would appreciate you. But they will take note of it, if you guard the thieves,' she said, accusing the BNP-led coalition of siphoning billions off state coffers during its five-year rule.

The alliance has made it clear that it will contest the upcoming general election if advisers' proposals are fully implemented and the voter list is corrected and updated.

'We want a free and fair election. We have adequate preparation for the polls,' she said.

Hasina was critical of the flawed voter list. 'We have asked our activists to find out fake names and include all eligible voters,' she said.

On Bangabhaban siege, she said, 'The army has already besieged the president. People don't need to do that anymore.'

'Let's see for how many days he (the President) can save himself—guarded by the army.'

She said her alliance would demonstrate in all districts and upazilas Tuesday to demand full implementation of advisers' proposals.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/12/front.html#12>

## **AL-led alliance wants Iajuddin to quit CA post**

Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led alliance on Monday reiterated its demand that the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, must relinquish the post of chief adviser and appoint a new one as per the constitution to ensure a fair and credible election.

The alliance leaders termed the president as the main obstacle in the way of a free and fair election, and accused him of serving the purpose of the BNP-Jamaat alliance for sending them back to state power.

'The president's address to the nation was a blatant falsehood, illogical and intentional to misguide the people,' the alliance coordinator and AL general secretary, Abdul Jalil, said at a press briefing at the party chief's Dhanmondi office.

A fair election was impossible under the supervision of a 'partisan person,' he warned.

Jalil said that the speech of the president reflected the statements of BNP chairperson attacking the agitating political parties.

Accusing the chief advisor of failing to take decision collectively according to the constitution, he said that the president always took decision following the directives from the Hawa Bhaban ignoring the opinions of the advisory council and resulting in the resignation of the four advisers.

'We congratulate the advisers who resigned from the advisory council being guided by their conscience,' said Jalil.

He also accused the president of deploying army defying the opinion of the advisers and said that the president was trying to make the armed forces controversial.

He hoped that the army would not engage in serving the purpose of any quarter.

Expressing the optimism to participate in the election after implementation of the package deal agreed by the advisory council, Jalil urged the people to make the countrywide demonstration schedule for today a success.

The AL president, Sheikh Hasina on Sunday announced the agitation programmes and rallies at the upazila and district headquarters across the country demanding implementation of the package deal.

In the capital, the demonstration will be held at the Muktangan at 3:00 pm.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/19/front.html#1>

## **AL, allies give 24-hour ultimatum to implement package proposal**

*Dawn-to-dusk hartal on Dec 21*

Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina, president of Awami League, on Monday gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the President and chief adviser to the caretaker administration, Iajuddin Ahmed to implement the 'package deal' that Iajuddin himself offered to ensure a free, fair and credible election.



'We demand an answer by 24 hours. We want a free and fair election, but our stand is clear — election cannot be held according to the existing schedule announced by the Election Commission,' said Hasina while addressing a grand rally organised by the AL-led alliance at Paltan Maidan.

The caretaker government on December 4 offered a package deal which included arrangement for sending two controversial election commissioners on leave, appointing another election commissioner to take charge of the commission, making some changes in the already-announced election schedule, and transferring some government secretaries.

The caretaker administration implemented some of the proposals and backtracked from implementing others, particularly the one regarding recasting of the commission.

Hasina, vowing to not participate in the polls before proper updating of the voters' list and reconstitution of the Election Commission, demanded that the rough voters' list be hung at the district and upazila offices so that it can be checked by the people before the final list is printed.

She also announced a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on December 21, the last date of submitting nomination forms for the upcoming general elections that is scheduled for 22 January.

The EC shifted the election to January 22 on Monday from the earlier date of January 23 due to Saraswati Puja.

The rally was also addressed by the former president and Jatiya Party chairman, HM Ershad, and another former president and presently head of the Liberal Democratic Party, AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Hasina urged the people to vote for the AL-led 'grand alliance' so that the country can be developed and governed in line with the spirit of the liberation war.

Earlier, Hasina accused President Iajuddin Ahmed and the immediate past government of Khaleda Zia of repeatedly ignoring her proposal for electoral reforms.

'We submitted reform proposals but the BNP government told us to place them in the parliament. When we did so they proposed a dialogue and we agreed, but the BNP backtracked,' she said, adding that Iajuddin also withdrew the package deal when the AL-led alliance accepted it.

She termed the dubious role of the BNP and the caretaker chief as a conspiracy to implement the blueprint of election-engineering drawn by the BNP-Jamaat axis.

Hasina also warned the caretaker administration to not play games with the election, saying that the people of the country would not accept such an election.

She urged the party-men to seek voters' lists from the election offices in their areas and file cases



against the officials individually if they do not provide the lists.

She also demanded transparent ballot boxes and voters' identity cards.

Accusing the BNP-Jamaat alliance of looting a huge amount of money, Hasina assured the people that they would reclaim the money from the 'robbers' and distribute it to the people if voted to power in the next polls.

She said that the people were now united in a grand alliance and would not accept a rigged election or one in which the other parties did not participate.

Addressing the rally, Jatiya Party's chairman, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, said that he had been repeatedly threatened that he would be sent to jail for his stance against the four-party alliance.

He also alleged that the case in which he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment was revived hurriedly with the intention of stopping him from competing in the election.

The Liberation Democratic Party's president, AQM Badruddoza Chowdury accused Iajuddin of trying to bring back the BNP-Jamaat alliance to power through a false and farcical election.

Tofail Ahmed, AL's presidium member, said their demands would be materialised through movement. He said that the whole nation is now united against the Khaleda-Nizami clique.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers Party of Bangladesh, said that the problems of the poor people should be resolved by rooting out terrorism and corruption from the country.

Several thousand leaders and activists started to gather at the Paltan Maidan before midday with colourful banners and placards and filled up the ground by 3:00pm.

There were so many people that they could not be accommodated in Paltan, and so had to gather in adjacent places like Bangabandhu Avenue, GPO, Motijheel and areas near Gulistan and the Press Club.

They also chanted various slogans against the caretaker chief and BNP-Jamaat alliance and in favour of probable candidates of their respective localities with the portraits of the candidates and the facsimiles of boats.

The cultural wings of the alliance sang songs on the dais from the morning, which turned the rally's venue into a festive zone.

The rally was also addressed by, among others, AL presidium members Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, general secretary Abdul Jalil, Jatiya Party presidium member Kazi Zafar and secretary-general ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, JSD president Hasanul Huq Inu, Samyabadi Dal general secretary Dilip Barua, Zaker Party president Mostafa Amir

Faisal, Gana Forum presidium member Zahirul Islam, Ganatantri Party president Mohammad Nurul Islam, Gana Azadi League president Abdus Samad, National Awami Party general secretary Enamul Huq, Ganatantrik Mojdur Party general secretary Zakir Hossain, Communist Kendra joint convenor Asit Baran Roy were present, among others.

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-19T142513Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-280775-1.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-12-19T142513Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-280775-1.xml&archived=False)

## **Thousands flock to Bangladesh leader Khaleda's rally**

Tue Dec 19, 2006 2:32 PM IST

DHAKA (Reuters) - Tens of thousands people streamed into the Bangladeshi capital on Tuesday in a show of support for former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia a day after her bitter rival threatened to boycott elections next month.

Khaleda who has repeatedly accused her opponent Sheikh Hasina, also a former prime minister, of trying to sabotage the election set for January 22 was expected to spell out her stand at one of the biggest rallies in Dhaka in recent weeks.

"We are going to arrange a much bigger rally to demonstrate Khaleda's huge popularity and to send a signal to the opposition that we still command the field," said Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, a leader of Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The elite Rapid Action Battalion force guarded the Paltan public ground as thousands of Khaleda supporters arrived in buses and trains, many carrying banners and portraits of the leader.

The runup to the polls has been violent and tense with rival activists clashing almost daily. At least 44 people have been killed and hundreds injured since late October in protests over electoral reforms.

Hasina who leads the Awami League told a crowd of about 100,000 people on Monday that she would boycott the elections unless reforms were carried out to ensure a free and fair poll.

Hasina and her allies have been demanding the removal of elections officials she accuses of a bias towards Khaleda's party and an overhaul of the voters list.

She has also been demanding that President Iajuddin Ahmed resign as chief of the caretaker authority charged to hold elections for failing to show impartiality.

Khaleda who stepped down in October after her five-year-term ended has insisted the election must be held within the stipulated time to save the country from a constitutional crisis.

The two women are the main contenders in the coming polls, after they had alternated as prime ministers of the impoverished country for the last 15 years.

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<http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=DHA68873&WTmodLoc=World-R5-Alertnet-5>

## **One dead in Bangladesh clashes ahead of strike**

Wed 20 Dec 2006 14:02:40 GMT

DHAKA, Dec 20 (Reuters) - One person was killed and 20 were injured in a clash between rival political activists in Bangladesh on Wednesday, a day before a nationwide strike called to demand electoral reforms for upcoming polls.

Tension has been rising ahead of the Jan. 22 parliamentary elections with a multi-party alliance threatening to boycott the polls unless its demands to reform the Election Commission and more time for campaigning are met.

On Wednesday, activists from the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Awami League hurled sticks and stones at each other at Shaikupa 250 km (156 miles) west of Dhaka, killing one man. Police used batons to end the violence. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, who heads the

14-party alliance, has urged supporters to enforce Thursday's nationwide strike.

The country is being run by a caretaker government after BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia ended her five-year term as prime minister in October.

Hasina accuses the country's president and head of the interim authority, Iajuddin Ahmed, of favouring Khaleda to ensure she wins the election and has demanded the president step aside. The interim government is charged with organising the polls.

A 10-member council of advisers headed by Ahmed met on Wednesday and said the poll date of Jan. 22 remained unchanged, said Adviser Mahbubul Alam, in charge of the information ministry.

"The caretaker government calls upon all political parties to accept the new schedule and participate in the election," Alam told reporters after the meeting.

The Awami League has rejected the call and the poll schedule.

"We will lay an indefinite siege on the presidential palace, if demands are not met by Thursday," Obaidul Quader, a senior Awami League official, told reporters.

At least 45 people have been killed and hundreds injured since late October in protests over electoral reforms. Hasina has called for some election officials to be removed, accusing them of being biased.

The advisers asked one of the disputed officials to go on leave during the elections, Alam said without giving details. He said enrolment of voters would continue until Jan. 21.

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[http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2006-12-21T101047Z\\_01\\_DHA135687\\_RTRUKOC\\_0\\_US-BANGLADESH.xml&WTmodLoc=IntNewsHome\\_C2\\_worldNews-6](http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2006-12-21T101047Z_01_DHA135687_RTRUKOC_0_US-BANGLADESH.xml&WTmodLoc=IntNewsHome_C2_worldNews-6)

## **Army steps in as Bangladesh strike turns violent**

Thu Dec 21, 2006 5:11 AM ET

By Anis Ahmed

DHAKA (Reuters) - Troops and riot police fought pitched battles with protesters on Thursday as a strike aimed at forcing electoral reforms in Bangladesh turned violent.

Witnesses said at least 25 people were wounded in the clashes that broke out in several areas of the capital, Dhaka, which is largely paralyzed by the strike that has also affected business and transport across the country.

The protest was called by a 14-party alliance, led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, to force the interim government to implement reforms ahead of a general election set for next month.

In Dhaka, troops in armored cars patrolled the streets, chasing down protesters and rounding them up. Police also fired tear gas and rubber bullets at activists who had set a police car ablaze in the Shyamoli residential area, witnesses said.

The interim government had put the army on stand-by earlier this month, despite criticism by the Hasina-led alliance.

"They (army) are out in full force ... (they) chased away violent activists, training guns at them," a Reuters cameraman said.

Outside the capital, activists damaged more than 50 vehicles and rickshaws, halted trains, barricaded highways and at least 100 people were injured in fighting between rival groups, local officials and witnesses said.

The country's main seaport, Chittagong, and trading-post towns on the borders with India and Myanmar stood idle, while schools, universities and two stock exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong were closed.

## RIVALS TRADE CHARGES

Mohammad Nasim, a senior Awami leader and former home (interior) minister, urged the interim government not to use the army to suppress people's democratic rights and privileges.

"Our army is a patriotic force, defends the country and works to establish peace world over. Do not pitch them against people fighting for democracy and rights," Nasim told a protest rally.

The disputed election is set for January 22, but Hasina has asked for a delay to allow time for campaigning and to prepare a "flawless" voters list as well as issue voter identity cards.

Hasina's alliance also wants President Iajuddin Ahmed, head of the caretaker government, to resign, accusing him of bias.

"A congenial atmosphere for a free and fair election does not exist in the country now," Hasina told European Union officials in Dhaka.

On Wednesday, Hasina rejected as insufficient a government move to give a holiday to one election commissioner, who is among several she accuses of being biased toward her rival Begum Khaleda Zia.

Khaleda Zia, who ended her five-year term as prime minister in October and handed power to the interim authority, rejects any delay in the election date. She accuses Hasina of "plotting to push the country into a constitutional crisis, destroy democracy and ruin the economy".

The run-up to the polls has been marred by violence, with at least 45 people killed and hundreds injured in clashes between political rivals since late October.

(Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed)

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[http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/7598\\_1875190,000500020001.htm](http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/7598_1875190,000500020001.htm)

## **Bangladesh police clash with protesters**

**Associated Press**

Dhaka, December 21, 2006|11:56 IST

Riot police dispersed thousands of protesters who smashed vehicles during a general strike held on Thursday to force electoral reforms before next month's elections.

Several people were injured during the violence in two of Dhaka's districts, according to an agency reporter.

Police swung batons when the demonstrators attacked buses for defying the shutdown.

The dawn-to-dusk strike halted most traffic and shut down stores and schools in Dhaka, the capital city of 10 million people.

Similar disruptions have been reported in more than 50 other cities and towns.

More than 7,000 security forces have been ordered onto the streets of the capital, Dhaka, to prevent violence, Dhaka Metropolitan Police said.

Extra police will be deployed in more than 60 other cities and towns.

A 14-party alliance, led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, organised the strike despite efforts by the interim government to defuse a crippling standoff over the polls.

The protest has been supported by the parties of two former presidents, Hossain Mohammad Ershad and Badruddoza Chowdhury.

On Wednesday, the Election Commission announced that candidates would have three more days — until Sunday — to file to participate in the January 22 election.

The alliance rejected the move. "The changes are not enough to create an atmosphere for free and fair elections," said Abdul Jalil, a spokesman for the alliance, which is demanding a delay in the election date.

To meet an alliance demand, the country's interim government said Wednesday it would ask a controversial election official take a leave of absence.

Government spokesman Mahbubul Alam also said the Election Commission would be asked to correct a flawed voter list — another key opposition demand.

Hasina has threatened to oppose the elections unless the alliance's demands are met.

She also has urged President Iajuddin Ahmed to resign as the country's interim leader, claiming he is controlled from behind the scenes by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Zia and Hasina are longtime adversaries, holding power alternatively since democracy was restored in 1991 after 16 years of autocratic rule.

Impoverished Bangladesh has been repeatedly paralysed over the past two months by protests demanding electoral reforms.

Demonstrations and clashes have left more than 30 dead and scores injured.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/22/front.html#e>

## **Stray clashes mark hartal**

*Vehicles damaged, trains halted, Mirza Jalil,*

*15 others detained in city*

Staff Correspondent

Stray incidents of clashes between the lawmen and demonstrators at different places in the capital and elsewhere in the country marked the daylong hartal enforced by the Awami League-led 'grand alliance' on Thursday.

Army troops also briefly joined the police in action against protesters at Shyamoli areas of the capital city and patrolled the city streets all day.

Demonstrators attacked and damaged a number of transports, set fire to some of the vehicles and halted trains at different stations.

The police picked up at least 16 people from different points of the capital during the shutdown.

The Awami League and its allies enforced the hartal to press home their demands for proper update of the electoral roll, deferment of the polls date and recasting of the Election Commission to ensure a free, fair and credible parliamentary election.

In the capital, the police swung into action at different places including Shyamoli, Mirpur, Jatrabari and Karwan Bazar to disperse protesters in the morning.

At Shyamoli, the police and demonstrators locked in clashes when the lawmen intercepted a procession led by Krishak League president Mirza Abdul Jalil in front of Shyamoli cinema at about 11:30am.

Angry protesters damaged several vehicles and set fire to a truck requisitioned by the police for transporting forces during the clash.

The police fought stone-throwing protesters using tear gas and firing rubber bullets leaving more than 20 people injured.

Demonstrators also prevented the fire service from reaching the spot and three firemen, Helaluddin, Asad and Razzak, were injured after being hit with stones thrown by pickets.

The police detained eight people including Mirza Jalil, a former bureaucrat turned politician, from the spot.

During the clash, army troops quickly appeared on the scene and joined the police in action against the protesters chasing the crowds up to Adabar.



Pickets also damaged a number of private transports at Mirpur, Pallabi, Arambagh, Karwan Bazar, Jatrabari, Mohakhali, Uttara and Malibagh during the shutdown. The alliance held rallies at Mohakhali, Bangabandhu Avenue, Russell Square, Maghbazsar, Abdullahpur, Jatrabari, Pallabi and Tejgaon.

Speakers at the rallies demanded immediate implementation of the entire package proposal offered by the caretaker government, saying that the latter's claim that the package had been implemented 100 per cent was a bluff.

They vowed to realise the demands through tougher action programmes like indefinite blockades.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) and its youth front Jatiya Juba Sanghati, and Islamic Front Bangladesh also brought out processions and held separate rallies at different points in Paltan area.

The authorities deployed 9,000 law enforcers in the capital to avert troubles during the hartal.

Vehicles stayed off roads in the capital. A few public transports plied the VIP road from the airport to Shahbagh. Some CNG-driven three-wheelers were seen plying the roads while rickshaws occupied most of the city streets.

The capital Dhaka was virtually cut off from the rest of the country as inter-city buses did not ply and trains were halted in a few places across the country except in the Chittagong Division.

Schools, shops and business establishments, including the two stock exchanges, remained closed. Banks, however, operated on a limited scale.

Activities at Chittagong and Mongla seaports remained almost normal but transport of goods to and from the ports were affected.

In Chittagong, pickets damaged at least 10 vehicles in different areas of the port city.

The railway sources said all inter-city and mail trains left Chittagong railway station on schedule. Shah Amanat International Airport sources reported no changes in their scheduled flights.

In Barisal, demonstrators damaged a number of vehicles, including rickshaws in different parts of the city while motor vehicles stayed off roads. Ferry services were almost normal.

Activists of JCD and Chhatra Shibir chased BCL activists on the campus of Barisal Polytechnic Institute.

In Sylhet city, activists of the AL-led alliance occupied the main streets and staged demonstrations all day. Activists of the LDP and Jatiya Party (Ershad) also joined protesters.

At least 15 people were injured, two of them seriously, in a clash between the activists of BNP and AL at Bishwanath upazila headquarters in the morning.

In the afternoon, the activists of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami swooped on the activists of Jatiya Party leaving 15 of them injured in Surma Market area.

Clashes between pro-hartal pickets, lawmen and activists of the BNP-led alliance were also reported from Munshiganj, Patuakhali and Netrakona. At least 40 people were injured in the clashes, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

According to reports, demonstrators halted a number of trains at different places including Mymensingh, Nilphamari, Rajshahi and Iswardi in Pabna disrupting railway communications all day.

No untoward incidents were reported from anywhere in Khulna, Rajshahi, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Jessore, Kushtia, Jhenaidah and Narsingdi.

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<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200612262069.htm>

## **Dozens hurt in Bangladesh pre-poll violence**



Dhaka, Dec. 26 (PTI): Riot police fired rubber bullets and lobbed tear gas shells at rival political activists who faced-off here today leaving dozens injured as hundreds of candidates filed nomination papers for the January 22 general elections in Bangladesh.

The activists attacked each other with bamboo sticks, hurled stones, smashed cars and torched a motorbike, prompting police to fire rubber-bullets to stop the nearly hour-long violence at the election office in central Dhaka as the election commission's final deadline for filing of nominations expired today.

