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<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DHA34995.htm>

## Bangladesh police, opposition clash, 50 injured

12 Mar 2006 07:53:32 GMT

Source: Reuters

DHAKA, March 12 (Reuters) - At least 50 people were injured in the Bangladeshi capital on Sunday in clashes between police and opposition activists during a demonstration for electoral reforms, police and witnesses said.

The clashes erupted as hundreds of opposition workers pushed through a police barricade and marched to the election commission's office, demanding the resignation of the election commissioner, who they said was biased.

Police fired tear gas shells and used water canons to break up the protest, launched by a 14-party alliance led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina to compel the government to make the election commission more independent, ahead of elections next year.

Police said at least 20 opposition workers were detained after they burnt a bus and damaged vehicles during the protest on Sunday, which is a working day in Muslim Bangladesh.

"The situation is under control, but there have been sporadic clashes," a senior police officer said, as hundreds of police in riot gear stood guard outside key government buildings.

Opposition leaders said they had planned a peaceful protest and blamed the authorities for the violence.

"It is an unprovoked attack on a peaceful march. A number senior leaders of our party have been injured," Tofael Ahmed, a leader of the main opposition Awami League, said.

Political analysts say the year to the polls is likely to see a surge in violence between rival parties, as Hasina warned she might boycott -- or even try to resist -- the election unless Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met her demands for electoral reforms.

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[http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/printArticle.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=76589&version=1&template\\_id=44&parent\\_id=24](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/printArticle.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=76589&version=1&template_id=44&parent_id=24)

## **Bangladeshi opposition activists clash with cops**

Publish Date: Monday, 13 March, 2006, at 11:06 AM Doha Time



.Police detain a demonstrator belonging to the Awami League in Dhaka yesterday

By Mizan Rahman & Agencies

**DHAKA:** At least 50 people were injured in the Bangladeshi capital yesterday in clashes between police and opposition activists during a demonstration for electoral reforms, police and witnesses said.

The clashes erupted as hundreds of opposition workers pushed through a police barricade and marched to the election commission's office, demanding the resignation of the election commissioner, who they said was biased.

Police fired tear gas shells and used water canons to break up the protest, launched by a 14-party alliance led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina to compel the government to make the election commission more independent before elections next year.

Police said at least 20 opposition workers were detained after they burnt a bus and damaged vehicles during the protest on Sunday, which is a working day in Bangladesh.

Traffic resumed on the streets after opposition activists left the scene, and hundreds of police in riot

gear stood guard outside key government buildings, a police officer said later.

In protest against police action, the opposition has called for a fresh countrywide protest tomorrow, to be preceded by an eight-hour nationwide strike from 6 am today.

Awami Jubo League, the youth front of Awami League, called for the strike earlier on Saturday, to protest against price hikes of commodities and short supply of utilities.

Opposition leaders said they had planned a peaceful protest and blamed the authorities for the violence.

"It is an unprovoked attack on a peaceful march. A number of senior leaders of our party have been injured," Tofael Ahmed, a leader of the main opposition Awami League, said.

Political analysts say the year to the polls is likely to see a surge in violence between rival parties, as Hasina warned she might boycott - or even try to resist - the election unless Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met her demands for electoral reforms.

Meanwhile, the Awami League has also demanded international inquiry under UN supervision into all killings, grenade and bomb attacks and militant activities across Bangladesh.

"We are raising the demand as we think the people are kept in the dark by the Task Force Intelligence interrogators...these interrogators once protected the militant supremos," Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil said at a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office in Dhaka.

He said perpetrators and their patrons could only be brought to justice through an international inquiry.

Pointing out the contradiction in remarks made by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the Inspector General Police (IGP), Jalil said the prime minister is saying that militants have foreign links while the IGP rejected such a possibility. "Who is telling lies: the prime minister or the IGP?"

He called for the expulsion from the cabinet of the ministers, who "patronised and harboured the militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh."

He also demanded interrogation of Jamaat-e-Islami chief and Industries Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami, Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haq, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, State Minister Alamgir Kabir, Deputy Minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu, Nadim Mostafa MP, PM's son Tarique Rahman and State Minister Lutfozzaman Babor for their alleged patronage to militants.

"BNP-Jamaat coalition government has created these terrorists to annihilate the Awami League," Jalil said.