Police and eyewitnesses said the clash erupted as media tycoon Mosaddek Ali of ex-Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Haji Selim of former premier Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League arrived near-simultaneously to file nomination papers with a large number of drum-beating and sloganeering supporters in tow.

Television channels reported similar clashes in northern Netrokona and Natore districts where, according to police, another 58 people were wounded in the pre-poll clashes.

The AL-led "mega alliance" and BNP-led four-party today finalised decisions on seat-sharing following Sheikh Hasina's decision to join the polls after protracted street protests.

The Awami League combine has accused the interim government of President Iajuddin Ahmed of rigging the polls.

Under the seat sharing, Sheikh Hasina would contest from four constituencies while her crucial allies, former military ruler Hussain Muhammad Ershad of Jatiya Party is to vie for five seats and ex-president Badruddoza Chowdhury of Liberal Democratic Party will compete for two seats.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/27/front.html#e3>

## **Over 250 hurt in clashes in Dhaka, elsewhere**

Staff Correspondent

More than 250 people were injured, about 10 of whom were shot, among the supporters of different political parties while submitting nomination forms in the capital and elsewhere in the country on Tuesday.

A number of motor vehicles were damaged or torched and shops vandalised during the clashes.

In the capital, the areas surrounding the divisional commissioner's office at Segun Bagicha turned into a battlefield when supporters of Dhaka City mayor-cum-BNP Dhaka city unit's president Sadeq Hossain Khoka and Awami League candidate Haji Mohammad Selim clashed at about 1:30pm.

Both the aspirants were in the office of the divisional commissioner where they had gone to submit their nomination papers.

The clashing groups chased each other, pelted each other with brickbats and damaged a number of vehicles, including one belonging to Bangla Vision, a private television network. They torched a motorbike of a Naya Diganta photo-journalist, Nasim Sikder.

The wayside shops were damaged and goods were looted or damaged during the incident.

Some shop-owners claimed that their money was looted during the vandalism.

A total of 92 people were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and eight of them were admitted because of serious injuries, said hospital sources.

The police lathi-charged the unruly supporters and then lobbed teargas shells to bring the situation under control at about 2:00pm.

In the meantime, another procession of an Awami League candidate, Sayeed Khokan, reached the divisional commissioner's office. The police escorted Khoka's supporters out of the place.

No one was arrested during the clashes, said the Ramna police.

In Netrakona, at least 25 AL activists were injured at Purbadhala (Netrakona-5 constituency)



upazila headquarters in an attack, allegedly by BNP activists, at noon.

Those who were attacked were in a procession, in support of AL candidate Waresat Hossain Belal, which was going to the upazila nirbahi officer's office to submit his nomination form.

Another clash between the AL's and BNP's supporters at Madan upazila headquarters left at least 10 people injured. The local AL office and some shops were also ransacked during the clash, said the locals.

In Natore, at least eight persons were shot and seven injured when an AL procession came under attack, allegedly by armed BNP thugs, in Kalurmore at around noon.

In Chuadanga, at least 80 activists of two rival groups of BNP were injured in a clash that erupted when two contenders at Damurhuda were going to submit nomination forms on Tuesday.

About 50 vehicles were damaged during the clash between supporters of BNP district president Mozammel Haq and Damurhuda pourasava vice-president Aktarul Islam.

They chased each other with brickbats and sticks. The clash continued for five hours, leaving 80 activists of both sides injured.

In Comilla, at least 18 people, including a police sub-inspector, were injured in a clash between rival groups of the Awami League at Barura upazila.

Police said the clash took place when the supporters of AL leader Nasimul Alam Chowdhury Nazrul and AL rebel candidate Abdul Hakim came face to face at Barura jute market.

In another incident, about 25 people were injured as Jamaat and Shibir activists allegedly attacked the supporters of former prime minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, a candidate of the Awami League-led grand alliance.

The attackers also damaged four buses carrying the supporters of Kazi Zafar to the election office.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/28/front.html#4>

## **50 injured in clashes over nomination, protests on**

Staff Correspondent

Supporters of disgruntled and rival candidates of both the BNP-led combine and Awami League-led alliance on Wednesday locked in clashes in various areas across the country leaving at least 50 people injured.

Supporters of unsuccessful nomination-seekers as well as party workers aggrieved at some nominations also enforced half-day hartals in Barisal, Mymensingh, and Rajshahi while the local administration of Baniachang upazila in Habiganj district imposed Section 144, a ban on gathering of more than four persons, in the town apprehending electoral violence.

In Rajshahi, local AL units enforced half-day hartals in Bagha and Charghat upazilas to press home their demand for cancelling the candidacy of AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, Rajshahi city AL secretary, for Rajshahi-5 (Bagha-Charghat) constituency.

Motorised vehicles did not ply on any route and educational institutions and shops remained closed during the hartal hours.

In Barisal, supporters of BNP central committee member Joynal Abedin called an indefinite hartal in Muladi and Hizla upazilas (Barisal-3) demanding his nomination as the party candidate for the constituency. The general strike was still in force as of Wednesday evening.

In Mymensingh, some activists of both the alliances observed half-day hartal in Haluaghat upazila (Mymensingh-1) as their favourite leaders did not get their party tickets for the January-22 polls.

In Habiganj, supporters of two nomination-seekers from the BNP-led alliance, Sakhawat Hasan Jibon and Mosharraf Ahmed Thakur, had announced to hold separate meetings at the same venue, on the Shaheed Minar premises in Baniachang upazila (Habiganj-2), in the morning. The upazila



administration, however, imposed Section 144 on the area to avert any violence.

In Jessore, supporters of TS Ayub, a BNP leader and aspirant candidate for Jessore-4, blocked the Bagharpara-Dhaka highway for about half an hour protesting the party's refusal to nominate him as its candidate for the constituency.

Also in Jessore, followers of Moniraqmpur upazila BNP president Shahid Iqbal damaged a car of former lawmaker Mufti Maulana Wakkas, the BNP-led alliance's nominated candidate for Jessore-5.

In Khulna, supporters of two rival aspirant candidates of the BNP-led line-up, Azizul Bari Helal and Khulna district BNP president Mazedul Islam, locked horn with each other at Bot-tala in Rupsha upazila leaving at least 10 people wounded.

Ten shops were ransacked and two motorbikes set on fire during the clash in the evening.

In the same evening, at least 20 BNP activists were injured in a factional clash over nomination in Narsingdi.

According to witnesses, the skirmishing began when two separate processions — one in support of BNP secretary-general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and the other of former lawmaker Khairul Kabir Khokan, came face to face at the town bus stand at about 5pm. Both the leaders have filed nomination papers as contestants in the election for Narsingdi-1.

The warring sides chased each other, pelted brickbats, and beat each other with sticks, leaving about 20 people injured. Most of them were admitted to the Narsingdi Sadar Hospital and the rest received treatment at various local clinics.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/29/front.html#4>

## **AL, BNP review nominations under pressure**

Staff Correspondent

Major political parties including BNP and Awami League continued to change nominations for certain constituencies amid pressures and agitations from within.

Followers of potential candidates, who felt offended by the final nominations, took to the streets demanding review of the nominations and accommodation for dedicated leaders.

Both BNP and AL, leading two rival combines, are facing such pressures from various parts of the country, forcing the party high-commands to rethink the nominations that incorporated candidates from small allies at the cost of parties' local veterans.

Several hundred supporters of Muhibur Rahman, a Sylhet Awami League leader, have been demonstrating for four consecutive days in front of party president Sheikh Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence demanding his nomination for the Sylhet-2 constituency.

Hasina was reconsidering review of nominations for some constituencies including Dhaka-2, Chandpur-5 and Comilla-3 in the face of criticism and demonstrations, said a party source.

The BNP on Thursday confirmed nomination of party's joint secretary general Md Ashraf Hossain for the Khulna-3 constituency.

Ashraf claimed on Thursday at the local press club that the party nominated him to vie for the seat.

Earlier, Khulna mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman claimed that the party asked him to contest for Khulna-3.

A section of the BNP activists, however, burnt an effigy of Ashraf Hossain at Daulatpur area protesting his nomination.

A group of party activists also observed a six-hour hunger strike starting from 8:00am at Shaheed Hadis Park in the city demanding nomination of Majedul Islam for Khulna-4 (Rupsha-Terokhada-Digholia) constituency.



A section of BNP activists Thursday went berserk demanding that nomination be given to TS Ayub for the Jessore-4 constituency.

Several hundred leaders and workers blocked road and rail routes at Basundia in Sadar upazila for four hours from 12 noon.

Wearing shrouds around their heads, they took out processions and burned tyres and a motorcycle in areas stretching one km on Jessore-Khulna road and removed rail tracks that hampered train movement.

They also burnt the effigy of Omar Sadat, who is likely to get nomination for the Bagharpara-Abhoinagar constituency.

Mainuddin Bhuiyan, a presidium member of the Jatiya Party-led by HM Ershad, on Thursday joined BNP after getting assurance of nomination for the Narsingdi-5 constituency. He joined the party presenting a bouquet to its chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Banani office.

The Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish faction secretary general, Ahmed Abdul Kader, called on Khaleda demanding more sit for the Islamist party, a BNP source said.

A BNP faction has called a half-day hartal in Bandarban for today to protest against nomination of Saching Prue Jerry to contest the elections from the BNP-led alliance in Bandarban constituency.

The faction led by the district BNP president, Maa Ma Ching, announced the shutdown programme at a press conference at the local press club Thursday evening.

Protesters also burned the effigies of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Saching Prue Jerry and brought out a procession in the district town.

Awami League leaders at the Sylhet-6 constituency comprising Bianibazar and Golapganj upazilas condemned nomination of fundamentalist, Maulana Habibur Rahman of the Khelafat Majlish, for the constituency. 'Voters of the area will not accept a fundamentalist candidate to represent the constituency,' the Golapganj upazila Awami League president, Iqbal Ahmed Chowdhury, said at a press conference on Thursday.

The party's Bianibazar upazila unit president, Abdul Hasib, echoed Iqbal.

The Chapainawabganj district Jamaat-e-Islami amir, Rafiqul Islam, said at a press conference that the BNP-led alliance should nominate a Jamaat leader for at least one out of two constituencies there.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/30/front.html#4>

## **Jute mill workers in Khulna hold protest for fourth day**

Staff Correspondent . Khulna

The workers of the state-owned jute mills removed railway slippers and damaged hoardings and shops during a blockade of highway and railway in the industrial belts of Khalishpur, Daulatpur and Atra in Khulna on Friday, the fourth successive day of their programmes to push for their demands.

The mill workers under the banner of the Khulna-Jessore unit of the Jute, Yarn and Textile Workers and Employees' Action Council have been enforcing the non-stop blockade from December 26 to push for their eight-point charter of demands.

The demands include payment of all dues and festival bonus, reopening of the closed mills, abolition of all anti-labour laws and placement of sufficient funds by the government at the mills for the purchase of raw jute.

The mill workers removed some railway slippers at three points and set them on fire near Natun Rasta.

They damaged a number of hoardings at Khalishpur and Daulatpur where they also battered the shutters of many closed shops.

The mill workers barricaded nine kilometres of the Khulna-Jessore Highway from Baikali, disrupting traffic.

All types of transports stayed off the main road in the Khalishpur industrial belt and neighbouring

areas. No trains could leave the railway station.

Khulna-bound people had to suffer a lot as they had to walk down the nine-kilometre stretch or cross the stretch in rickshaws or rickshaw vans.

The workers said their Friday congregation prayer in Natun Rasta crossing and at the gate of the Alim Jute Mills in Atra industrial belt where they have been staging sit-in from Tuesday.

A number of labour leaders addressed the gatherings in Natun Rasta crossing and at Atra. Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, Md Shah Alam, Siddiqur Rahman, Azizur Rahman, Abdus Sattar and Abdul Malek were among the speakers.

All the eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna have been in a poor financial condition for several years.

The road blockade at Natun Rasta crossing and Atra continued till Friday evening..

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/dec/30/front.html#4>

## **AL, allies call countrywide blockade for Jan 7-8**

*Demand flawless voters' roll, resignation of CA, recasting of EC*  
Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led expanded alliance on Friday announced it would enforce a countrywide blockade during January 7-8 to press for proper update of the voters' roll and resignation of the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, from the post of the chief adviser to the caretaker administration to ensure a credible election.



'The voters' roll has not been updated properly and Iajuddin has completely failed to ensure a congenial atmosphere for polls. A countrywide blockade will be observed on January 7 and 8 to realise our demands for proper update of the electoral roll and resignation of Iajuddin as the chief adviser,' the AL president, Sheikh Hasina, said at a press conference of the alliance in the city's Radisson hotel.

She also demanded rescheduling of the elections, suspension of the activities of the Rapid Action Battalion till the day of ballot, withdrawal of army troops before Eid, implementation of the package deal by recasting the Election Commission, changes in the top posts of the intelligence agencies and reshuffle of the administration.

Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad, Liberal Democratic Party president Badruddoza Chowdhury, coordinator of the alliance and AL general secretary Abdul Jalil, Workers Party president Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal president, Hasanul Haq Inu, Zaker Party chairman Mostafa Ameer Faisal and senior leaders of the AL and left organisations were present, among others, at the press conference.

Hasina said that the voters' roll should be on display at least for 15 days at the Election Commission offices for correction before publishing the final list but the EC was yet to do it.

When asked whether the grand alliance would boycott the January 22 elections, Hasina said, 'we do not want to leave the field. We want to fight staying in the field.'

'Our alliance never announced that it would boycott polls, if he [Ershad] has announced boycott, it is up to him,' she said responding to a query as to what was the position of the alliance following the announcement of polls boycott by Ershad if his nomination papers were not declared valid.

Hasina, however, said that Ershad had already appealed against cancellation of his nominations which were now under the commission's consideration.

'We will say when time comes,' the AL president said when asked what the alliance would do if the elections were not rescheduled, the voters' roll was not updated and Ershad decided not to participate in the elections.

Hasina accused the government of cancelling the nomination papers of Ershad without following the rules and regulations and showing no proper ground. She also condemned attacks on the

residences and business organisations of LDP leaders and killing of AL leaders and activists across the country by the RAB.

The AL president said the caretaker government was helping the BNP-Jamaat alliance in their conspiracy for going to power through election engineering and added that a large number of fake voters had been included in the list while many eligible voters were left out.

‘The government is trying to steal the people’s votes and implementation of the election engineering ploy has entered its final stage after submission of nomination papers by the candidates of the grand alliance,’ she said adding that the chief adviser was still playing a partisan role.

She warned the caretaker administration that the AL-led alliance would go for an indefinite blockade of the Bangabhaban if the demands were not met.

Earlier, the leaders of the AL and its allies held separate meetings with Hasina and reviewed the present political situation and discussed further course of action to ensure a free, fair and credible election.

# En 2007

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[http://www.libertaddigital.com/noticias/noticia\\_1276296032.html](http://www.libertaddigital.com/noticias/noticia_1276296032.html)

## **CRECEN LAS PROTESTAS EN LA CALLE MIENTRAS LA UE PIDE NEGOCIAR**

### **(05-01-07) Dos bloques opositores se retiran de las elecciones presidenciales de Bangladesh denunciado fraude**

**Los dos principales bloques opositores de Bangladesh confirmaron que se retiran de la contienda presidencial a celebrarse el próximo veintidós de enero y anunciaron más protestas. Mientras, los representantes de la Unión Europea han instado a una solución negociada y piden a las partes que se abstengan de emplear la violencia.**

**LD (EFE)** La Comisión Europea, que tiene una delegación en Dhaka, expresó su preocupación por el "lamentable" desarrollo de los últimos acontecimientos en el país de cara a las elecciones presidenciales a celebrarse el próximo veintidós de enero. El jefe de la sección política, Charles Whiteley, denunció que "una gran parte de la población no tendrá la oportunidad de expresar su voluntad" democrática.

En declaraciones telefónicas desde Dhaka, Whiteley añadió que la Comisión está "observando muy cuidadosamente" la situación y se pronunciará el próximo día ocho sobre la continuidad de la misión de observación de las elecciones enviada a Bangladesh, que de momento consta de un equipo preliminar de once expertos.

La principal formación opositora, la Liga Awami, compuesta de catorce partidos opositores, retiró esta semana sus candidaturas para los comicios pues, en su opinión, no se han creado condiciones para su celebración en condiciones de igualdad, entre ellas una completa revisión del censo. Posteriormente, siete grupos de izquierda unidos en el bloque Ganomukti Andolo se sumaron a la coalición opositora en el boicot y anunciaron protestas tanto en Dhaka como por todo el país.

La Liga Awami tenía ya anunciado para los días siete y ocho un bloqueo total de la capital, así como de los puertos, aeropuertos y rutas terrestres de Bangladesh, una forma de protesta que ya ha empleado en los últimos tres meses de tensión desde que terminó la legislatura del anterior Gobierno, del Partido Nacionalista de Bangladesh (BNP).

De acuerdo con la Constitución, cuando expira el mandato de un Gobierno ha de formarse otro provisional y neutral encargado de organizar elecciones en un plazo máximo de tres meses. Pero la falta de consenso entre los dos grandes bloques políticos, que tienen una larga trayectoria de enfrentamiento, llevó al presidente del país, Iajudín Ahmed, a asumir él mismo la jefatura del Gobierno provisional, ayudado por una serie de "consejeros".

## **Three-day blockade begins today**

*Police slap ban on protests in capital*

Ofiul Hasnat and Bibhas Chandra Saha

The Awami League-led expanded alliance begins a three-day countrywide blockade this morning with the police slapping a ban, for an indefinite period, on any sorts of street agitation in Dhaka.

The alliance, which earlier announced a 48-hour blockade to push for the update of the voters' roll and resignation of the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, as chief adviser to the caretaker government, at a meeting on Saturday night extended the blockade duration by 24 hours to run to Tuesday to protest at the police clampdown on the alliance activists.

The alliance will also lay siege to president's office, Bangabhaban, on Tuesday and announce more agitation programmes at a rally in Paltan Maidan on January 10.

As in the previous clampdowns during the tenure political governments, the police on Friday began a blanket arrest of the alliance activists across the country to foil the agitations.

The police arrested more than 1,300 people in Dhaka alone in a couple of days, according to official counts.

But the alliance coordinator, Abdul Jalil, also the Awami League's general secretary, briefing newsmen after the meeting, said the police had detained more than 3,000 activists of the 'grand alliance.'

Jalil put out a call for the people to make the blockade successful, halting the transports to and from the capital and the communications between districts and upazilas, and the activities at land, river and sea ports.

Transport of Hajj pilgrims, examinations, ambulances, hospitals, press, chemists' and other emergency services will remain out of the purview of the blockade, he said.

The meeting also discussed the alliance's next course of actions and initially decided on another round of non-stop countrywide blockade from January 17 to the polling day on January 22 to force the government not to hold one-sided elections, sources attending the meeting said.

The Awami League president, Sheikh Hasina, who announced the 48-hour blockade at a briefing on December 29, would announce fresh programmes at the January 10 rally.

The leaders of the alliance, which on January 3 decided on the boycott of the ninth parliamentary polls scheduled for January 22 citing lack of an atmosphere conducive to fair and credible polls, warned of serious consequence if their demand for fair polls is not met.

The law enforcers have, meanwhile, been instructed to act sternly to keep law and order during the blockade, and in a press statement, the authorities imposed a ban for an indefinite period on any sort of processions, rallies and agitations in the city.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner, ABM Bazlur Rahman, imposed the ban, which the alliance leaders termed 'violation of democratic and fundamental rights.'

'We will not abide by the illegal instruction of the government,' said Jalil, who asked his deputies to defy the ban and take control of the streets.

The metropolitan police commissioner at a meeting with all the police officers of the city, including 33 officers-in-charge, in the Razarbagh Police Line auditorium on Saturday, asked them to take stern action against law breakers.

'You must be tough in maintaining order,' the city police commissioner reportedly told the meeting, police sources said.

The administration has deployed about 20,000 members of different law-enforcing agencies in the capital to strictly maintain order.

The law men include members of the Rapid Action Battalion, Armed Police Battalion, Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Ansars in addition to the police.

Besides, the plainclothes law men will also remain vigilant at different strategic points and

gatherings, said the sources, adding no 'unruly activity' will be tolerated. Army troops will also patrol the city during the blockade.

In the press statement, the police commissioner slapped an indefinite ban on staging rallies and demonstrations and bringing out processions with arms, explosives, sculls and oars, sickles and other potential arms in the capital from zero hours on Sunday.

'Different political parties have announced various protest programmes, including blockade, on January 7 and 8. Information has it that leaders and activists of some political parties might participate in the programme and carry sticks, sculls, oars and sickles, thus creating fear in the public mind, and it may hamper security in the capital,' said the commissioner in a notification on Saturday.

The order noted that the restrictions were imposed under Sections 28 and 29 of the DMP Ordinance for maintaining law and order, ensuring public security and protecting government establishments.

Earlier in later part of 2006, the alliance enforced blockades for 13 days in four phases — three days from October 28, four from November 12, four from November 20, and two from December 3 — demanding that the interim administration should create an atmosphere congenial to holding free, fair and credible elections by reconstituting the Election Commission, updating the 'faulty' voters' roll, and resignation of Iajuddin as the chief adviser.

Meanwhile, the AL and its allies have taken all-out preparations to make the blockade successful.

'We have completed all preparations to make the blockade a success and through it to force the government to reschedule the elections after ensuring a congenial atmosphere,' the AL general secretary and coordinator of the alliance, Abdul Jalil, told New Age on Saturday afternoon.

'Not only the rail-road-river communications will be snapped, every sector of the country including the maritime ports of Chittagong and Mongla will be paralysed during the blockade,' he declared.

The leaders of the alliance, meanwhile, have marked 29 spots in the city for gathering during the blockade. Those include Gabtali bus stand, Mirpur Section 10 roundabout, Mirpur Section 12 bus stand, Russell Square, Azampur, Kuril level crossing, Mahakhali, Maghbazar, Jurain level crossing, Jatrabari crossing, Dayaganj bus stand, Sadarghat, Nawabpur to Bahadur Shah Park, North South Road, Shapla Chattar, Noor Hossain Square, Shahbagh roundabout, Kamalapur Railway Station, Lalbagh Fort crossing, Farmgate crossing, Nabisco crossing at Tejgaon, Dainik Bangla crossing, in front of the Shyamali Cinema, Chawkbazar crossing, Badda crossing, Malibagh crossing, Nilkhet, Supreme Court gate, and Kanchpur Bridge.

Besides, leaders, activists and supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party will bring out protest processions and gather at Mouchak, Maghbazar and Bangla Motors at 9am, where they will hold pro- blockade rallies, and those of the Zaker Party will take position in the Golap Shah Shrine area.

Our Sylhet correspondent adds: The Awami League-led grand alliance brought out a truck procession and held rallies in the Sylhet city on Saturday afternoon to drum up support for January 7-8 countrywide blockade.

The city mayor, Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, along with senior leaders of the AL and its allies led the truck procession that started from the Ibrahim Smriti Parishad office at Chalibandar and paraded the city streets including those in north and south Surma areas.

The alliance leaders also held separates rallies at the Court Point, Muktijoddha Chattar, and in front of the Ibrahim Smriti Parishad after the procession.

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[http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/breaking\\_news/16400664.htm](http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/breaking_news/16400664.htm)

Posted on Sun, Jan. 07, 2007

## **Transport blockade begins in Bangladesh**

JULHAS ALAM



Associated Press

**DHAKA, Bangladesh** - Riot police used batons and fired tear gas Sunday to disperse thousands of stick-welding and stone-throwing protesters in the Bangladeshi capital who are demanding electoral reforms, witnesses and a news report said.

Several demonstrators were injured during the melee in Dhaka, Ruhin Hossain, a witness, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Thousands of police and soldiers were deployed in the Bangladeshi capital as a three-day transport blockade called by a major political alliance to force electoral reform began.

Schools and businesses were closed in Dhaka as the alliance staged street protests demanding voting reforms and a postponement of the Jan. 22 election.

Some 2,000 protesters demonstrated near the downtown headquarters of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, which spearheads the 19-party alliance that called the strike.

Transportation ground to a halt across Bangladesh early Sunday.

About 12,000 police and soldiers were deployed across the capital, where the 19-party political alliance plans to block roads and railways until Tuesday to isolate the city from the rest of the country.

Many feared a repeat of violence seen in previous protests. At least 34 people have been killed in demonstrations since October.

Protesters accuse the interim government in charge of organizing Jan. 22 elections of favoring their opponents, a four-party coalition led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The alliance wants the vote delayed until electoral reforms are complete, including the revision of a voter list. The group vowed not to let police halt their strike.

"If they try to stop us, we will continue our protests until the election day," said alliance spokesman Obaidul Qader.

The alliance accused police of detaining about 1,500 activists ahead of the planned protests. But a police Web site said it had detained about 600 people for various crimes.

Bangladesh has a history of political turmoil. Two presidents have been slain in military coups, and Hasina and Zia have traded premierships since the restoration of democracy in 1991.

## **50 injured in people-police clash in Bangladesh**

Dhaka, Jan 07: About 50 people were injured as police used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse stone-pelting protestors in Bangladesh, where former premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League-led alliance enforced a communication blockade on Sunday demanding electoral reforms and dismissal of caretaker government led by President Iajuddin Ahmed.

Army troops and other security personnel were out in force in capital Dhaka while military vehicles patrolled the streets mounting automatic weapons on the first day of the 72-hour nationwide siege called by the mega alliance.

About 50 people, including some policemen, were injured as riot police and elite rapid action battalion clashed with activists of the alliance who tried to stage protest marches defying a ban, media reports and witnesses said.

Shyamoli area in northern Dhaka appeared to be the scene of the day's worst violence where more than 30 activists and policemen were injured in clashes when police exhausted its stock of teargas canisters requiring reinforcement.

Police said they were forced to retaliate firing rubber bullets and tear gas as the activists threw stones.

The mega alliance is demanding the resignation of Ahmed as the head of the caretaker government and new election schedule after correcting the disputed voters' list scrapping the current schedule setting January 22 for the voting.

The initial two-day railway, waterway and road blockade was extended by another day late yesterday after President Ahmed put his foot down saying polls would be held as planned on January 22.

Bureau Report

## **Dhaka police clash with protesters demanding electoral reforms**

Dhaka, Jan. 7 (AP): Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas, and charged with batons on Sunday to disperse thousands of stick-wielding and stone-throwing protesters in the Bangladeshi capital demanding electoral reforms and a postponement of the Jan. 22 polls, police, witnesses and news reports said.

But the country's interim leader, President Iajuddin Ahmed, said he could not change the election date as it was mandated by the country's constitution.

Several protesters were injured during the melee in Dhaka, the ATN Bangla television station reported.

The station also said schools and businesses were shut and transportation across the country ground to a halt as a three-day transport blockade by supporters of the alliance led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started on Sunday.

Hasina's supporters said they planned to block roads and railways to isolate Dhaka from the rest of the country.

About 12,000 security forces have been deployed in the capital, amid fears of a repeat of the violence that has marred previous political protests and left at least 34 dead since October.

At least five small, homemade bombs were set off in the old part of Dhaka, NTV television said without providing further details. The report could not be confirmed immediately.

Sunday's clashes took place on Bangabandhu Avenue near the headquarters of Hasina's Awami League party \_ where about 2,000 people demonstrated \_ and spread to two nearby parts of the city, ATN Bangla said.

About a dozen protesters were seriously injured in the Dhanmondi area when police charged with batons, Ruhin Hossain, a witness, told The Associated Press by telephone from the scene.

Some of the protesters had tried to free other demonstrators who were being detained by police, he said.

Similar violence occurred in the nearby Shyamoli area, an AP photographer said from the scene. Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse protesters near the home of an Awami League leader, police official Kankan told The AP by telephone.

The official, who uses one name, said at least four policemen were wounded, and that security officials had detained more than 25 protesters in Shyamoli.

The AP photographer said he saw about a dozen police beating a protester in Shyamoli. ``I'll die, please don't beat me, I'll die," the photographer quoted the man as saying.

He said a huge contingent of troops had reached Shyamoli, but had not yet gone into action.

Troops also were patrolling outside Bangladesh Television in Dhaka's Rampura area, apparently guarding the state-run station.

The transportation blockade brought much of the country's logistics network to a halt on Sunday.

In the port city of Chittagong, 216 kilometers (135 miles) southeast of Dhaka, transportation of goods from the city's sea port ceased, port official Kamrul Islam told The AP.

Protests were also reported in the country's third largest city of Sylhet, 192 kilometers (120 miles) northeast of Dhaka.

``I'm committed to handing over power to an elected government through holding elections in time. I seek cooperation from all in protecting the constitution," Bangladeshi president Ahmed said in a statement late Saturday.

Under the constitution, the interim government has only 90 days to hold the elections. Ahmed took over as interim leader on Oct. 29 and his 90-day term expires on Jan. 25.

Hasina's alliance has said it will boycott the poll and has threatened to disrupt it, claiming the interim government favors its opponents – a four-party coalition led by Hasina's longtime political rival, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

It wants the ballot delayed until electoral reforms, including the revision of a voter list, are complete. It also wants Ahmed to step aside as the country's interim leader.

The Election Commission has said the polls will go ahead as scheduled, regardless of the boycott. Zia's alliance also said they would participate.

Bangladesh has a history of political turmoil. Two presidents have been slain in military coups, and Hasina and Zia have traded premierships since the restoration of democracy in 1991.

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[http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/printer\\_33235.shtml](http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/printer_33235.shtml)

## **10 vehicles burnt, 200 hurt on first day of blockade**

By Staff Reporter

Sun, 7 Jan 2007, 10:03:00

Disruption of public life, business, sporadic clashes, damage of vehicles and disruption of train services marked the first day of the fifth spell of non-stop siege programme called by Awami League-led grand alliance yesterday.

Army troops were seen on the streets to maintain peace, eyewitnesses said.

The grand alliance is pressing for their demand for removal of the Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government and bringing reforms in the electoral system.

Alliance activists damaged and burnt about 10 vehicles in different roads in the city and elsewhere in the country.

Army troops and policemen were seen using loudspeakers to warn people not to gather more than five persons together on the roads, eyewitnesses said.

About 200 alliance activists were injured across the country during the blockade hours and police arrested at least 20 persons in connection with vandalism, sources said.

As part of the 72-hour non-stop blockade programme, the pickets of the grand alliance tried to gather in 20 points in the city including-Mirpur, Russell Square, Sobhanbagh, Motijheel, Sayedabad, Jatrabari, Uttara, and Mohakhali, yesterday, but police foiled the gathering except at Bangabandhu Avenue and Noor Hossain Square.

Earlier, Dhaka Metropolitan Police banned all rallies, processions and demonstrations in the city for an indefinite period.

Police blocked all roads to the Bangabhaban with barbed-wire fences in a bid to control probable violence because of the alliance siege programme.

A number of buses and CNG auto-rickshaws and a large number of rickshaws plied in the city. Some small shops were also seen open in different areas and many schools were also remained open in the capital.

At least 20,000 members of law enforcing agencies including police, BDR, Armed Police Battalion (APBN), Ansar and riot police have been deployed in Dhaka city to maintain law and order.

At least 85 people were injured in separate clashes between grand alliance activists and police on the first day of the 72-hour blockade programme in Dhaka yesterday.

Members of the law enforcing agencies picked up some alliance activists, who were involved in vandalism during the blockade hours, in Adabar, Russell Square, Panthapath, Motijheel, Dhaka University and Badda, witnesses said.

At least 30 people, including police personnel, were injured during a clash between alliance activists and police in the city's Adabar areas at about 11:00am.

Police lobed teargas shells and fired rubber bullets to disperse the gathering.

At least 50 activists of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), including its Secretary General Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan, were injured in a clash between its activists and police at Moghbazar at about 12:30pm.

Police also arrested 10 LDP activists from the spot.

The clash started as police chased the procession at Moghbazar crossing and charged batons on the LDP activists, witnesses said. The LDP activists also retaliated by throwing brickbats at the police.

Another 10 people were injured in other places, including Lalbagh, where pickets exploded at least six handmade bombs, sources said.

Train communications were disrupted on different routes across the country.

Railway head office sources said rail communications were halted at various stations in Dhaka, Paksey and LImonirhat.

In Dhaka railway division, Kishoreganj-bound 11-Sindur Provati train from Dhaka was halted at Manikkhali station at about 7:15am, while train movement remained disrupted at Islampur Bazar Station from 7:30am.

Our Keraniganj Correspondent reports: About 35 people were injured when police and BDR charged batons on the activists of Awami League-led grand alliance activists at Kadamtali crossing in south Keraniganj.

Witnesses said police and BDR charged batons on the grand alliance activists at about 11:00am when they were demonstrating peacefully squatting on the highway on the south side of the 2nd Buriganga Bridge as part of the 72-hour countrywide blockade programme.

Our Sylhet Correspondent adds: The first day of the blockade programme enforced by grand alliance passed off peacefully. No traffic movement was seen during the blockade hours. Inter-district bus services and train movements were also disrupted.

Our Gazipur Correspondent reports: Agitated pickets set ablaze four vehicles and damaged several buses during Awami League-led grand alliance blockade programme at Chandra in Kaliakoir link road.

Local sources said a taxicab and a CNG-run three-wheeler were also set on fire at Tongi, while a number of buses were damaged at about noon in Tongi Station road areas.

Our Manikganj Correspondent adds: The first day of siege programme observed amid sporadic clashes between police and alliance pickets.

The clash occurred when police dispersed the alliance procession at about 11:00am, witnesses said.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/01/08/d7010801011.htm>

## **Blockaders fight with law enforcers on first day**

*Hundreds of rubber bullets, tear gas shells fired in Adabor in capital, cops beat up activists elsewhere; communication breaks down*

Staff Correspondent

More than 200 persons were injured as blockaders fought pitched battles with law enforcers in the capital and elsewhere yesterday on the first day of the three-day countrywide blockade called by Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance.

The blockade cut off the capital from the rest of the country.

Military vehicles mounted with automatic weapons patrolled the streets of the capital yesterday. The army and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members were seen guarding different strategic points in the city.

Several hundred army personnel were drawn together in Adabor after the area witnessed the worst clash of the day between grand alliance activists and police leaving around 50 injured.

### **Blockade exemptions**

The Awami League-led alliance said vehicles carrying Hajj pilgrims and journalists, ambulances, all exams and pharmacies will be outside the purview of the 72-hour blockade.

Besides, clashes and chases took place between the blockaders and police at Maghbazar, Russel Square, Matshya Bhaban crossing, Zero point, Tanti Bazar, Lalbagh, and Badda.

Police arrested 106 activists of the grand alliance in the city.

Pickets set fire to a private car and two buses, and damaged dozens of vehicles at different places in the city. Presence of motorised vehicles including buses was thin on the city streets.

Around 100 leaders of both AL-led grand alliance and BNP-led four-party alliance were injured in sporadic clashes in different places outside the capital as well.

Inter-district road communications were snapped as no inter-district bus operated. Rail communications were also halted at various stations in Dhaka, Pakshi, Lalmonirhat, and Daulatpur.

Activities at the country's premier seaport were also hampered due to the blockade. Loading and unloading took place partially but delivery of cargoes remained suspended.

## **ADABOR**

Around 50 people including policemen and journalists were injured during a four-hour clash that turned Baitul Aman Housing Society, PC Culture and Adabor areas in the capital into a big battle field.

The fighting erupted after police had charged batons and dispersed several hundred AL leaders and activists when they gathered in front of the house of a local AL leader and ward commissioner Abul Hashem Hashu on Road No 10 in Baitul Aman Housing Society around 10:00am.

Following the police action, several hundred blockaders rained brickbats on the policemen. As time passed, more people joined the demonstrators and pelted police with some more brickbats. No high level police official was found in the troubled area at the time.

Two policemen suffered serious injuries and took shelter in the local Ansar camp and came out disguised as civilians. The pickets raided two houses in the area in search of the injured policemen and damaged the houses.

Police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets at the demonstrators several hundred times. They also fired from shotguns adding fuel to the anger of the demonstrators.

By 12:30pm, the stone throwing blockaders made the policemen retreat more than a kilometre away from the Baitul Aman Housing Society to Ring Road near Adabor police station despite continuing reinforcement and supply of teargas and rubber bullets. Police were even seen taking tear gas canisters and shotgun bullets from the army.

The demonstrators went in a massive offensive against the policemen around 1:00pm and almost captured Adabor police station when a small group of army personnel who went in front of the police station at 12:45pm took position and pointed their firearms towards the blockaders.

The crowd however left the area soon and police regrouped again. Half an hour later several hundred army men with automatic assault weapons rushed to the area and took position in rows on Ring Road in front of Adabor police station.

Soon after the army reinforcement, the policemen entered the lanes which were littered with brickbats. At that time police allegedly beat several innocent people and arrested them.

The injured in the clashes include The Daily Star photographer Showkat Jamil, Officer-in-Charge of Adabor Police Station Nasiruddin, Police Constable Anjan and Nayek Habib.

Police arrested 28 people from the spot during the clashes.

## **RUSSEL SQUARE**

Police in Dhanmondi area, especially from Russel Square to Road No 27, sent out ominous signals to grand alliance activists with an aggressive posture since the morning.

Police charged and dispersed an AL procession, led by former home minister Mohammad Nasim, on its way to Russel Square from Road No 27 around 11:00am.

After the procession regrouped under Nasim's leadership around Russel Square, police baton charged the group slightly injuring Nasim and Sohel Taj.

Police also arrested 11 AL activists from a Nasim-led rally in Russel Square, five from in front of Metro Shopping Mall, and a Jubo Mohila League activist from Dhanmondi Road No 11.

Quickly after the arrests, scattered AL activists hurled brickbats at riot police from adjoining alleyways. Police and blockaders were then got locked in small pitched battles in the area with no report of serious injury.

Afterwards, police indiscriminately arrested 25 to 30 people off the streets, including street vendors, security guards, rickshaw-pullers, and bystanders.

Till 3:00pm, police maintained a tight grip on the area, not allowing gatherings of more than five people.

### **MAGHBAZAR**

The police clubbed an LDP procession at Maghbazar crossing leading to a clash between the police and the LDP activists that left at least 50 LDP supporters including its Secretary General Abdul Mannan injured.

As the police swooped on the LDP activists, they also retaliated by throwing bricks at the police, sources said.

At one stage of the half an hour clash, the police fired tear gas while the agitating LDP activists set fire to a private car. They also vandalised the Maghbazar branch of Dhaka Bank.

According to the police, they charged batons on the procession after the LDP activists started pelting them with bricks. The police arrested 10 persons from the spot.

The LDP leaders alleged the BNP cadres also attacked them along with the police.

### **BANGABANDHU AVENUE**

A number of police, BDR and army personnel cordoned off the Bangabandhu Avenue to Paltan crossing area to prevent the grand alliance's activists from attending processions.

The atmosphere of this area was quite festive as artistes were performing satirical songs.

Bangladesh Jubo League held a rally at Muktangan, Bangladesh Swechchhasebok League at Zero Point and Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL) at the mouth of Bangabandhu Avenue.

### **TONGI**

The pickets ransacked six vehicles at Tongi on the Dhaka-Gazipur highway and set fire to a CNG-run three-wheeler at around 10:54 am.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men then clubbed the pickets away from the highway and arrested at least three.

### **MOHAKHALI**

Some unknown men set a bus on fire at Mohakhali at 6:30 am, police sources said.

### **MIRPUR**

The police clubbed an AL procession at Mirpur Section-10 roundabout in the morning leading to the demonstrators hurling bricks on the policemen.



The demonstrators vandalised a taxicab and two CNG-run three-wheelers.

Police arrested nine persons from the spot.

Army men arrested a person from Mazar Road area and dispersed demonstrators as they were damaging the moving vehicles.

The demonstrators also ransacked five buses near Mirpur Section-1.