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<http://www.ndtv.com/morenews/showmorestory.asp?slug=Dhaka%3A+Police+fire+tear+gas+at+activists&id=85718>

## **Dhaka: Police fire tear gas at activists**

Monday, March 13, 2006 (Dhaka):

Riot police fired tear gas in Dhaka on Monday to disperse hundreds of stone-throwing activists who tried to march into the streets in support of a general strike.

Several people were injured in the violence in central Dhaka. Police detained about two dozen protesters.

The violence erupted after about 400 protesters tried to overrun barbed-wire barricades erected by police to stop them from taking to the streets.

Police responded by swinging batons and firing tear gas at the activists.

## **Nationwide strike**

A nationwide strike was called by Bangladesh Youth League, to protest the killing of one of its members last week, allegedly by security forces.

The strike affected schools and shops and disrupted traffic in many cities and towns. Such strikes are a common opposition tactic in Bangladesh.

Imam Ali, a leader of the youth league, died on Thursday, hours after he was arrested by the Rapid Action Battalion on extortion charges.

Authorities said Ali was killed after his supporters attacked security forces who were escorting him to a police station, a claim rejected by the youth league and Ali's family. (AP)

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/03/13/d6031301011.htm>

# **The Daily Star**

**Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

Mon. March 13, 2006

## **Cops foil 14-party bid to besiege EC JSD President Inu among 100 injured in pitched battle on streets**

Staff Correspondent

Leaders and workers of the 14-party opposition alliance trying to lay siege to the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat in the capital yesterday clashed with the police and at least 100 were injured, 15 of them critically.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu is among the injured in serious condition.

Protesting the police attack on Inu, JSD has called a countrywide hartal for 6:00am to 2:00pm today.

The opposition workers set fire to a police minibus, and damaged at least 20 vehicles and several shops on Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi Road No 27 and in adjacent areas.

Besides charging batons, the police fired over 150 teargas shells and used water cannons during the street fighting that also left five cops injured.

Chase and counter-chase went on for more than an hour, making it the biggest ever such clash under the coalition regime.

Leaders of the 14-party including Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abu Sayeed, Hasan Mahmud, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Ajay Kar Khokon, Faruk Ahmed, among others, were injured in the baton charge.

Over 100 opposition workers were picked up from the scenes and beaten up remorselessly inside the prison vans.

At a press briefing, 14-party Co-ordinator and AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil claimed that at least 200 workers were injured in the police actions and over 300 leaders and workers of the opposition line-up were held.

The 14-party had announced the programme, demanding immediate removal of chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other 'politically-appointed' election commissioners.

In Sukrabad, Sobhanbagh and Dhanmondi-27 areas, hundreds of opposition workers fought pitched battles with the policemen in riot gear.

Police charged batons even inside a private hospital and different shopping centres when some of the opposition workers went there to take shelter from teargas. At least 10 shoppers and a female patient fell victim to the police excesses.

The fighting erupted when opposition workers tried to break the police barricades near Dhanmondi road No 27. Failing to overcome the barricades, the demonstrators began pelting brickbats at the law enforcers. In retaliation, police lobbed teargas shells and shot hot water on them.

### **POLICE VERSION**

Deputy Commissioner (DC-south) Mazharul Islam told the journalists yesterday that they did not attack the opposition workers. "Rather, the opposition men tried to dismantle the police barricades and threw stones at them," he said. He also denied having beaten up any pedestrians during the melee.

### **SITUATION AT RUSSELL SQUARE**

Hundreds of opposition workers began to gather at the Russell Square in procession from early in the morning. By 11:00am the road stretching from Kalabagan to Dhanmondi 27 was literally filled with the 14-party activists.

At about 11:30am, led by senior leaders including Abdur Razzak, Hasanul Haque Inu, Tofail Ahmed, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Mohammad Nasim, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaisar, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya the opposition activists began marching towards the EC Secretariat.

But police put up barricades at Dhanmondi 27 Crossing before the procession could reach there. The leaders and activists breached two barricades. After they were barred from moving further, they became involved in a fierce altercation with the police personnel.

At one stage, the policemen began to chase after the 14-party activists. But the opposition men regrouped and clashed with the police, pitching the entire area into a battle-like situation.

Split in several groups, the police in riot gear and plainclothes continued chasing the marchers. At least three water cannons and two armed teargas tank moved along the roads to pursue the opposition gathering.

Continuously chased by the policemen, many of the workers took refuge at local hospitals and shopping centres, but to little avail. Police stormed the Pan Care Hospital on Dhanmondi Road No 27 and damaged the windowpanes of the main entrance while baton-charging the opposition workers. They arrested five on the scene.

Even Shanta, a pregnant woman, could not escape the police atrocities. She was injured while waiting to leave the hospital for home.

A number of police constables with some women police threw her to the ground and started to kick her in front of some senior police officials. A constable named Ruhul Amin was kicking her in the abdomen as the on-duty journalists were trying to save her.

The opposition leaders later held a brief rally at the square and brought out a procession that paraded different roads. Leaders alleged that the government has used its loyal police officials including 'infamous' DC Kahinur Miah to attack and abuse its political opponents.

Addressing the rally, Abdul Jalil said the 'despotic regime of Nizami Khaleda' would never be able to suppress the ongoing movement for reforms by resorting to violence against the opposition workers.

Leaders and activists of the opposition alliance gathered also at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Led by AL leader Matia Chowdhury and Kamal Ahmed Majumder, they began marching in procession towards the EC Secretariat from Mirpur at around 10.30am.

When the procession reached near Agargoan roundabout, police set up barricades to intercept the procession. The 14-party leaders sat there and held an instantaneous rally, protesting the obstruction.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) mobilised its leaders and workers at Muktangon as part of a similar programme.

### **CONDITION OF THE INJURED**

Inu along with three other AL and Jubo League workers were admitted to Bangladesh Medical College Hospital. Neurosurgeon Nowsher Alam told The Daily Star that the JSD chief has sustained some serious injuries in the back of his head and been kept under a 48-hour observation.

Inu told The Daily Star that the police charged baton on him from behind. They [police] did it without provocation.

Seriously injured Jubo Mohila League's south (city) unit General Secretary Farida Yasmin Jhuma along with three others were admitted to Trauma Centre. While 15 other AL and Jubo League workers were rushed to Suhrawardi Hospital, where Doctor Uttam Barua told The Daily Star that Shahidul Islam's condition is very critical.

Besides, Shahidul's brother Jahirul Islam, Jamshed Ali, Abul Hossain, Mohammad Fazlu, Mizanur Rahman Babu, Gaffar Hossain, Liton Shikder, Abul Hasem, Mohammad Muhit, Rubel Hossain, Mohammad Biplob, Rabiul, Bakkar and Alfaz were among the injured admitted there.

A large number of injured workers took first aid at different hospitals and clinics in the city.

Meanwhile in Satkhira and Gaibandha, 14-party laid siege to district election offices. Police barred the opposition procession in Satkhira near the EC office. In protest, leaders and activists blockaded

Satkhira- Kaligonj Road in front of the election office, disrupting vehicular movement for about three hours.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/03/31/d6033101011.htm>

# The Daily Star

***Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW***

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Fri. March 31, 2006

**Front Page**

## **Downtown Dhaka turns into battlefield**

**Over 100 hurt as cops foil sit-in; opposition declares to hem in PMO April 19**

Staff Correspondent

Riot police clashed with hundreds of opposition protesters in the capital yesterday to foil a sit-in programme around Bangladesh Secretariat, firing tear gas shells and rubber bullets that left around 100, including law enforcers and newsmen, injured.

Surrounding areas of the secretariat, including the Noor Hossain Square, Bangabandhu Avenue, Gulistan, Paltan crossing and Doyel Chattar, turned chaotic during an hour-long chase and counter-chase between the law enforcers and opposition activists.

Meanwhile, the 14-party alliance declared to stage a sit-in programme in front of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on April 19, demanding reforms in the caretaker government system and Election Commission.

The opposition held the two-hour long sit-in programme starting at 11:00am yesterday, defying the government ban on gatherings, rallies and processions around two-and-a-half kilometre radius of the secretariat.

The opposition blamed the police for attacking their peaceful demonstrations. They staged rallies at different parts of the city in the afternoon in protest of the attacks.

Assistant Deputy Commissioner (East) Imtiaz Ahmed, however, counter-blamed the opposition men for "provoking" the police to go into action.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) had deployed around 9,000 law enforcers at different strategic points around the secretariat to thwart the opposition men.

The police put up barbed-wire fences at Matsya Bhaban, Paltan crossing, Baitul Mukarram, Noor Hossain Square, Bangabandhu Avenue and Doyel Chattar early in the morning and prevented all kinds of traffic in the areas.



They also took positions at different lanes and by-lanes, and rooftops of high-rise buildings in the areas.

Earlier on Tuesday, the DMP issued a release, imposing the ban on all kinds of gatherings and rallies in the adjoining areas of the secretariat for 24 hours from Wednesday midnight, considering the opposition programme a "security threat" to the secretariat.