Our DU correspondent reported at least four BCL activists were injured when police charged batons on a procession of Chhatra Sangram Parishad (CSP) in front of the High Court. Police also arrested nine BCL workers.

## **COUNTRY**

Our correspondent from Satkhira reports at least 50 leaders and activists of the AL-led grand alliance and BNP were injured in sporadic clashes between the two archrivals at Patkelghata bazar in Tala Upazila during the blockade.

The injured -- 15 of AL and 35 of BNP -- were admitted to Satkhira Sadar Hospital and other local clinics. Hospital sources said the condition of BNP leader Abdur Rahman was critical.

Two BNP offices and 4 shops belonging to the BNP leaders were vandalised during the clash. BNP blamed the grand alliance men for the vandalism. The grand alliance leaders protesting BNP attacks called a half-day hartal at Patkelghata for today.

Reports from Keraniganj say that around 35 people were injured when police and BDR charged batons on the activists of AL-led grand alliance at Kadamtali crossing in south Keraniganj thana yesterday morning.

Witnesses said the police and BDR charged batons on the grand alliance activists at around 11:00am when they were demonstrating peacefully sitting on the highway at the south side of the 2nd Buriganga Bridge. Among the injured, eight were admitted to a local clinic.

At Sanarparh of Siddhirganj in Narayanganj, at least 20 leaders and activists of grand alliance were injured as they locked in clashes with the police at noon yesterday for about half an hour at Sanarparh of Siddhirganj.

The army was later called in to bring the situation under control.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, the countrywide blockade snapped the rail and road links between the port city and the rest of the country as well as impeding regular activities of the country's prime seaport.

Our Nilphamari correspondent reports, rival activists of the AL-led grand alliance and the BNP-led 4-party alliance locked in clashes leaving at least five people injured at Dimla upazila.

The clash ensued as the blockade supporters tore up election campaigning posters of a BNP candidate Shahrin Islam of Nilphamari 2 constituency.

Blockade supporters obstructed the Rajshahi-bound Barendra Express at Saidpur Station in the morning while motorised vehicles did not ply the streets.

Our Rangpur correspondent said the grand alliance activists allegedly damaged at least 30 buses and trucks at Paglapir and Modern point in Rangpur on the first day of the blockade.

Witnesses said police rush to the scene and brought the situation under control after half an hour.

Activities at the Hili land port came to a standstill due to the blockade, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna reports, a group of picketers attacked Khulna-bound passenger train Shimanta Express at around 8:30am at Daulatpur. An unidentified woman was injured and three compartments of the train was damaged in the attack.

The train reached Khulna half an hour late under police security.

Our Barisal correspondent reports, hundreds of Dhaka-bound passengers remained stranded at all terminals as inter-district transports were cancelled due to the blockade.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/08/front.html#e>

## **Clashes mark first day of blockade**

*Capital remains cut off, trains halted,  
operation in ports suspended*

Staff Correspondent

The picketers of the Awami League-led alliance, took to the streets and clashed with lawmen in the capital and elsewhere, defying police ban on any agitation in the Dhaka city on Sunday, the first day of three-day countrywide blockade.



The clash left over 100 people injured all over the country.

The alliance announced that the blockade would begin on Sunday to press home its demand for deferring elections beyond the constitutionally mandated 90-day time frame, properly updating the voters' roll and resignation of president Iajuddin Ahmed from the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government.

The Dhaka city police commissioner, in a notification on Saturday, had slapped a total ban on holding rallies or gathering anywhere for an indefinite period.

But defying the ban, the alliance's activists staged rallies and brought out processions in different places including Bangabandhu Avenue, Russell Square, Malibagh, Jurain, Badda and Mohakhali on Sunday. Some artistes sang songs at the rallies in Muktangan and Noor Hossain Square.

The picketers damaged a number of vehicles and set fire to some of them during the blockade. They also halted a number of trains at different stations, disrupting rail communication badly.

The capital Dhaka was virtually cut off from rest of the country as the long-route vehicles stayed off the roads. But a very few city service buses and human haulers plied some routes while rickshaws occupied the city streets.

The operation at the seaports and land-ports was hampered. However, loading and unloading of cargo at the Chittagong seaport was normal under the army's supervision, but the goods could not be transported outside the port.

Officials in the Bangladesh Railway head-office said that train communications were halted at various stations in Dhaka, Pakshi and Lalmonirhat railway divisions. However, no untoward incident was reported.

In Dhaka railway division two trains were halted at Manikkhali and Islampur Bazaar stations. In

Pakshi, five trains were halted at Abdullahpur, Atrai, Nandangachhi, Sayedpur and Parbatipur stations and the picketers halted three trains in Lalmonirhat.

However, train movement was normal and no untoward incident was reported in Chittagong railway division, said sources.

The lawmen detained over 100 people in the capital Dhaka.

The pro-blockade picketers clashed with police at different places including Adabar, Moghbazar, Russell Square and Gulistan, leaving over 100 people injured.

The police refused to the agitators to bring out processions or assemble at any place, and chased the picketers in different places. Still, the alliance activists managed to hold small rallies and bring out frequent processions in different parts of the city.

The leaders and activists of Awami League and its partners, including Jatiya Party, Liberal Democratic Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, attended the rallies.

At Adabar in the capital city, a fierce clash erupted between the picketers and police when the latter intercepted them when they were bringing out a procession from the Mohammadia Housing area at about 10:00am. The clash also spread to Shyamoli and Ring Road.

The picketers pelted the police with brickbats from the lanes and by-lanes and the police lathi-charged them, lobbed teargas shells and fired rubber bullets. At one stage the police, who had run out of teargas shells, had to borrow some from the soldiers who had taken up positions but acted as silent onlookers.

A number of vehicles were damaged during the four-hour-long clash.

More than 50 people were injured in the clash and the police detained over 60 people on charge of picketing.

The clash ended after the arrival of another contingent of the army at about 2:00pm. However, the soldiers did not go into action against the picketers.

At Moghbazar a clash erupted between the police and activists of the Liberal Democratic Party when their procession was intercepted at about 12:15pm. The angry picketers damaged a vehicle and later set fire to a car in front of Bishal Centre shopping complex.

The picketers also set fire to a bus near BRAC Centre in Mohakhali at the beginning of the programme at 6:00am, and also a taxi-cab at Farmgate, and damaged some vehicles at Russell Square, Mirpur and Pallabi.

Explosions of crackers were reported from Chawkbazar and Swarighat during the blockade.

Business establishments and shopping centres remained closed.

Clashes between the police and picketers were also reported from Keraniganj, Savar, and Jirani of Dhaka, Bhulta of Narayanganj, Tongi of Gazipur, and Narsingdi.

The picketers damaged vehicles at Gopalganj, Bhola, Tongi, Savar and Sirajganj and set fire to two vehicles in Jirani and Tongi.

In Chittagong loading and unloading continued at the port but delivery of goods remained suspended. When the port authorities tried to deliver goods by eight trucks under police escort in the morning, the picketers foiled the attempt.

The most of the shopping malls, markets and roadside shops in Chittagong, remained closed while a small number of motorised vehicles plied on the city streets.

In Bagerhat all activities including loading and unloading remained suspended at Mongla Port since the morning. No gang booking was given in the morning.

Operations in the land-ports of Benapole, Hilli, Sonamasjid and Burimari was also halted due to the blockade.

In Rajshahi, frequent rallies of the AL-led alliance were held in city. The BNP-led combine also brought out separate rallies seeking votes.

City streets virtually looked deserted, commercial centres and educational institutions remained shut down.

In Khulna, the pro-blockade activists damaged 10 vehicles at about 7:15pm at Kudir Bottala area under Rupsha upazila in Khulna leaving six passengers injured.

The vehicles left Khulna with police escort and when it reached Kudir Bottala area the gap

between police van and the vehicles grew longer and the pro-blockade activists stopped the vehicles and began to smash the glasses of the vehicles.

In Sylhet, the blockade passed peacefully in Sylhet on Sunday amid stringent patrolling by the army, RAB and riot police in the city.

A huge number of army men, members of Rapid Action Battalion and armed police were deployed in the city in the early hours.

Motorised vehicles, except little number of rickshaws and three-wheeler auto-rickshaws, did not plied city streets. All educational institutions and business establishments, including shopping centres, remained closed.

In Barisal, there was no picketing against the blockade in the city and pro-blockade pickets brought out small processions in different parts of the town. They blocked the roads and highways at Amtala, Goriarpar and Rupatali entrance points.

But Barisal-Dhaka-Barisal launch services were on and saw heavy rush of stranded passengers.

There were no untoward incidents anywhere

Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Comilla, Noakhali, Moulvibazar, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Satkhira, Patuakhali, Jhalkati and Barguna, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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<http://www.zeenews.com/articles.asp?aid=346584&sid=SAS&ssid=>

## **Bangla police clash with protestors on Day-2 of blockade**

Dhaka, Jan 08: Bangladesh police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at stone-throwing protestors demanding electoral reforms as a nationwide blockade called by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League-led alliance entered its second day today, paralysing the country.

Witnesses said the protestors exploded home made crackers and hurled stones leading riot police to retaliate with rubber bullets and tear gas as the violence spread in Dhaka's Russel Square, Maligabdh and several other hotspots.

Army troops were patrolling the streets while authorities deployed over 10,000 policemen with riot gears as the mega alliance intensified the street campaign to press home their demand that President Iajuddin Ahmed quit as chief advisor of the Caretaker Government.

There were, however, no immediate reports of any major casualty on the small hours of the second day protest. The initial two-day railway, waterway and road blockade was extended by another day late Saturday after President Ahmed put his foot down, saying polls would be held as planned on January 22.

Traffic was thin in Dhaka's usually bustling streets while transport operators said they kept inter-district buses off the road while railway services were disrupted at some places as the activists smashed or torched several vehicles in suburban Savar, Gazipur and Narayanganj.

Authorities Saturday said the government would provide army and police escorts for transports carrying cargoes from Southeastern Chittagong Port during the countrywide communication blockade.

Bureau Report

## **Bangladeshi Police Clash With Protesters**

By *FARID HOSSAIN*

The Associated Press

Monday, January 8, 2007; 7:26 AM

DHAKA, Bangladesh -- Riot police used tear gas, rubber bullets and batons Monday to disperse thousands of stone-throwing protesters in the Bangladeshi capital who are demanding postponement of this month's elections and electoral reforms, witnesses said.

About 5,000 protesters tried to overrun barbed-wire barricades manned by police in central Dhaka, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

Clashes across Dhaka left at least 300 people injured, including several policemen, the United News of Bangladesh news agency reported. Police officials wouldn't confirm or deny the figures.

Protesters halted trains by squatting on railroads in several places outside the capital Dhaka, railway officials said on condition of anonymity because they are not permitted to speak to the media. No attacks on trains were reported.

The violence broke out on the second day of a crippling three-day transportation blockade imposed by a 19-party alliance that opposes the Jan. 22 election.

Scattered buses, three-wheel taxis and rickshaws that defied the blockade were the only means of transport for the capital's 10 million residents.

Clashes between protesters and police were reported from other parts of Dhaka and its outskirts. Dozens were hurt and police arrested several activists, news reports said.

In the congested old part of the city, protesters blasted small, handmade bombs and police replied with rubber bullets, leaving several injured, local television station Channel I reported. Protesters set a parked bus on fire and damaged several vehicles in Savar, an industrial town outside Dhaka.

At least 100 people, including police, were injured in similar clashes across the capital on Sunday, the first day of protests that cut the city off from rest of the country, Dhaka newspapers reported.

On Sunday, police used batons, tear gas and rubber bullets on stick-wielding, stone-throwing demonstrators.

Schools and businesses remained closed Monday to avoid being caught in the violence.

In an effort to force its demands, the alliance led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said it plans to keep blocking roads, railways and river routes Tuesday to isolate Dhaka from the rest of the country.

Protesters accuse the interim government in charge of organizing the elections of favoring their opponents, a four-party coalition led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The alliance wants the vote delayed until electoral reforms are complete, including the revision of a voter list.

The country's interim leader, President Iajuddin Ahmed, said he could not change the constitutionally mandated election date.

About 12,000 security forces patrolled Dhaka's streets amid fears of a repeat in violence that has marred previous political protests and left at least 34 dead since October.

Under the constitution, an interim government is charged with overseeing elections and has only 90 days to hold them. Ahmed took over as interim leader from Zia on Oct. 29 and his 90-day term expires on Jan. 25.

Bangladesh has a history of political turmoil. Two presidents have been slain in military coups, and Hasina and Zia have traded premierships since the restoration of democracy in 1991.

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[http://www.itv.com/news/world\\_6aee6dde2a234099df9b0310c03df72b.html](http://www.itv.com/news/world_6aee6dde2a234099df9b0310c03df72b.html)

## **Riots rock Bangladeshi capital**

10.48, Mon Jan 8 2007

Riot police are out in force in Bangladesh as thousands of stick-wielding and stone-throwing protesters have gathered in the country's capital Dhaka. (Pic: Reuters)

The demonstrators are demanding electoral reforms and a postponement of elections which are scheduled for January 22.

Schools and businesses are closed and transport has been brought to a standstill by a three-day blockade imposed by a 19-party alliance.

In an effort to force its demands, the alliance led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina said it plans to keep blocking roads, railways and river routes on Tuesday to isolate Dhaka from the rest of the country.

But the country's interim leader, President Iajuddin Ahmed, said he could not change the constitutionally mandated election date.

About 12,000 security forces personnel are patrolling Dhaka's streets amid fears of a repeat in violence that has marred previous political protests and left at least 34 dead since October.

Elsewhere in Bangladesh, at least 20 people have died in the past 24 hours from cold weather in the north of the country, taking the confirmed death toll from the recent cold snap to 110 in the past week.

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<http://www.metimes.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20070108-083821-5884r>

## **Police fire rubber bullets at Bangladesh protestors**

Shafiq Alam

AFP

January 8, 2007

**DHAKA -- Dozens of people were injured in Bangladesh Monday as opposition protestors clashed with riot police on the second day of a blockade to force electoral reform and postpone national polls this month.**

Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at protestors in Dhaka's old quarter who pelted them with stones and small bombs as the nationwide opposition blockade erupted into violence for a second day.

There were confrontations elsewhere in the capital, too, with riot police baton-charging demonstrators.

The blockade is paralyzing the impoverished country in an attempt to force the government to delay the January 22 general election, which the opposition says is stacked in favor of the outgoing ruling party.

"The protestors hurled many small bombs at our officers, and we shot back with rubber bullets and tear gas," said Abdul Quddus, assistant commissioner of Dhaka police. "There were thousands of protestors, they were also pelting us with stones and rocks."

At least 23 people were seriously hurt in the clashes in the capital, police said, while media reports said that at least 50 more suffered minor injuries.

Earlier, police fired tear gas and baton-charged demonstrators in central Dhaka.

Police said that officers charged the activists trying to demolish barbed-wire barricades near the offices of the main opposition Awami League.

"Police swung into action after the protestors became unruly," said Dhaka police additional deputy commissioner Mahbubur Rahman.

In a third clash at Kerainiganj on Dhaka's southern outskirts, at least 20 people including six police officers needed hospital treatment after police baton-charged activists and also fired tear gas, said local police chief Samiul Alam.

A bus was also torched at Savar in western Dhaka, police added.

At least 150 people were arrested for violence during the protests, said an officer in Dhaka's police control room.

The Awami League and its 13 leftist allies are enforcing the second day of their 72-hour blockade.

Some 12,500 police officers and thousands more soldiers patrolled the streets of the capital.

The Awami League and its allies have announced a boycott of the general elections, which they say have been rigged by the outgoing Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as a result of an inaccurate voter list.

Elsewhere in the city, thousands of opposition activists staged rallies and demonstrations, chanting "farcical polls are unacceptable."

Activists also put up blockades on main highways, paralyzing the country's transport network for the second day running, police added.

There was a similar situation in other key cities, with buses and cars off the roads and schools and businesses closed, officials said.

In Chittagong, international trade at the country's main port was again halted, said port director Kamrul Islam.

Thousands of opposition supporters also took to the streets of Chittagong amid tight security.

Some 5,000 police, paramilitaries, and soldiers were patrolling the city to prevent unrest, said assistant police commissioner Farid Uddin.

The opposition has repeatedly staged crippling protests and blockades in the past year to highlight its demands.

At least 35 people have been killed in unrest in the nation of 144 million people since the BNP-led government handed power to an interim administration at the end of October, when its five-year mandate expired.

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[http://english.people.com.cn/200701/08/eng20070108\\_339163.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200701/08/eng20070108_339163.html)

## **Clashes between police and protestors leave 300 people injured in Bangladesh**

UPDATED: 19:00, January 08, 2007

At least 300 people were wounded as riot police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka Monday to disperse former opposition activists protesting what they called a stage-managed parliamentary election on January 22.

Witnesses said the police swung into actions when slogan-chanting protestors held demonstrations in the capital and its outskirts on the second day of 72-hour transport blockade across the country.

Troops mounting machine guns on open jeeps patrolled the streets but remained calm. Besides, some 12,000 riot police were deployed to maintain order.

A grand alliance led by former main opposition Awami League president Sheikh Hasina enforced the blockade from Sunday to press for scrapping the January 22 polls and preparing a flawless electoral roll in a bid to ensure free and fair elections.

The alliance is also demanding President Professor Iajuddin Ahmed resign from the office of the Chief Advisor of the interim caretaker government for being biased to former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's 4-party alliance.

The blockade disrupted normal life and commercial activities. The capital remained cut off from the rest of the country as highway and train communications were severely disrupted.

The witnesses said grand alliance activists and police fought pitched battles at different places in Dhaka and its outskirts. To control the situation police used batons, tear gas and rubber bullets. The injured people were rushed to hospitals and clinics.



The grand alliance is planning second spell of similar blockade next week to resist the "unilateral" elections. Ignoring the grand alliance's demand, President Ahmed said the parliamentary elections must be held on schedule in accordance with the Constitution.

Source: Xinhua

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<http://www.zeenews.com/znnew/articles.asp?aid=346680&sid=SAS>

## **Fresh violence erupts in B'desh as mega alliance enforces siege**

Dhaka, Jan 08: Scores of people were injured and at least 50 detained as fresh violence erupted in Bangladesh on Monday during a nationwide three-day blockade enforced by the major Awami League grouping to press for electoral reforms ahead of the January 22 general elections.

Riot police fired rubber bullets and lobbed tear gas shells at demonstrators affiliated to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League led-mega alliance during a communication blockade that paralyzed the country.

Army and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles troops patrolled the streets in Dhaka and other major cities mounting automatic weapons on armoured cars as clashes between protestors and the police left several scores injured.

Witnesses said the protesters exploded homemade crackers and hurled stones prompting riot police to retaliate as the violence spread to Dhaka's Russel Square, Maligabh and several other hotspots through the day. Police detained at least 50.

Television channels said violence also gripped several other districts and in suburban Savar sub-district the demonstrators torched a bus and smashed several others.

The mega alliance was set to lay siege to the Bangabhaban presidential palace tomorrow demanding that President Iajuddin Ahmed quit as chief advisor of the caretaker government, scrapping the current polls schedule.

The alliance boycotted the election alleging that Ahmed was biased towards the outgoing government of Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

A reconciliation attempt by US and British envoys in Dhaka, Patricia Butenis and Anwar Chowdhury, ended yesterday yielding no results.

Bureau Report

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/09/front.html#2>

## **Violence spreads as blockade on**

Staff Correspondent

Police on the second day of the three-day blockade imposed by the Awami League-led alliance were merciless to protestors in the capital, seriously injuring more than 200 in brutal charges and taking into custody some 100 people.



*Pickets put up barricade on the road at Malibagh in Dhaka by setting fire to hawkers' cot on Monday, the second day of the three-day countryside blockade enforced by the Awami League-led alliance.*

— *New Age photo*

Changing their former strategy to one of zero tolerance, the law enforcers — including the police, Bangladesh Rifles, Rapid Action Battalion, Armed Police Battalion and Ansar — brutally beat up and dispersed not only the activists but also innocent pedestrians in the capital, which virtually remained cut off from rest of the country for the second consecutive day.

On the second day, violence spread to different areas in the capital and some other parts of the country. While police appeared more attacking, pickets at places were also seen active in retaliation.

The policemen, as they had done in previous blockades, did not allow any processions or rallies on the main streets and swooped on the agitators whenever they tried to break the ban slapped on processions and rallies in the capital.

Although reluctant to go for all-out action, the police department, being instructed by the higher authorities, became more aggressive in dealing with the Awami League-led alliance's demonstrators who are demanding resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of head of the caretaker government and a fresh polling schedule after correction of the voters' roll. Today the alliance's activists will encircle Bangabhaban, the presidential residence, to press home the same demands.

The agitators damaged vehicles, set fire to some of them and halted trains at different stations across the country on the second day of the blockade.

Activities in the two seaports and other land-ports were badly hampered due to the blockade.

In the capital violence flared up on Bangabandhu Avenue, in Malibagh, Lalbagh, Nayabazar, Nazirabazar and Keraniganj as police chased and beat up the agitators. Outside Dhaka some 40 persons were injured when police brutalised agitators at Savar and Dhamrai. A bus was set ablaze in front of Jahangirnagar University.

The police first attacked activists near Shaheed Noor Hossain Square (Zero Point) when activists of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad, a combine of student wings of the alliance partners, tried to break through a police barricade and pelted policemen with brickbats at about 9:45am. Police clubbed the demonstrators and fired 10 teargas canisters to disperse them during the 20-minute clash.

The second attack by the police took place at 10:20am, without any provocation whatsoever. Police attacked from behind a rally of the demonstrators on Bangabandhu Avenue, leaving more than 30 injured.

Police beat up the protesters indiscriminately and picked up 10 of them. Policemen entered a

wayside eatery beside the AL's office and clubbed and picked up the customers who were having their meals.

Minutes after the incident, an army convoy of two trucks and three pick-up vans followed by two police vans passed through the area.

The activists led by Motia Chowdhury reorganised and brought out another procession on Bangabandhu Avenue but did not try to break through the police barricade. Later, addressing a rally, AL leaders castigated the police for their 'atrocities' and asked Iajuddin Ahmed to step down from the post of the caretaker government's chief.

As demonstrators consolidated their position between Zero Point and Pir Yamini Market, there were repeated instructions from the police high-ups to clear the road by dispersing the agitators. But the police officers deployed there were reluctant to go into action.

At one stage, police asked the agitators to leave the area at 3:00pm but the demonstrations and cultural function continued till 5:00pm. However, AL's city unit's general secretary, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, left the venue along with his supporters at 3:30pm.

At Malibagh the police swooped on the demonstrators when they tried to bring out a procession at about 11:00am. Usually the area had remained calm in the previous blockades and also on the first of the current spell, but it turned into a battlefield on Monday.

The agitators pelted policemen with brickbats and the latter countered by lobbing teargas shells and fired some shots during the clash that lasted up to 1:00pm. At one stage, the police finished their stock of teargas shells and bullets. Later, when they were reinforced by another contingent, the police went inside the lanes and picked up about 20 people from houses and shops. Two women were seen locked in altercation with the police as they had picked up three residents from their houses in Malibagh.

Some on-duty policemen said that an assistant commissioner of the Ramna zone had commanded the lawmen to go for all-out action against the demonstrators and the situation worsened. The officer was on duty at Russell Square which was volatile on Sunday.

In old Dhaka more than 100 people, including two policemen, were injured in clashes in Lalbagh, Nayabazar and Nazirabazar of Kotwali and Kadamtali crossing of South Keraniganj in the morning.

The lawmen beat up the demonstrators, lobbed teargas shells and even fired shots in Lalbagh, Nazirbazar and Nayabazar while the picketers pelted them with brickbats.

Locals said police and BDR jawans lathi-charged the grand alliance's activists at about 11:00am when they were demonstrating peacefully, sitting on the south side of the 2nd Buriganga Bridge as part of their blockade programme.

At one stage the agitated demonstrators, who were beaten up badly, started pelting the law-enforcers with brickbats, which led to another clash.

The police later fired tear-shells and rubber bullets to disperse the furious demonstrators.

Twenty-five of the injured were admitted to a Keraniganj clinic while the rest were treated in Mitford Hospital.

In Khulna at least 25 people were injured in a clash at Khulna Railway Station at about 8:30am when the activists tried to stop a train that was leaving the station.

The injured were undergoing treatment at local hospitals and the police picked up three people for picketing.

In Chittagong at least 15 people were injured when a procession of the AL-led alliance came under attack, allegedly by BNP activists, at Chandraghona under Rauzan upazila on Monday morning. Three of them were undergoing treatment at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

In Jessore a clash between the transport workers and agitators left a number of people injured, one of whom was shot. The man who was shot was admitted to the General Hospital.

The demonstrators damaged a number of vehicles at Sirajganj, Rangpur, Brahmanbaria, Habiganj and Satkhira.

They also halted a number of trains at Jamalpur, Akhaura, Phulbaria, Shyampur and uprooted railway tracks between Khulna and Khulna junction and stopped train movement from Parbatipur station in the morning.

The ferry services on the Mawa-Char Janajat and Paturia-Daulatdia-Kazirhat routes were suspended and the demonstrators disrupted river transport at Narsingdi.

No untoward incidents took place in the divisional cities of Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal, and Noakhali, Comilla, Moulvibazar, Patuakhali, Jhalakathi, Barguna, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Faridpur, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj and Gazipur, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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## **Army allowed to arrest without warrant**

*Armed forces starts election duty tomorrow*

Khadimul Islam

The army will be in the field for election duties for 20 days from Wednesday with powers of arresting anyone without any warrant, according to a notification of the ministry of home affairs issued on Monday.

Monday's notification, signed by the secretary of home affairs, M Abdul Karim, came after the Armed Forces Division sought clarification regarding the delegation of power to the army during the election duties, Election Commission sources said.

'Suspects who could create troubles during election through terrorist activities will be identified and arrested under the existing laws before the polls,' an earlier notification of the home secretary, issued on January 3, said.

According to the article 2[xiaa] of the Representation of the People Order 1972 [RPO], which in 2001 redefined the term 'law-enforcing agencies' by incorporating members of the defence services, the army will work before and during any general election to ensure law and order and enjoy powers as other law enforcing agencies do.

At least one company of the army will be deployed as mobile and striking force in each district while a reserved force will be available when required, the home ministry notification said.

As far as possible, each group of the army will be accompanied by a magistrate but the members of the armed forces will be able to perform independently if a magistrate is not available during the duties.

Any magistrate or officer-in-charge of a police station may order to disperse an unlawful assembly, or an assembly of five or more persons which could disturb public peace, according to the 'instructions regarding aid to the civil power' of the notification.

'When a magistrate is present and requires a military officer to disperse an unlawful assembly, absolute discretion lies with the military officer as to the manner in which the necessary action should be taken. He is the sole judge of the action necessary, though this must be limited to the purpose indicated, namely, the dispersal of the crowd and the arrest of offenders,' the notification said.

The magistrate is empowered only to require the military commander to disperse the unlawful assembly or to effect the arrests, and he has no authority to give an order to open fire or to take particular action.

The military commander is authorised by law to open fire, if in his opinion the circumstances so demand in order to allow him to comply with the requisition of the magistrate, but the principle of using the minimum force, consistent with the objective to be achieved is applicable.

The magistrate may order the military to cease action when he thinks the required objective has been attained.

In case of serious emergency when communication is not possible with any magistrate and public security is endangered by any assembly, any commissioned officer may himself disperse the assembly by military force and may arrest any persons in it.

No prosecution can be undertaken against an officer or non-commissioned officer for action taken

by him, either when obeying the requisition of the magistrate, or acting on his own initiative, save with the sanction of the government; and even if such prosecution takes place, the law declares that he is not deemed to have committed an offence, so long as he acts in good faith.

The army was called out of the barracks in aid of the civil administration on December 9 but remained in temporary camps in the cities and towns during agitations by political parties demanding free and fair elections.

Monday's notification said all the power delegated to the army were given under the existing laws and rules of the Election Commission particularly according to the article 2[xiaa], 73, 74, 77 and 78 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972. The articles 73, 74, 77, 78 and 87 provide descriptions of the offenders or suspected troublemakers and mention the offences, penalties and procedures.

About arrest without warrant, the notification referred to article 87 which says 'Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), or in any other law for the time being in force, a member of any law enforcing agency performing duty in connection with an election—[a] shall have, even if he is not a police officer, the same powers as a police officer has under the said code for arresting without warrant any person, other than a person performing any duty in connection with an election, who commits an offence ..... or for the maintenance of peace, law and order, at the polling station or within a radius of four hundred yards of the polling station, on the polling day, as if he were a police officer; [b] shall arrest without warrant any person who commits an offence under any of the articles mentioned in clause [a], if the returning officer or the presiding officer so directs; [c] may arrest without warrant any person, who being removed from the polling station by the presiding officer, under article 30, commits any offence in the polling station; [d] may remove any notice, sign, banner or flag used in contravention of article 79; [e] may seize any instrument or apparatus used in contravention of article 80 ; and [f] may take such steps, including use of force, as may be reasonably necessary for the exercise of his power and performance of his duties under this article.

The power also allows the armed forces to take actions against any activity that goes against the electoral code of conduct.

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## **60,000 troops to be deployed on polls duty**

Staff Correspondent

About 40,000 troops will join 20,000 others already posted at district headquarters and spread across the country from Wednesday for maintaining order and creating an atmosphere conducive for the January 22 election, home ministry officials said.

During the 2001 parliamentary election, some 55,000 members of the armed forces were engaged in maintaining law and order for 15 days before and after the election.

President and chief adviser Iajuddin Ahmed called out troops on December 10 in aid of civil administration to keep law and order.

Following widespread criticism, the troops were asked to stay at their camps in district headquarters.

Sources in the army said

the troops will move to the upazila level by midnight Tuesday and begin operation against illicit weapons and listed criminals.

Members of the navy were deployed at Chittagong Port and along the coastal belt of Bhola, Bagerhat, Cox's

Bazar and Noakhali, while air force personnel were posted at Zia International Airport

in Dhaka, Shah Amanat Airport in Chittagong and Jessore Airport.

The forces will remain deployed till January 29 to tackle any post-election violence, said a home ministry notification.

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<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/001200701091925.htm>

## **Bangla violence escalates, 100 injured**

Dhaka, Jan. 9 (PTI): Riot police fought off with water cannons and batons supporters of the major Awami League-led combine who tried to lay siege to the Presidential Palace here to force Bangladesh President, Iajuddin Ahmed, to step down as caretaker government chief, as fresh violence on the third day of the nationwide strike left at least 100 injured.

Security forces and the protestors faced-off at different places in the national capital, which turned into a virtual battlefield with the 'mega' alliance supporters hurling crude bombs and rocks at the police.

Police in turn fired rubber bullets and lobbed tear gas shells at the mob, eye-witnesses and police said.

Senior politicians Tofael Ahmed and Rashed Khan Menon were injured in the clashes, the ATN Bangla TV channel said.

Clashes erupted at Dainik Bangla Crossing, Old Dhaka and several other areas, injuring at least 100 people.

The AL-led alliance in their third and last day of the nationwide road, rail and waterway blockade tried to enforce a sit-in around the Bangabhaban presidential palace where a security net was in place. The protestors tried to crash their way through a police barricade to press home their demand for the ouster of Ahmed and bringing about electoral reforms.

Two days of the strike crippled the nation with movement of traffic restricted on most Dhaka roads.

Over 200 people were injured in two days of clashes with police, para-military Bangladesh Rifles and Army troops. Troops were yet to go into action, but moved in when police needed extra support to quell violence.

Sheikh Hasina Wajed, former Prime Minister and leader of the mega alliance, decided to boycott the January 22 general elections demanding a level-playing field. She is expected to announce a new action plan to "resist polls."

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/01/10/d7011001011.htm>

## **Cops attack blockaders with brute force**

*Maul senior grand alliance leaders unprovoked; pickets retaliate by throwing hand bombs; country remains paralysed*

Staff Correspondent

Five top leaders of the Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance were injured as police assaulted them while using brute force to disperse alliance activists and leaders from around the Bangabhaban

during a siege of it yesterday that triggered violent clashes between the law enforcers and the demonstrators.

Policemen in riot gear brutally assaulted the leaders at Noor Hossain Square and fired teargas shells inside the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue during the siege that was also marked by police-demonstrators pitched battles in Fakirerpool and Joykali temple area.

The leaders -- Tofail Ahmed, Rashed Khan Menon, Nurul Islam, Dilip Barua and Haji Mohammad Selim -- fell to the ground due to the police beating without any let up in two to three minutes.

A ferocious attack by AL activists using brickbats and homemade bombs forced the police to retreat at least 50 metres and the activists rescued the injured leaders.

Besides, at least 50 demonstrators and policemen were wounded in clashes during the siege of the president's office on the last day of the alliance's three-day countrywide blockade demanding resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser and announcement of a new schedule for the general election after 'proper updating' of the voter list.

The Bangabhaban was cordoned off by a heavy security net comprising several thousand police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel. Five truckloads of army also patrolled around it frequently as the demonstrators chanted slogans like 'army-janata bhai bhai, Iajuddiner fanshi chai'.

Police and BDR stood in several lines on the roads leading to the Bangabhaban from Dainik Bangla intersection, and from Paltan to Bangabandhu Avenue.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) had already imposed a ban on squatting around the Bangabhaban to prevent a siege of it.

Reports received in Dhaka said BNP and its student wing's office at Peerganj in Rangpur was attacked and set afire on the third day of the countrywide blockade yesterday.

Besides, at least 35 people were injured in a clash between activists of the grand alliance and BNP in Netrakona.

A home ministry press release claimed that unidentified people set afire 15 to 20 bus garages at Aminbazar in Savar yesterday, damaging those. But Savar police said a bus garage at Aminbazar caught fire as a gas cylinder exploded yesterday morning.

### **BANGABANDHU AVENUE, NOOR HOSSAIN SQUARE**

A festive atmosphere at Bangabandhu Avenue vanished and it virtually turned into a battlefield as violence erupted at Noor Hossain Square at around 1:40pm and then spread to the adjacent areas.

This situation followed arrest of one Awami Jubo Mohila League activist from a procession that attempted to stage a sit-in beside police barricades near Noor Hossain Square. Alliance activists then hurled dozens of handmade bombs and volleys of brickbats from both ends of Bangabandhu Avenue at riot police.

Police then launched an all out attack on the activists forcing them into the AL office and to flee through Golap Shah Mazar area. Police also fired a large number of tear gas shells, at least two of those into the AL office. AL activists retaliated by pelting brickbats and handmade bombs from the roofs of adjoining buildings.

After a brief thaw in the fighting, violence reached its peak at around 2:30pm as a small procession led by senior alliance leaders, including Tofail, Menon, Nurul Islam, Dilip Barua and Haji Selim, approached the police barricade.

A section of alliance activists at the rear of the procession started hurling brickbats and homemade bombs, prompting police to go for indiscriminate beating of anyone before them.

The senior leaders, hoping they would be spared, stood still. But police became more aggressive as alliance activists continued to hurl brickbats.

Police then swooped on the leaders and bashed them with batons even after they had fallen to the ground.

At Noor Hossain Square, the assistant Commissioner of Motijheel Zone of the DMP was heard ordering his men saying, 'beat, beat.' When reporters asked about this later, he kept mum.

At that time police also forced out people from the shops around Moulana Bhasani Stadium and chased them away through Gulistan area.

### **FAKIRERPOOL, DAINIK BANGLA CROSSING**

Police swooped on a procession led by AL leaders AKM Rahmatullah and Haji Selim and dispersed it when it reached near Fakirerpool water tank at 11:15am.

Following the police clubbing, several hundred demonstrators darted out to the main road and different alleyways in Fakirerpool and started raining brickbats on the law enforcers. Police fired more than 100 teargas shells and rubber bullets on the demonstrators.

At least 20 people including some policemen were wounded as the fighting continued till 2:45pm. Police picked up at least 30 leaders and activists from the spot.

Alliance supporters exploded several homemade bombs during the clash.

Later, police allowed some innocent people trapped in an alleyway at Fakirerpool to leave the place with their hands up. Police also searched their bodies at the time.

Besides, clashes and chases took place between alliance supporters and police at Joykali Temple, BCC Road, Jugi Nagar and Ranking Street at noon.

Police fired at least 30 rubber bullets and teargas canisters at the demonstrators while the latter pelted them with brickbats.

### **COUNTRY**

Our correspondents report: Activists of the grand alliance set fire to the offices of Pirganj upazila unit of the BNP and its student wing JCD in Rangpur, and damaged at least 15 buses at Darshana on Rangpur-Bogra highway on Monday night.

Witnesses and police said the activists also attacked a rally organised by the local BNP at about 8:30 pm on Monday at Pirganj Bazar.

In Netrpkona, at least 35 leaders and activists of the alliance and BNP were injured in sporadic clashes between the two arch rivals at Durgapur, Mohongonj and Kendua upazila yesterday.



Besides, alliance activists and workers vandalised buses and trucks at Kaliganj in Jhenaidah yesterday. They also engaged in chases and counter chases with BNP workers.

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<http://www.zeenews.com/znew/articles.asp?aid=346858&sid=SAS>

## **Protestors try to lay siege to Bangabhavan in B'desh**

Dhaka, Jan 09: Violence continued unabated in Dhaka on the third day of the nationwide strike called by the major Awami League-led grouping as sloganeering and bomb-throwing protestors tried to crash police barricades and storm the presidential palace to force President Iajuddin Ahmed to quit his post as the chief of the caretaker government.

Hurling home-made bombs at security forces, the protestors affiliated to the Awami League-led 14 party combine, tried to tear through police barricades and march to Bangabhavan here to press home their demands of electoral reforms.

Riot police baton-charged the mob and lobbed teargas shells at thousands of stone-pelting demonstrators who defied a government ban on rallies and converted the capital city into a virtual battlefield, police and eye-witnesses said.

Two days of the nationwide blockade called by the `mega` grouping, which has decided to stay away from the January 22 general elections, crippled the nation and left over 200 people injured in clashes with police, para-military Bangladesh Rifles and army troops.

Army troops were yet to go into action but moved in when police needed extra support to quell violence.

Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the former Prime Minister and leader of the mega alliance, decided to boycott the polls demanding a level-playing field. She is expected to announce a new action plan to "resist polls".

The main entry and exit points of the city were blocked by the demonstrators, bus services hit and port operations suspended during the blockade, police said.

Bureau Report

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<http://www.humanite.presse.fr/journal/2007-01-08/2007-01-08-843361>

## **Des élections qui virent à l'affrontement à Dacca**

l'Humanité - 9 jan 2007

**Bangladesh . Plus de cinquante personnes blessées dans la capitale, hier, à l'approche du scrutin législatif du 22 janvier.**

Un climat de violence s'est emparé du Bangladesh, pays de 140 millions d'habitants, à l'approche des élections législatives du 22 janvier. Au moins 45 personnes ont été tuées et des centaines d'autres blessées dans des violences politiques depuis qu'un gouvernement provisoire a pris les rênes du pouvoir. Hier, des heurts entre la police et des manifestants de l'opposition ont fait une cinquantaine de blessés dans les rues de la capitale, Dacca.

Depuis fin octobre l'ex-premier ministre Khaleda Zia, à l'issue de son mandat de cinq ans, a remis son mandat à un gouvernement intérimaire dirigé par le président, Iajuddin Ahmed. Le Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh (BNP) de Khaleda Zia avait remporté haut la main les législatives de 2001. Un succès qu'elle semble en passe de rééditer puisque les partis de l'opposition ont décidé de boycotter le scrutin. À moins que les manifestations de l'opposition n'aboutissent à une annulation ou à un report des élections.

Une alliance de 14 partis emmenée par l'ancien premier ministre Sheikh Hasina accuse le gouvernement provisoire de favoriser ses adversaires. Cette opposition, dénommée ligue Awami, affirme que le pouvoir intérimaire et la commission électorale ont ajouté aux listes électorales 14 millions d'électeurs « fantômes » au profit du Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh.

« Nous sommes convenus de ne pas participer aux élections parce que le gouvernement provisoire chargé d'organiser des élections libres et équitables n'a pas créé une atmosphère électorale satisfaisante », a expliqué la dirigeante de la Ligue Awami. « En plus du boycott des élections, nous allons lancer un mouvement plus vaste visant à chasser Lajuddin du poste de dirigeant provisoire. » L'opposition a entamé un blocus des transports de trois jours. C'est le début, hier, de ce mouvement qui a provoqué des affrontements avec la police.

« Nos hommes ont fait usage de gaz lacrymogène et de balles en caoutchouc pour disperser la foule de plusieurs milliers de protestataires armés de pierres », a indiqué le sous-inspecteur Kankan. Selon la chaîne NTV news, cinq bombes artisanales auraient par ailleurs explosé dans le centre historique de la capitale mais sans faire de blessés. Environ 13 000 policiers et des effectifs militaires ont été mobilisés pour parer aux violences.

Deux autres partis ont également annoncé qu'ils boycotteraient les élections : le Jatiya de l'ancien dirigeant militaire Hossain Mohammad Ershad et le Parti démocratique libéral de l'ancien président A. Q. M. Badruddoza Chowdhury. Fin décembre, l'invalidation par les autorités de Hossain Mohammad Ershada avait provoqué des émeutes dans le nord du pays.

Malgré cette situation très tendue, Khaleda Zia mène depuis jeudi sa campagne électorale faisant fi des troubles. Une attitude qui pourrait selon plusieurs diplomates et politologues déboucher sur une grave crise politique. En attendant, plus de 4 000 candidats sont en compétition pour les 300 postes de parlementaires, soit deux fois plus qu'il y a cinq ans.

Damien Roustel

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<http://www.centredaily.com/mld/centredaily/news/16420328.htm>

Posted on Tue, Jan. 09, 2007

## **Bangladesh police clash with protesters**

FARID HOSSAIN  
Associated Press

**DHAKA, Bangladesh** - Thousands of protesters fought riot police in the capital Tuesday, throwing stones, bricks and homemade bombs as a crippling blockade to force the postponement of elections stretched into a third day, witnesses and reports said.

Police used batons and fired rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters who tried to overrun barbed-wire barricades erected around the downtown presidential palace.

Army troops joined police in manning the barricades, but they did not intervene, witnesses said.

But the mere presence of troops raised concerns in a country with a history of military rule. Bangladesh spent 15 years under military rule since gaining independence from Pakistan in 1971. It has witnessed two presidents slain in military coups and 19 other failed coup attempts.

The protesters belonged to a 19-party political alliance that opposes the Jan. 22 election and has vowed to boycott it.

The alliance planned to hold a rally Wednesday at a soccer field in Dhaka, walking distance from the presidential palace, to announce a new series of street protests, an alliance statement said.

Media reports have said nonstop blockades on election day could be announced at the rally.

Some major city roads toward the rally venue will remain off-limit to traffic Wednesday to maintain order, police said late Tuesday.

On Tuesday, the protesters also hurled several handmade bombs - small tin pots filled with explosives - at security forces, witnesses said.

The clashes left at least 100 people injured, including police, ATN Bangla TV station reported. Dozens of protesters were detained. The exact number of wounded or detainees could not be immediately confirmed.

Hundreds of other activists, police and security forces were wounded Sunday and Monday, the first two days of a nationwide transport blockade.

The alliance - led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina - has alleged the voters' list for the election has flaws, including fake names. The group wants the poll delayed until a problem-free list is available.

To press its demands, the alliance blocked roads, railways and river routes Sunday to Tuesday to isolate Dhaka from the rest of the country.

Only a few buses, three-wheel taxis and pedal rickshaws were left to provide transport for the capital's 10 million residents.

Security forces had cordoned off the official residence of the interim leader, President Iajuddin Ahmed, after protesters vowed to lay siege to the building. Authorities earlier banned protests in the area.

Despite heavy security and the ban, thousands of demonstrators poured into downtown Dhaka close to the presidential palace.

Pro-alliance dockworkers also stopped activities Tuesday at the main sea port of Chittagong, disrupting delivery of goods to the rest of the country.

The most violent clashes occurred Monday in Dhaka and its adjoining areas. Police used tear gas, rubber bullets and batons to disperse thousands of protesters. At least 300 people, including several police, were injured, the United News of Bangladesh reported.

Police declined to comment on injuries.

Election officials and Ahmed have said the election date cannot be changed.

The constitution requires the interim government to hold polls within 90 days from Oct. 29, the day it took office when former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's five-year term expired.

On Monday, U.S. Ambassador Patricia Butenis urged Bangladesh leaders to try to resolve impasse.

"We have difficulty finding a one-sided election credible," Butenis said.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/10/front.html#1>

## **Police pitiless during Bangabhaban siege**

Staff Correspondent

Clashes continued on all the roads leading to Bangabhaban between the demonstrators and the police during the Awami League-led alliance's siege of the presidential residence on Tuesday, the third day of the combine's latest spell of countrywide blockade.



At least 50 people, including senior alliance leaders Rashed Khan Menon, Tofail Ahmed, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Dilip Barua, were injured in police action on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The demonstrators also fought with lawmen in different places in the country on the last day of the blockade that snapped communications and made the ports inoperative for the third consecutive day. More than 50 people were injured in clashes across the country.

Activities in Chittagong Port ground to a total halt due to blockade and the strike by the dock workers, while work at Mongla Port and Benapole, Hili, Burimari and Sonamasjid land-ports was also halted for the third consecutive day.

Train communications were badly hampered as the demonstrators halted some trains and uprooted railway tracks in different places, said sources in the railway headquarters.

The alliance called for a siege of Bangabhaban on the last day of its three-day blockade to force the president-cum-chief advisor of the caretaker government, Iajuddin Ahmed, to hold a credible election after compiling a correct electoral roll.

The alliance is also demanding that Iajuddin quits the office of the chief adviser, accusing him of being grossly biased and trying to install the BNP-Jamaat alliance in power by vote rigging.

Violent clashes marked all the three days of the blockade, injuring over 400 people, including police and newsmen. Most of the clashes were in the capital where the police showed zero tolerance and the administration slapped a ban on rallies, gatherings or processions and carrying oars, poles, sickles or anything that could be used as a weapon.

In the capital the police swung into action on the demonstrators who were holding a rally in front of Awami League's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue at about 1:30pm. The police lobbed teargas shells, fired gunshots and also clubbed the demonstrators to clear the place.

The police attacked the demonstrators from two sides, forcing them to enter the AL's head-office.

The dispersed demonstrators then gathered on the rooftops of different buildings and pelted lawmen with brickbats. Bombs were also exploded during the clash, which continued up to 2:15pm.

Some on-duty senior police officers misbehaved with the senior alliance leaders, including Rashed Khan Menon and Tofail Ahmed, when they asked for an explanation of the police action that had been taken without any provocation, said witnesses.

Earlier, the police attacked an alliance procession, led by AL leaders AKM Rahmatullah and Haji Mohammad Selim, at Dainik Bangla crossing at about 11:00am.

The police lathi-charged the demonstrators, lobbed teargas shells and fired gunshots while the picketers pelted them with brickbats.

The picketers also attacked some houses in an alley beside the water tank after the reported throwing of brickbats on them from rooftops.

The police forced the picketers to flee into the alleys from where the latter pelted them with brickbats. After a number of crackers were hurled at them, the police left the alleys and took up positions on the main roads and continued lobbying teargas shells and firing gunshots at picketers during the clash that spread up to Arambagh and continued till 2:00pm.

At Ittefaq crossing the police used loudspeakers and repeatedly asked the people to leave the place, saying that the authorities had banned gatherings, rallies, processions and sit-ins around the Bangabhaban since the morning.

When the demonstrators, defying the police, continued to sit on the streets, the police dispersed them by using a water-cannon. The dispersed demonstrators then spread to different alleys and a clash erupted on Rankin Street in Wari.

About 50 people were injured in the clashes and ten of them were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while others were treated at different private hospitals and clinics.

Apart from trying to besiege Bangabhaban, the picketers were hardly seen to be active in other places of the capital. Quite a few motorised vehicles plied the city's streets; their number had increased significantly on Tuesday compared to the previous two days. The long-route buses did not come out till the afternoon.

Outside the capital the alliance activists staged demonstrations in Savar, Dhamrai, Keraniganj and Ashulia, keeping road communications snapped for the third consecutive day.

They were also active in Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Narsingdi and Gazipur. The police drove away the pickets by lathi-charging them when they tried to take up positions at Kanchpur in Narayanganj in the morning.

The demonstrators laid down logs in Narsingdi, bringing traffic to a halt on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway and on different roads in Barisal. All kinds of transport were stopped in Rajbari.

In Mymensingh the picketers uprooted a portion of railway tracks, snapping train communication on the Mymensingh-Mohanganj route.

In Rangpur the picketers set fire to BNP and JCD offices of the Pirganj upazila unit, and damaged at least 10 buses at Darshana point on the Rangpur-Bogra highway on Monday night.

In Sylhet most of the vehicles, except a few rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and cars, remained off the streets during the blockade.

In Rajshahi the streets were free of motorised vehicles and commercial centres and educational institutions remained closed. Cultural wings of the AL staged cultural programmes, gambhira and folk dance at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point all day long.

In Khulna the AL-led combine put up barricades at 29 points in the city and district, including

Picture Palace crossing, Sonadanga bus terminal, Joragate, Natun Rastar Mor, Rupsha Ferry Ghat and Gallamari.

However, there were no untoward incidents in Chittagong, Noakhali, Moulvibazar, Comilla, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Sirajganj, Pabna, Dinajpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Jhenaidah, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna and Faridpur, according to reports sent by New Age correspondents.

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## **Most garment factories yet to pay increased wages**

Kazi Azizul Islam

Most garment factories have not paid the increased wage, stipulated by the wage board announcement made three months ago, for December, said labour leaders.

The leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, who earlier promised to ensure the payment of the minimum wages in a month after the announcement, have now passed the blame on political unrest for their failure.

The government on October 22 made the gazette notification on the new wage after a three-party commission on RMG

wage review on October 5 worked out the pay structure, after working for more than four months, fixing the minimum wage at Tk 1,662 in the sector.

A labour unrest in the garment sector in late May and June 2006 forced the government to form the commission in early June giving it three months to suggest a new pay scale. The minimum wage had, earlier, remained unchanged at Tk 930 for 12 years.

'Most factory owners are depriving workers,' Nazma Akter, president of the Combined Garment Workers' Federation, said.

Nazma, who was member on the commission as workers' representative, said, 'There are more than 5,000 factories. We found that less than 100 factory owners have paid the increased wage.'

Few dozen factories told the workers that they would be paid the increased wage for January, to be disbursed in February, she said.

'Almost all the owners have found a common excuse, saying it has become impossible for them to disburse regular wages because of political unrest,' Mushrefa Mishu, president of the Garment Workers' Unity Forum, said.

Mishu, earlier arrested for organising workers during the labour unrest, said in some garment factories, workers were harassed or fired when they demanded increased wages

Aminul Haque Amin, general secretary of the National Garment Workers' Federation, said the federation in the last week of December sent a letter to the manufacturers and exporters' association, complaining non-payment of new wages. The federation is yet to receive any response.

The association's president SM Fazlul Hoque told New Age the association had informed all its members of the new wage structure. 'Many factories have implemented new wages.

The rest will soon implement the structure. The owners are struggling to pay the regular wage because of political unrest.'

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[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C01%5C10%5Cstory\\_10-1-2007\\_pg1\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C01%5C10%5Cstory_10-1-2007_pg1_2)

## **200 injured in Bangladesh clashes:**

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

## **50,000 attempt to march to presidency**

DHAKA: The Bangladesh capital turned into a battlefield on Tuesday as protesters demanding the scrapping of national elections hurled bombs and rocks at police who responded by firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

Around 50,000 protesters, chanting “no elections on January 22”, clashed with officers as they attempted to march to the presidential palace, Bangabhaban, on the third day of a crippling nationwide blockade. In one clash at least 10 small bombs were thrown at riot police who responded with tear gas volleys, according to police. In a second similar incident, police also fired rubber bullets, police said.

“The activists threw small bombs, rocks and stones at our officers and we had no choice but to retaliate,” said Assistant Police Commissioner Rezaul Islam. Police said a total of 25 small bombs were thrown at officers during the two clashes. “At least eight officers were injured, three of them seriously,” said Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka police Shahryar Rahman.

Senior opposition leader Tofael Ahmed said at least 200 Awami League activists were hurt.

Earlier, thousands of police and troops patrolled the streets of the capital with barbed wire barricades, blocking all roads leading to the presidential palace. Agencies

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/11/front.html#2>

## **RMG workers on rampage again**

*40 people injured, 10 vehicles and a factory set ablaze*

Staff Correspondent

Furious workers of Padma Poly Cotton Fabrics Ltd on Wednesday went on the rampage, clashing with the police and setting ablaze ten vehicles and a factory in the industrial area of Tejgaon. About 40 people were injured in the clashes.

All traffic movement was halted on the busy Tongi Diversion Road for four hours till 12:30pm due to the clashes.

Witnesses said hundreds of workers of the factory came to work in the morning at around 7:30am, but they found a notice, announcing the factory’s closure for an indefinite period, pasted on the factory’s gate.

Enraged at this sudden move by the factory’s management, the workers staged a demonstration in front of the factory’s gate and chanted slogans against the owners and some officials loyal to them who had hired goons to attack them on Tuesday evening.

Meanwhile, a rumour spread among the agitated workers that one of the four of their fellow workers, who were injured by the hired goons inside the factory and are now being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, had succumbed to his injuries in the morning.

Inflamed by the rumour, angry workers went on the rampage and broke the factory’s windowpanes, and damaged its computers and furniture.

They also damaged four vehicles and set blaze a motorbike parked inside the factory.

The workers then marched towards Sharmin Group and Hamim Group and asked the on-duty workers to join them.

As the on-duty workers hesitated to come out and join them, the workers were further enraged by the delay and attacked the factory and damaged the furniture, and shattered the windowpanes by pelting them with brickbats.



*The workers of the Padma Poly Cotton Fabrics Ltd set fire to a number of cars and rampage through the factory premises at Tejgaon in Dhaka on Wednesday, protesting at the sudden closure of the factory and demanding payment of salary. — New Age photo*

A huge contingent of police and members of the Rapid Action Battalion rushed to the spot but failed to bring the situation under control.

The law-enforcers indiscriminately lathi-charged the agitating workers and fired teargas shells in a bid to disperse them, but the workers countered by throwing brickbats on the law-enforcers. Many workers were injured in the clash.

Soon after the incident, another group of infuriated workers marched towards the NASA group, located on GMG alley, and extensively damaged whatever they could lay their hands on.

They also damaged a number of computers and set ablaze at least nine vehicles that were parked there.

A large contingent of regular police and riot police rushed to the spot and managed to bring the situation under control at around 12:30pm.

Then the workers marched towards the BGMEA Bhaban and submitted a memorandum of their five-point charter of demands.

The workers of the Padma Poly Cotton Fabric factory alleged that some hired thugs, hired by the management, swooped on the innocent workers and severely injured four of them and confined them in the storeroom.



'We requested the owners to reinstate Mojibur, one of our colleagues who had been fired, but he hired goons to attack us,' Anis, a worker, told New Age.

The police also arrested seven persons of the management of the Padma company for assaulting the workers and produced them before the court on Wednesday.

Sub-inspector Mizanur Rahman told New Age that sub-inspector Abdul Baten had filed a case with Tejgaon police station against the owners and the arrested persons.

The owners went into hiding after the incident.

Tipu Munshi, vice president of BGMEA, told newsmen, 'We will form a probe committee to investigate the incident and take action against the owners if they are found guilty.'

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/11/front.html#1>

## **AL, allies announce fresh spell of agitation programmes**

*Indefinite siege of Bangabhaban from Jan 14, blockade on Jan 14-15,17-18, hartal on Jan 21-22 if polls not cancelled*

Staff Correspondent



*A large crowd attends the rally of the Awami League-led expanded alliance in Paltan Maidan in Dhaka on Wednesday where Sheikh Hasina announces a series of agitation programmes. — New Age photo*

Sheikh Hasina, leader of the Awami League-led expanded political alliances on Wednesday announced a series of agitations, including nationwide blockade of transportation for January 14 to 18 with a day's break on January 16. The agitation programme also includes laying siege to Bangabhaban, the official residence of president Iajuddin Ahmed, for an indefinite period from January 14.

The political combine announced the programmes to press home its demands for cancellation of the January 22 polls, resignation of president Iajuddin from the post of the chief of the non-party caretaker government, and announcement of fresh polls schedule.

Hasina, also announced a 48-hour countrywide hartal from January 21, if the polls schedule was not cancelled by the time and a non-stop general strike from January 22 if the 'one-sided' elections were held according to the existing schedule.

She also announced a countrywide protest today against the police oppression during the blockade. Vowing to resist the January 22 polls at any cost, Hasina, addressing a rally in Paltan Maidan, also urged the law enforcers and the officials involved in election duties and people from all walks of

life to abstain from the 'one-sided' elections.

'We have no option but to wage a tougher movement to push for the demands. Agitation programmes will continue till the time people would be freed from the clutches of "vote thieves",' said Hasina.

The Awami League organised the rally marking the homecoming day of the first president, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, where alliance leaders, including Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad and Liberal Democratic Party president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, also spoke.

On this day in 1972, Sheikh Mujib returned home from Pakistan where he had been held in solitary confinement in a prison during Bangladesh's nine-month war of independence. The Pakistan army arrested him on the night of March 25, 1971.

'No one-sided elections will be held in Bangladesh as the mega alliance has rejected the polls. The people have rejected the polls,' Hasina said, adding the alliance wanted elections for all the parties and people.

She said no elections would be held under the present caretaker government chief, Iajuddin Ahmed, and iterated the demands for immediate resignation of Iajuddin as chief adviser and the appointment of a neutral caretaker chief in keeping with the constitution.

Hasina also demanded reconstitution of the Election Commission, properly updated voters' roll, transparent ballot boxes, keeping the 345 upazila level 'partisan' election officers out of the polls process and neutralisation of the administration before a fresh polls schedule.

She also gave a warning that the people involved in the 'illegal' elections would be considered enemies to the people.

Hasina warned the caretaker administration over not playing games with elections, saying the people would not accept such elections.

Accusing Iajuddin of making way for the BNP and the Jamaat to go to power by holding elections according to their blueprint, Hasina said the chief adviser took over the charge of the interim government, violating the constitution. She also accused Iajuddin of carrying out partisan activities in repeated violation of the constitution.

'He [Iajuddin] always refers to constitution at the directive of Hawa Bhaban, but he initiated the polls process without a completely updated voters' roll, although an updated roll is a must for polls according to Section 121 and 122 of the constitution,' Hasina said, adding there was no complete voters' roll till date, 12 day before the polls.

'We expected justice from the president as he was a teacher. But we do not know if he is afraid of any quarters or if he has lost his senses?' she said, adding all the responsibilities would lie with the chief adviser for any consequences.

Accusing Iajuddin of using the police to oppress the leaders and activists of the Awami League and its allies, Hasina also warned the police with a dire consequence if the oppression was not stopped. Pointing out the Awami League government's contribution to increased ration for the policemen from 20 per cent to 50 per cent and the construction of Tk 5-crore five-storey residential building at Razarbagh, Hasina asked the policemen why they were oppressing the people who were in the streets for their betterment.

'Look at international communities, development agencies and friendly countries who said one-sided elections would not be acceptable,' Hasina said to Iajuddin, adding even the election commissioner in-charge said the responsibility would lie with the caretaker government chief for any unwarranted situation in holding the polls.

Hasina said it seemed that Iajuddin had already prepared the polls results and was just waiting for staging the election drama.

'We tried to take part in the polls and submitted nomination papers, but found a number of inconsistencies in the voters' roll where a candidate was recorded dead,' she said, adding such elections of conspiracy would be resisted at any cost.

Several thousand leaders and activists of the alliance began gathering in Paltan Maidan at about noon and crowded the ground by 3:00pm.

The crowd spilled over to neighbouring areas in front of the General Post Office and Bangabandhu

Avenue. They chanted slogans against Iajuddin and the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

The Jatiya Party chairman, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, said Iajuddin had been working to push for the agenda of a party. 'We will not allow holding any elections according to the blueprint of the party.'

He said a certain quarter was conspiring against him, by reviving cases against him, as he had joined the Awami League-led alliance.

The Liberal Democratic Party president, AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, said the country was facing a political crisis and a conspiracy was on to capture the voting rights of the people.

Awami League presidium member Sajeda Chowdhury said, 'We want free and fair elections where the people would be able to cast their vote at their will.'

Another presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said Iajuddin must resign as chief adviser to the caretaker government.

The BNP-led alliance was trying to establish a communal and fundamentalist country, AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said.

The alliance coordinator, Abdul Jalil, also the Awami League's general secretary, said, 'We must resist the polls.'

The Workers Party president, Rashed Khan Menon, put out a call for the people to resist the 'vote thieves.' 'We want to establish a non-communal democratic Bangladesh if the alliance is voted to power.'

The Liberal Democratic Party executive president, Oli Ahmed, said the expanded alliance was representing the two-thirds of the total population.

The caretaker government was trying to hold 'farcical' elections without participation of major political parties and properly updated voters' roll, said Hasanul Haq, president of a Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal faction.

The cultural wings of the alliance had sung songs on the dais before the meeting began. Poet Mahadeb Saha recited a poem on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the rally.

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6252095.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6252095.stm)

Thursday, 11 January 2007, 12:50 GMT

## **Observers shun Bangladeshi vote**



Protesters say planned elections will not be fair

**The United Nations and European Union have said they are suspending election observer missions in Bangladesh.**

A UN statement said: "The political crisis... has severely jeopardised the legitimacy of the electoral process."

The EU said conditions for a credible vote did not exist and its observers would leave Bangladesh by Sunday night.

Weeks of violence have preceded the 22 January general election, which a major alliance of parties is boycotting because of alleged bias.

The BBC's John Sudworth in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, says the announcements by the UN and EU are being seen as a strong signal from the international community to the caretaker government that the poll should be postponed.

### **UN concern**

The EU said it was closing its election observer mission in the country with regret.

**“ The United Nations is deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in the country, and urges all parties to refrain from the use of violence ”**

### UN statement

"Agreement on the conditions for the elections by the election stakeholders is a prerequisite for credible and meaningful elections and these do not currently exist," a statement said.

All of its long-term observers were being recalled to Dhaka to be flown home, the EU said, and an additional 130 who were due to arrive would not now be going.

The UN issued a statement saying it was "deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation" and was withdrawing all technical support to the electoral process.

It said it hoped the army would continue to play a neutral role and that "those responsible for enforcing the law (would) act with restraint and respect for human rights".

The decision to pull out follows that taken by two Washington-based election observer missions to do the same.

Our correspondent says that with polls now less than two weeks away the election process is in tatters and there is no sign of compromise.

The alliance led by the Awami League is refusing to take part, claiming the electoral register is incomplete, inaccurate and biased in favour of its rival, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which left office in October.

But the caretaker government insists the constitution does not allow it to suspend the election.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/12/index.html>

### **President declares state of emergency**

*Iajuddin resigns as chief adviser; Fazlul Huq made acting CA; new council of advisers 'in a day or two'*

Shahiduzzaman

- | Polls to ninth Jatiya Sangsad postponed indefinitely
- | Nighttime curfew clamped in metropolitan cities and district headquarters
- | Freedom of movement, assembly, association, thought and conscience, speech, profession and occupation and rights to property suspended
- | News and current affairs programmes of private channels suspended

The president, Iajuddin Ahmed, on Thursday evening declared a state of emergency in the country suspending fundamental rights and indefinitely delaying the elections to the ninth Jatiya Sangsad, which was earlier scheduled for January 22.

In an address to the nation broadcast live over radio and television at about 11:15pm, Iajuddin also announced his decision to step down as the chief adviser to the caretaker government and to hold a free and fair election to be participated by all political parties 'in due course'.

The senior most adviser to Iajuddin's council of advisers has been given charge of the chief adviser while the other nine advisers all resigned on Thursday. A new set of advisers will be appointed within a day or two who will be charged with holding a free, fair and acceptable election 'in the shortest possible time', the president said.

Curfew has been imposed in Dhaka city and all metropolitan and district towns from 11:00pm to 5:00am every night until further order, the state-run Bangladesh Television said quoting a Bangabhaban circular.

The emergency services including ambulance, Fire Brigade, media, utility services, doctors, hajj pilgrims and aviation passengers will remain out of the purview of the curfew, said an announcement of Bangabhaban Thursday night. It advised such persons to carry identity cards and air tickets.

However, police and members of other law enforcing agencies detained three-wheelers carrying journalists during curfew in the early hours at different points of the city.

The president declared emergency in the wake of the Awami League-led alliance's boycott of the parliamentary elections and series of siege and strike programmes meant for resisting the polls.

The declaration also comes in the wake of widespread international criticism about the caretaker chief's defiant bid to hold the Jan 22 vote. Officials of the UN and the EU have made it plain that they will not support or monitor the vote due in 11 days.

In his address to the nation, Iajuddin said under the prevailing situation when the political parties are in totally opposing poles it was neither possible to achieve the goal of running the country nor to hold a free, fair and neutral election as per the expectations of the common people.

He said that almost none of the decisions or steps taken by his caretaker government were welcomed by the political parties since he took the responsibility of chief adviser on October 29.

The president admitted that general elections without the participation of all political parties would not be acceptable either at home or abroad.

He said it was desirable to bring an end to the controversy that was created centering his taking over as the chief adviser that has 'divided the country and the nation into two opposing camps'.



A handout of the government's press information department said, 'The president has proclaimed emergency using his authority as mentioned in article 141 of the constitution.'

'As it is to my satisfaction that a grave emergency exists in which the security or economic life of Bangladesh is threatened by internal disturbance, I issue a proclamation of emergency throughout the country until further order under the article 141 A (1)(2)(3), 141B, 141C(1), (2) and (3) of the constitution,' the president said in the proclamation.

This is the first emergency announced since the reinstatement of parliamentary form of government following the ouster of the military dictator HM Ershad in 1990. Ershad announced emergency in November 1990 immediately before his fall.

According to article 141B, the issuance of proclamation of emergency automatically suspends the operation of the fundamental rights to freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of thought and conscience, and of speech, freedom of profession and occupation and rights to property.

Article 141C(1) states, 'While a proclamation of emergency is in operation, the president may, on the written advice of the prime minister, by order, declare that the right to move any court for the enforcement of such of the rights conferred by part III of this constitution as may be specified in the order, and all proceedings pending in any court for the enforcement of the right so specified, shall remain suspended for the period during which the proclamation is in force or for such shorter period as may be specified in the order.'

Every such order suspending the fundamental rights, however, must be placed before the parliament as soon as may be, according to sub-article 141C(3).

Article 141A(2) stipulates, 'If any such proclamation is issued at a time when parliament stands dissolved ... the proclamation shall cease to operate at the expiration of thirty days from the date on which parliament first meets after its re-constitution, unless before that expiration of the said period of thirty days a resolution approving the proclamation has been passed by parliament.'

The president, however, holds the power to revoke the proclamation of emergency at any time by a subsequent proclamation.

The principal information officer quoting Bangabhaban ordered suspension of news and current affairs programmes in all private television channels, senior administrators of the channels told New Age.

The army, which was already out of their barracks as part of their election duty in aid of the civil administration, was more visible on the streets of the capital after the declaration of the emergency making people rush home early.

bdnews24.com, a private sector news agency, said traffic was snarled Thursday evening in most cities as news spread by word of mouth and mobile phone news service. Panicked people in the capital in their rush for home caused huge traffic chaos, their correspondents reported.

A bewildered traffic policeman, Abdul Quader, on duty at Dhaka's Shyamoli said: 'Something very big must have happened'.

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<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/ultimas/2007/01/13/empeora-crisis-en-bangladesh-con-detencion-de-2-mil-500-personas>

## **Empeora crisis en Bangladesh con detención de 2 mil 500 personas**

Agencias

13/01/2007 16:45

*Pekín.* Más de dos mil 500 personas fueron arrestadas y varias viviendas fueron allanadas este sábado en Bangladesh por la policía y soldados, apenas un día después de instaurarse un nuevo gobierno provisional, en medio de los preparativos para los comicios.

De acuerdo con informes de la policía, fueron detenidas en total dos mil 552 personas, incluidas 195 arrestadas la noche del viernes en la capital Dhaka bajo varios cargos, además de que se confiscaron 34 armas, 38 balas y cinco bombas caseras.

Las autoridades detuvieron en el oeste y el norte del país al menos a 20 personas, entre ellos algunos políticos locales, y allanaron viviendas de asistentes de dirigentes políticos sospechosos de actividades delictivas y corrupción, pero no realizaron arrestos.

La víspera, el ex gobernador del Banco Central de Bangladesh Fakhruddin Ahmed tomó posesión como nuevo primer ministro interino del país, en un esfuerzo para restaurar la calma en esa nación del sur asiático azotada por la violencia.

El presidente de Bangladesh, Iajuddin Ahmed, renunció el jueves pasado al puesto de primer ministro tras varios enfrentamientos que han dejado unos 45 muertos en tres meses.

En Bangladesh se han originado protestas y enfrentamientos entre seguidores del gobernante Partido Nacional y del opositor Liga Awami por discrepancias sobre la fecha en que se celebrarían las elecciones generales, y por dudas sobre el padrón electoral.

El Partido Liga Awami alega que en el padrón electoral existen unos 14 millones de "nombres falsos" y exige que la fecha de las elecciones se retrase, lo que podría ocurrir con el nombramiento del nuevo primer ministro.

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/13/front.html#1>

## **Fakhruddin takes over as chief adviser**

Nazrul Islam



The president, Iajuddin Ahmed, reconstituted the non-party caretaker government on Friday, by appointing Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former central bank governor, as the new chief of the interim administration.

President Iajuddin, who resigned on Thursday from the post of the chief adviser and promulgated a state of emergency throughout the country, administered the oath of office to Fakhruddin Ahmed at a ceremony at Bangabhaban, the presidential residence.

Fakhruddin Ahmed, a renowned economist and former governor of the central bank, was serving as managing director of the Bangladesh Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, a public sector micro credit institution, before being made the chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Khaleda Zia and the leaders of her Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led alliance abstained from attending Ahmed's swearing-in ceremony.

Sheikh Hasina and the leaders of her Awami League-led alliance, attended the function.

The situation was just the opposite on October 29 last year, when Iajuddin took over as the chief adviser. Khaleda attended the swearing-in ceremony and Hasina boycotted it.

Former advisers, foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka, senior civil and military bureaucrats, and a section of eminent citizens were present at the ceremony.

The cabinet secretary, Ali Imam Majumder, conducted the oath taking ceremony at 7:00pm.

However, the president is likely to appoint ten other advisers in a day or two, most likely in consultation with the new chief of the interim government, the tenure of which was not spelled out immediately, officials said.

But the president in his address to the nation, through which he declared a state of emergency on Thursday night suspending fundamental rights, mentioned that a number of tasks needed to be

completed for holding a free, fair and credible election and that it would take time.

The Election Commission, meanwhile, formally announced postponement of the January 22 general elections. They will now go for massive reconstitution of the quasi judicial body and electoral laws as well and before holding the election, the EC sources said.

With the swearing in of the chief adviser, the authorities apparently relaxed emergency provisions, including restrictions on the print and electronic media.

Private television channels were reportedly asked by the Press Information Department on Thursday not to air news programmes, and they followed the instruction accordingly. The channels resumed news programmes on Friday.

The authorities also lifted the night-time curfew imposed for six hours everyday in Dhaka and other district towns for an indefinite period.

The police were seen announcing the lifting of curfew by loud hailers at different places in the city.

The withdrawal of curfew eased tensions in the capital and other parts of the country.

The police and the elite Rapid Action Battalion launched a hunt for listed criminals, some businessmen and a section of politicians having criminal links.

In an announcement, the Awami League general secretary, Abdul Jalil, said that the AL-led alliance had called off all street protests. The alliance had earlier announced a series of agitation programmes, including transport blockades and general strikes to resist holding of the January 22 elections.

Jalil refused to comment on the 'promulgation of emergency', but found the president quitting the office of the chief adviser a 'people's victory'.

The BNP in a statement said that it believed the emergency was a temporary measure. The statement said the party hoped the interim government would do everything possible to hand over power to an elected government in the shortest possible time.

The left leaning political parties opposed emergency while major political parties refrained from making direct comments.

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## **Life-sketch of Fakhruddin**

United News of Bangladesh . Dhaka

The newly appointed chief adviser to the caretaker government, Fakhruddin Ahmed, son of Mohiuddin Ahmed of Bikrampur in Munshiganj, was born on May 1, 1940.

He obtained BA (Hons) degree in Economics from Dhaka University in 1960 and MA in 1961. He stood first-class first in both the exams.

He also did Master's Degree in Development Economics from Williams College, USA, and Doctor of Philosophy in Economics from Princeton University.

Fakhruddin started his career as lecturer in economics department of Dhaka University. Later, he joined the Civil Service of Pakistan and served government in various capacities until 1978.

He held senior positions in the World Bank from 1978 to 2001 before joining Bangladesh Bank as its governor on November 29, 2001 where he had served for three years to May 1, 2005.

The former governor of Bangladesh Bank, Fakhruddin joined Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation as managing director on June 1, 2005.

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## **BNP, allies stay away from Bangabhaban function**

Staff Correspondent

The leaders of the BNP and its allies were conspicuously absent from the oath taking ceremony of the new chief adviser, Fakhruddin Ahmed, at Bangabhaban on Friday.



The party chairperson, Khaleda Zia, decided not to attend the function as the president, Iajuddin Ahmed, had not consulted her party before deciding to relinquish the post of the chief adviser nor about the appointment of Fakhruddin Ahmed to the post of the chief adviser, some key BNP sources said.

Khaleda stood by her decision to stay away from the function though top party stalwarts, including secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and standing committee members M Saifur Rahman and Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain tried to persuade her to attend.

She also asked the Jatiya believed the state of emergency would be a temporary measure. 'We believe the state of emergency is a temporary measure as the president declared it considering adverse impacts of violent programmes of a section of political parties on the life and property of the people, economy and law and order,' said the statement distributed among the members of the press after oath taking ceremony of the new chief adviser, Fakhruddin Ahmed.

The Jatiya Party of HM Ershad appreciated the move and said the declaration was expected in the existing political crisis.

'We welcome the decision as it was essential to restore a congenial atmosphere to the country to hold free, fair and credible elections,' the party's presidium member Anisul Islam Mahmud told New Age.

The Liberal Democratic Party secretary general, Abdul Mannan, said, 'I hope it should meet the crisis and not meet the ego of anyone.'

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## **Curfew withdrawn**

Staff Correspondent

A night-time curfew ordered of six metropolitan cities and district headquarters for six hours beginning at 11:00pm was withdrawn on Friday evening a day after its imposition on Thursday.

In a press statement, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said the curfew ordered on Thursday night had been withdrawn until further order.

'It is to inform all that the curfew imposed in a changed situation and as per the Special Powers Act 1978 in the Dhaka city area has been withdrawn,' said the the statement, signed by DMP commissioner, ABM Bazlur Rahman.

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[http://www.courrierinternational.com/article.asp?obj\\_id=69872](http://www.courrierinternational.com/article.asp?obj_id=69872)

## **CHRONOLOGIE • L'histoire tourmentée du Bangladesh**

**18 janv. 2007**

**Depuis sa création, en 1971, le Bangladesh connaît un climat politique extrêmement agité.**

**14 août 1947** La veille de l'indépendance de l'Inde, le Pakistan voit le jour. Le Pakistan-Occidental et le Pakistan-Oriental, composé de la partie principalement musulmane du Bengale, sont séparés par plus de 1 500 km de territoire indien.

**1949** Création de la Ligue Awami (AL) par Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, parti prônant l'indépendance du Pakistan-Oriental.

**1970** L'AL remporte les élections locales mais le gouvernement pakistanais, hostile aux velléités irrédentistes des Bengalis, refuse de reconnaître le résultat, provoquant de nombreuses émeutes au Pakistan-Oriental.

**1971** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman est arrêté et détenu au Pakistan-Occidental. En exil, il proclame l'indépendance du Bangladesh. L'armée pakistanaise intervient et tue plusieurs milliers de Bengalis. L'Inde, qui voit arriver un afflux de réfugiés, intervient militairement et vient en aide aux indépendantistes. Islamabad reconnaît finalement le Bangladesh.

**1972** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman est nommé Premier ministre.

**1974** Des inondations ravagent les récoltes et l'état d'urgence est déclaré. Protestations politiques.

**1975** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman est nommé président alors que le climat politique se détériore. Il est assassiné lors d'un coup d'Etat militaire, mené par le général Zia en août. La loi martiale est déclarée.

**1977** Le général Zia assume les fonctions de président et inscrit l'islam dans la Constitution du pays.

**1979** Le Parti nationaliste bangladais (BNP), parti de Zia, gagne les élections et suspend la loi martiale imposée en 1975.

**1981** Assassinat du général Zia lors d'un coup d'Etat manqué.

**1982** Un nouveau coup d'Etat, mené par le général Ershad, a lieu. Ershad prend le pouvoir, suspend la Constitution et interdit les partis politiques.

**1983** Ershad devient président.

**1986** Elections législatives et présidentielle. Ershad est maintenu au pouvoir pour cinq ans. Il lève la loi martiale et remet la Constitution en vigueur.

**1987** Etat d'urgence après une grève générale et des émeutes contre le gouvernement. Le Parlement est dissous.

**1988** L'islam devient la religion officielle. Des inondations font des milliers de sans-abri. La catastrophe humanitaire est sans précédent.

**1990** Face aux protestations grandissantes, Ershad démissionne. Il est condamné à treize ans de prison pour corruption et détention illicite d'armes.

**1991** Khaleda Zia, veuve de l'ancien président, devient Premier ministre. Le président n'a plus qu'un rôle honorifique.

**1996** L'AL gagne les élections législatives. Sheikh Hasina Wajed, la fille de Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, devient Premier ministre.

**1997** Ershad est libéré. L'opposition, menée par le BNP, lance une série de manifestations contre le gouvernement.

**2000** Détérioration des relations avec le Pakistan.

**2001** Sheikh Hasina se retire à la fin de son mandat. Une administration intérimaire prend sa place avant le nouveau scrutin. Une coalition menée par le BNP gagne les élections législatives.

**2002** Le président pakistanais, Pervez Musharraf, se rend au Bangladesh en visite officielle et exprime ses regrets pour les atrocités commises en 1971. Iajuddin Ahmed devient président du pays. Série d'attentats à la bombe.

**2004** L'opposition lance de nombreuses grèves pour pousser le gouvernement à la démission. Nouvel attentat à la bombe. Sheikh Hasina est blessée lors d'une attaque à la grenade lors d'une manifestation antigouvernementale.

**2005** Série de plus de 350 attentats simultanés à la bombe imputés aux islamistes.

**Octobre 2006** Khaleda Zia finit son mandat et nomme un gouvernement d'intérim. L'opposition l'accuse d'être partiale. Le président de la République prend finalement la tête du gouvernement.

**Novembre 2006** L'opposition fait campagne contre plusieurs membres de la commission électorale, accusés d'être pro-BNP.

**Décembre 2006** Les élections législatives sont prévues pour le 22 janvier 2007. L'AL menace de ne pas participer au scrutin. Une grève générale paralyse le pays.

**Janvier 2007** Emeutes à Dacca. Le président déclare l'état d'urgence le 11 janvier et appelle l'armée à rétablir l'ordre. Le lendemain, il laisse sa place à la tête du gouvernement d'intérim à Fakhruddin Ahmed, économiste renommé et gouverneur de la banque centrale. Finalement, l'AL déclare qu'elle participera aux élections. Le scrutin est repoussé de plusieurs mois.

Ingrid Therwath

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<http://www.newagebd.com/2007/jan/21/front.html#2>

## COMMENTARY

### **Unanswered questions raise fears of intrigue**

Zayd Almer Khan

It is ten days today that the president declared a state of emergency and stepped down from the position of chief adviser to the caretaker government. In his place was inducted a new chief adviser, ostensibly to another caretaker government. We say ostensibly because we really don't know what the nature, form and legitimacy of this government really is. The government itself, and its chief adviser in particular, has not yet deigned it necessary to explain much, or anything for that matter, to us.

According to the many vox pop interviews on TV, the opinions expressed by many a civil society leader (including the democratic politician-cum-human rights defender Dr Kamal Hossain) and the Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus himself, the people are apparently 'jubilant' about the state of emergency that ended 'the possibility of civil war' and brought back 'stability to the economy'. Despite such unqualified enthusiasm expressed by such esteemed quarters and the man on the streets alike at the suspension of our fundamental rights — the freedoms of movement, assembly, association, thought and conscience, speech, profession and occupation, and the rights to property — this paper feels it its responsibility to ask a few questions to Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed's government.

Question one: Who are you? Except for a characteristically feeble apology of a statement read out by the president as he stepped down on January 11 saying that he would hand over power to a new chief adviser, and the live broadcast of Fakhruddin's swearing in as the 'chief adviser to the

caretaker government', there has been no indication given of precisely what legal and constitutional framework the incumbency of this government falls under.

Question two: Who are you accountable to? While the fact that the government is backed by the military has been plainly obvious, there is no clear signal yet as to what role exactly the military is playing behind the scenes. It has been confirmed to us that the army headquarters had made some of the initial calls to those who were eventually installed as advisers to the government, with at least one confirmed incident of a top western diplomat making the call to a possible chief adviser appointee.

Are we to assume then that Fakhruddin and his cabinet's strings are being decisively pulled by a combination of the armed forces and our foreign 'development partners'? All the signs thus far point precisely that way.

Question three: What exactly are your intentions? The agenda for the government could range anywhere between the relatively straightforward — tabulating a truly representative voters' roll and holding a free and fair election for the current political order, as it is, to participate in and then for the winner to be handed the reins of power — and the very complex — massively reforming the electoral process, depoliticising institutions of the state, tackling corruption and its symbiotic relationship with politics, thwarting the all-encompassing nature of arms and muscle, etc.

The point is, there has to be an agenda. At least one that is laid out for the people to consider. And perhaps then the mandate, or lack thereof, for such actions could be discussed.

Question four: Who gives you the right to have those intentions? The 'development partners' and the military, by the sheer fact of their covert and overt backing of the government, would clearly be buying into the agenda. But what about the political parties, and the people? Without their buy-in, how far-reaching and sustainable would any overhaul of the system be?

Politicians, vilified as they may be, are by the nature of their profession bound to listen to at least some of the feeble voices that may reach them from among the cacophony of despair that emanate from the downtrodden, the all-but-disenfranchised. That is why farmers sometimes get electricity for irrigation over wedding lights in the city. That is why rickshaws remain, as do hawkers, because they have nothing else to resort to for their livelihood.

But will this government, the military, the 'development partners' or even the 'jubilant' civil society be hearing those voices? And without those voices heard, can there be a real mandate?

Question five: How long are you here for? Or otherwise, how long will an unelected, non-representative group of military-backed elite rule a populace of over 140 million people in the name of delivering democracy? A pertinent question indeed since not too far away a certain general Pervez Musharraf has only recently hinted at asking for five more years in office, a full six years after he assumed power in an effort to deliver democracy.

Question six: Has anyone thought of an exit strategy? All these shenanigans in the name of stability, at the end of the day, will require ratification with two-thirds of the next parliament voting to do so. How much of the political feather can be ruffled in order to keep all concerned on board to ensure that stamp of approval? The last time such a dilemma afflicted a military government, the right-wing, ultra-elitist and ultimately self-serving Jatiya Party was born.

If the current government wants to keep up the façade of constitutionality and the 'greater good of democracy' party line, then these are only but a few questions that they must answer to the public. And the civil society along with the media must ask them with candour.

Now that politicians have been swept aside, at least for the time being, it is in vogue for members of the civil society and sections of the media to lambaste politicians and political parties for all the ills that have been 'averted' by the state of emergency. But the political system reaching breaking point also represents a failure on the part of that same civil society and the media, because in their eagerness to unquestioningly align themselves to the crude power play of the political parties, they have abdicated their duties as a pressure group.

Instead of demanding democracy within the parties, instead of professionally and socially disassociating with practitioners of corrupt, bankrupt politics, instead of giving up the temptation to play advisers, consultants and confidants to partisan interests, they chose to toe the party line —

whichever one suited them at whichever point.

Just as it is shamelessly irresponsible of them today to exclusively denounce politics and 'rejoice' at the suspension of fundamental rights, if there is any intrigue coming our way by way of the current regime or any similar ones to follow, we will hold them party to it then.

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<http://www.humanite.presse.fr/journal/2007-01-18/2007-01-18-844197>

## **L'état d'urgence perdure au Bangladesh**

l'Humanité - 19 jan 2007

**Dacca . Les législatives du 22 janvier ont été repoussées après les émeutes, comme le demandait l'opposition. Mais l'appel à l'armée fait craindre un maintien du pays sous l'éteignoir.**

Moins d'une semaine après avoir décrété l'état d'urgence et - repoussé les élections législatives qui devaient se tenir le 22 janvier, le nouveau - gouvernement intérimaire du Bangladesh a demandé à - l'armée, déployée depuis la semaine dernière dans le pays, de rester dans les rues en attendant l'organisation des élections. « Le gouvernement a décidé de conserver les forces armées comme appui à l'administration civile aussi longtemps que nécessaire pendant l'état d'urgence », a déclaré Abdullah Al Shahin, au nom du gouvernement.

Jeudi dernier, le président bangladais, Lajuddin - Ahmed, qui avait été nommé chef du gouvernement intérimaire, avait instauré l'état d'urgence et décidé de - reporter un scrutin que - l'opposition boycottait. La ligue Awami estimait que les listes électorales avaient été « gonflées » de plus de 14 millions d'électeurs fantômes. La crise politique, qui couvait depuis début octobre, s'était transformée en véritables affrontements de rue : 35 personnes avaient été tuées et des milliers d'autres blessées dans des violences entre manifestants et forces policières.

C'est l'ancien gouverneur de la Banque centrale du Bangladesh, Fakhruddin Ahmed, considéré comme politiquement neutre, qui a été nommé à la tête du gouvernement intérimaire chargé d'organiser les législatives aussi vite que possible. Pour ce faire, il doit négocier avec les partis politiques bangladais, la Ligue Awami de Cheikh Hasina - fer de lance de l'opposition - et sa rivale Khaleda Zia, dirigeante du Parti nationaliste du Bangladesh (BNP), au pouvoir jusqu'en octobre 2006. La ligue, puissante alliance d'opposition au Bangladesh, est en fin de compte revenue sur sa décision de ne pas participer aux élections législatives.

D. B.

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[http://www.indianmuslims.info/news/2007/january/30/muslim\\_world\\_news/bangladesh\\_court\\_suspends\\_all\\_polls\\_for\\_three\\_months.html](http://www.indianmuslims.info/news/2007/january/30/muslim_world_news/bangladesh_court_suspends_all_polls_for_three_months.html)

## **Bangladesh court suspends all polls for three months**

Submitted by aftababedin on Tue, 2007-01-30 08:05. Muslim World News

Dhaka, Jan 30 (IANS) A Bangladesh court has suspended all elections for three months, including elections to the National Assembly, indicating a long spell for the current non-party caretaker government.

Monday's high court order, despite the demand for early polls by political parties, tasks the government with electoral reforms like updating voters' lists and issuing photo identity cards to each voter. This may actually take longer than three months.

The ruling also targets the Election Commission, whose role and officials have been controversial. The political alliance led by Awami League has been demanding its reconstitution.

The poll body has been asked to explain why it has not updated the voters' lists despite a clear directive by the Supreme Court last year.

A hasty updating was done, amid protests by Awami-led alliance, in time for the Jan 22 polls that were cancelled because of political turmoil.

The caretaker government headed by Chief Advisor Fakhruddin Ahmed has explained that it is implementing the demands made by political parties.

The Daily Star reported Tuesday that the government had indicated reconstitution of the Election Commission "in a couple of days", once the present incumbents "are ready to step down".

Retired judge Mahfuzur Rahman, the acting chief election commissioner, is expected to resign, followed by other election commissioners, the newspaper said.

The court's order came in response to a petition by Kazi Mammur Hasan, a Dhaka voter.

It asked the Election Commission to show cause why it should not be ordered to introduce voter identification cards and arrange transparent ballot boxes for the national election.

Issuing photo identity cards to an electorate of over 70 million could pose problems of finance and logistics, political observers pointed out.

Assured by the government that it would not impose indiscriminate curbs, sections of media have welcomed the government's initiatives.

The Daily Star said in an editorial Tuesday: "Ordinary people expect that the government would clean some of the mess left by elected governments. But the question is whether it will be possible for it to remove all the ills embedded in the society, and within the state's institutions, during its tenure.

"Many political observers hope that it will set an example, in certain core areas, that it can remove bottlenecks and establish checks and balances, necessary for good governance, in public institutions so as to create congenial environment for a fair and credible general election."

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<http://www.metrodirecto.com/es/article/ep/2007/02/04/20070204142842/index.xml?print=1>

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## **Detenidos trece dirigentes políticos opositores en Bangladesh**

DACCA, 4 (EP/AP)

Las fuerzas de seguridad de Bangladesh detuvieron en la mañana de hoy a trece importantes dirigentes políticos de la oposición amparándose en las leyes de excepción, según informaron los medios de comunicación y los familiares de los opositores.

Entre los arrestados hay dirigentes políticos y ex ministros, que fueron sacados de sus residencias en Dacca a primera hora de hoy. Ocho de los detenidos son estrechos colaboradores de la ex primera ministra Jaleda Zia en su partido. Uno de los arrestado estaban los ex ministros Nazmul Huda y Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury.

El ex ministro del Interior Mohammad Nasim, uno de los más destacados líderes de la Liga Awami, el partido de la ex primera ministra Sheij Hasina, también ha sido detenido. Hasina y Zia mantienen un agrio enfrentamiento político por las reformas electorales aprobadas por el Gobierno transitorio, elegido por Zia y que debe organizar las próximas elecciones legislativas.

En un principio, las elecciones estaban convocadas para el pasado 22 de enero, pero las graves protestas y disturbios registrados obligaron a aplazar los comicios y a declarar el estado de emergencia el pasado 11 de enero. En los enfrentamientos murieron 34 personas.

Europa Press

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6255773.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6255773.stm)

Monday, 3 September 2007, 10:47 GMT 11:47 UK

## **Q&A: Bangladesh crisis**

**Former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been arrested, charged with corruption and placed in detention. The move comes shortly after more charges were levelled against her arch rival Sheikh Hasina, also a former prime minister who has been under arrest for some time.**



Khaleda Zia and her two sons are now in detention

### **What are the two women charged with?**

Khaleda Zia has now been charged with corruption in relation to the choice of who should run two state-run container depots during her second term in office as prime minister. Earlier this year she was charged with tax evasion. Sheikh Hasina faces a new charge of taking illegal payments of some \$435,000 from an electricity company. She is already under investigation for extortion and murder. Both women deny any wrongdoing.

## **What is the political significance of the charges against them?**

Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have dominated Bangladeshi politics for many years. The country has a long-running reputation for deep-seated corruption. The current caretaker administration, backed by the military, has pledged to eradicate corruption. Many analysts say the government is determined to destroy the political power of the two women as part of its drive for political reform.

## **What has happened to ordinary politics in Bangladesh?**

The caretaker government introduced a state of emergency in January. Political parties have been banned from holding meetings. Trade union activities, including rallies and demonstrations are also banned.

The media has been censored. Private TV stations can only broadcast news supplied by state television. Newspapers are careful about publishing anything critical of the government.

One major question is whether the two main parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League, will be able to resume political activities.

The government says elections will be held only once it has rid the country of corruption. They say that will be by the end of 2008. So far scores of politicians, businessmen and civil servants have been arrested.

## **How have the main parties reacted to the state of emergency and the moves against their leaders?**

Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina and BNP leader Khaleda Zia face rumblings of discontent against their leadership from within their respective parties.

The BNP and Awami League - normally the bitterest of political enemies - say that elections should go ahead as soon as possible. But the problems faced by the leaderships of the two parties have made it difficult for them to rally popular support.



Students are frustrated over the lack of democracy

The restrictions on their political activities in recent months have meant that the two parties have kept a relatively low profile.

The Awami League has taken court action to get murder charges against Sheikh Hasina dropped, and secure her release from detention.



The BNP issued a series of statements condemning what it said were government efforts to force Khaleda Zia into exile.

### **How many senior politicians have been arrested?**

The chief of Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury told the BBC in July that some 200 people had been questioned or detained awaiting trial so far.

He said that many more arrests could be expected in the coming months.

Khaleda Zia's elder son, Tarique Rahman, was placed in custody in March. Her younger son is now in custody too, as well as several former BNP cabinet ministers.

The Awami League's General Secretary, Abdul Jalil, is also in custody.

A number of second-tier leaders from both parties are in hiding, some may have left the country. Other senior leaders have become "inoperative" - meaning they no longer give statements or say anything critical of the government.

In June, the special anti-corruption court handed down its first conviction and sentence to a former government minister, Amanullah Aman, who was sent to jail for 13 years.

The authorities have warned that many other convictions will follow.

### **Why were there student riots in August?**

There is dissatisfaction among many in Bangladesh over what they see as the slow re-introduction of democracy.

Students in particular are frustrated that under the state of emergency imposed in January, political gatherings are banned.

Many have also been angered over the presence of the military and the police force on university campuses.

Universities in Bangladesh have traditionally been hotbeds of political debate, and it was after student movements in the past that military governments of Ziaur Rahman and Muhammad Ershad were overthrown.

### **Will the military-backed government succeed in its efforts to eradicate corruption?**

That remains to be seen. Correspondents say the problem is so deep-rooted that it will not have time to clean things up before the elections promised by the end of 2008.

Some argue that the student protests show that the government is running out of time.

They say that Bangladesh cannot be clean while Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia stay on the scene: it looks as if both women are now in considerably weaker positions because of the court cases against them and dissent from within their parties.

It now appears the government has for the time being at least dropped plans to force them into exile following the failure earlier of this year to prevent Sheikh Hasina from returning to the country after

a trip to the US, and the abandonment of moves to persuade Khaleda Zia to go into exile in Saudi Arabia.

Many analysts argue that as long as the two women - even if they are not themselves corrupt - continue to hold run their respective parties, a culture of corruption will remain.

### **Why did the president call a state of emergency?**

Emergency rule was declared ostensibly to uphold law and order.

When the BNP's term of office ended in October, the country was gripped by a series of violent clashes in which many people were killed.

The Awami League protested that general elections that were due to have been held in late January would not have been free or fair. It said it would boycott the elections and disrupt them.

In the end President Iajuddin Ahmed bowed to pressure and declared a state of emergency and the postponement of general elections.

### **What were the Awami League and their allies unhappy about?**

Bangladesh has an unusual electoral set-up in which, before elections, the government must resign and a neutral, caretaker government takes over and assumes responsibility for running a fair and impartial poll.

This time, the Awami League argued that the interim government was biased in favour of the outgoing BNP led by Khaleda Zia, and that the list of people entitled to vote in the election was years out of date.

### **Why is politics so bad-tempered in Bangladesh?**

Bangladesh is one of the most politically polarised countries in the world, even though the actual policy differences between the Awami League and the BNP are not that significant.

Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have alternated as prime minister since 1991. They are bitter rivals and barely speak to each other. Their mutual loathing is reflected among their respective sets of supporters.

As a result, political life has been marked by, at best, ceaseless bickering.

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7181578.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7181578.stm)

Thursday, 10 January 2008, 17:42 GMT

## **Bangladesh's 'year of surprises'**

By Mark Dummett  
BBC News, Dhaka

**It has been a year of surprises in Bangladesh.**

When a state of emergency was declared on 11 January 2007, no-one could have imagined that peoples' basic rights would still be suspended 12 months later.



Many doubt the army's motives

A caretaker government, made up mainly of retired officials, but backed heavily by the powerful military and important donor countries like the UK, is still in charge.

The former prime ministers and leaders of the two main parties, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina are in custody, charged with extorting money when they were in power.

### **Credible vote**

The "battling Begums" are being held in detention in the grounds of parliament in Dhaka.

The chamber itself has been silent all year - at least some things stay the same as it has been boycotted by successive oppositions for much of its existence.

The interim government cancelled elections due to be held in January last year, after several months of street protests.



Inclement weather has hit food prices

The violent aftermath of recent elections in Kenya are a reminder of the direction Bangladesh was heading.

The caretaker government said it would take many months to organise a truly fair, peaceful and credible vote.

They have now promised to hold it before December 2008.

It has embarked on preparing an entirely new voter list, promising to re-register every one of the country's 90 million voters.

Reforms of the legal system, the police and political parties are underway.

### **Denouement**

The beefed-up Anti-Corruption Commission meanwhile, has gone after the old political class.

It says that close to 80 former ministers, civil servants and businessmen are now in detention.

They include one of the most feared and loathed men in Bangladesh, Tarique Rahman, son of Khaleda Zia.



It's been a bad year for the 'battling Begums'

"We are now moving towards the second phase - moving towards the denouement of the caretaker government's regime," Foreign Minister Iftokhar Ahmed Chowdhury said in an interview with the BBC.

"We are moving slowly towards the holding of elections.

"The main goal of the government is to create those institutions which will create a society which is the most stable and peaceful, in a region which is one of turbulence."

Few would argue with that aim - however the government's plans for 2008 have raised some uncomfortable questions.

### **Meetings banned**

Firstly - how can the parties campaign for elections with their leaders behind bars and the emergency powers still in place?

These allow the security services to hold anyone, without charge, for an indefinite period.

Political parties can only hold private meetings in their offices in Dhaka and public meetings are banned.

"The emergency will of course be lifted before the elections," Dr Chowdhury says, "but exactly at what point in it will be lifted is difficult to say at this point."



Tarique Rahman remains feared by many

Then there is the role of the military. The army has ruled the country for about half its existence, so many Bangladeshis are deeply suspicious of its motives.

The fierce response of the security forces to rioting students in August reminded many people of past military dictatorships.

Officially the men in uniform are just "supporting" the civilian government.

But they are involved in many of the most important things it does, such as selling food to the poor, organising the voter registration and co-ordinating aid efforts after last November's cyclone.

### **Obsequious**

An army man is head of the cricket board, a retired officer runs the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Photographs of the head of the army, General Moeen U Ahmed, appear most days in the newspapers. He is often pictured in civilian dress, discussing non-military matters, such as the state of the economy.

"A deliberate effort is discernable in the post-emergency period to maintain the pretence of a civilian administration," NM Harun, a contributing editor of the New Age newspaper, wrote this week.



It's argued the government has not tackled rising food prices

"But in practice it is General Moeen who calls the shots and Dr Fakhrudin (Ahmed, the head of the caretaker government) has been obsequiously following the lead of the military and running a puppet show."

If anything interrupts Bangladesh's peaceful return to democracy in 2008, however, many people believe it is likely to be the spiralling price of food.

In the past two weeks the cost of a kilogramme of rice, the staple, has gone up by about one fifth.

The food ministry says its stocks are half full and running out. It blames the devastating impact on November's cyclone and floods last year, as well as record global food prices.

But businessmen also blame the government. Its anti-corruption drive, some say, has at times resembled a witch-hunt and so scared away legitimate investments.

Whatever the causes, the government's reputation for competence has dropped as the prices have risen. So far, the public has largely supported the caretaker government. That could easily change if the food crisis continues.