### **THE CLASHES**

Processions of opposition activists from different parts of the city and adjacent districts started gathering at the police barricades in different areas at 10:00am. Led by senior leaders of the alliance, the demonstrations chanted anti-government slogans.

As a post-sit-in rally ended near the Bangabandhu National Stadium, the main venue of the sit-in programme, at Gulistan around 12:35pm, the demonstrators and the law enforcers locked in a clash.

The protesters pelted stones at the police in a bid to break the barricade while the law enforcers fired dozens of teargas shells and rubber bullets. The police chased the opposition men and charged batons indiscriminately, leaving over 12 persons injured.

In a few minutes, the clash spread near the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue when demonstrators started hurling stones at the police from rooftops. The police lobbed teargas shells at the AL office and dispersed the protesters from the area after 30 minutes of chase and counter-chase.

Top opposition leaders, including Dr Kamal Hossain, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Rashed Khan Menon, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Obaidul Quader, Dilip Barua, Enamul Haque and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, addressed the mammoth rally.

The opposition leaders told the rally that by imposing the ban on a democratic way of protest, the government is forcing the country towards a chaotic situation.

Around 12:00 noon, leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the AL, locked in a violent clash with the police near Doyel Chattar as the law enforcers prevented them from proceeding towards the secretariat.

Dispersed as the police charged baton on the procession, the BCL activists regrouped in the surrounding areas and again locked in clashes with the police. A group of BCL leaders and activists managed to hold a brief rally near Doyel Chattar but ultimately came under police attack.

The sporadic clashes left at least 20 BCL men, five policemen and two journalists injured.

The agitated BCL activists damaged at least three vehicles in front of the Bangla Academy and assaulted a police officer.

Clashes also erupted near the Paltan intersection as the police attacked an opposition demonstration led by AL leaders Asaduzzaman Noor, Shahjahan Khan and Shahara Khatun at 1:00pm. Five people were injured in the clashes.

The senior opposition leaders later brought the situation under control.

The police also barricaded the Matsya Bhaban intersection to prevent an opposition procession from advancing towards the secretariat around 11:00am.



The opposition procession led by AL central leaders Mohammad Nasim, Prof Abu Sayeed, Dr Hasan Mahmud, Dr Abdur Razzak and Lt Col (retd) Faruk Khan sat there and held a rally, protesting the police obstruction.

### **JOURNALIST INJURED**

During the sit-in programme, the police assaulted Zakir Hossain, staff correspondent of the daily Amar Desh, near the Jatiya Press Club area.

Zakir said he was going to office from his home near the press club when the riot police stopped him. As they asked to see his identity card, Zakir showed them his accreditation card.

The law enforcers then asked him where his camera was and then started to beat him indiscriminately.

### **APRIL 19 SIT-IN**

Opposition alliance Coordinator and AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday evening said the 14-party will stage a two-hour sit-in in front of the PMO on April 19 from 11:00am.

Vowing to force the government to resign, Jalil told the press after a meeting of the alliance at the AL Dhanmondi office that the opposition will go for continuous strikes if the government tries to resist the sit-in.

Jalil said the alliance will also demonstrate agitation programmes across the country today in protest of yesterday's police attack that injured around 200 opposition men.

The alliance will take up mass contact programmes in districts and upazilas during April 3-13, he added.



Police fire tear-gas shells to disperse a 14-party procession heading towards Bangladesh Secretariat for their sit-in programme yesterday. Over 100 people were injured in pitched battle between the police and the opposition activists during the two-hour programme. PHOTO: STAR

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<http://independent-bangladesh.com/news/mar/31/31032006ts.htm>

## **Secretariat siege programme ends in violence**

### **Clashes between police and demonstrators leave 70 opposition activists injured**

#### **STAFF REPORTER**

At least 70 leaders and activists of the Awami League led-14-party combine suffered injuries in a series of clashes between police and the demonstrators in the city during their Secretariat siege programme yesterday.

Most of the incidents took place in the central part of the city at noon when police lobbed tear gas canisters and charged batons indiscriminately on the opposition activists while the demonstrators

retaliated by showering brickbats on the law enforcers. In the melee some vehicles were damaged and furniture of pavement vendors were set on fire.

The 14-party combine gave the call for Secretariat siege demanding immediate acceptance of their electoral reform proposals and updating the old voter list in accordance with the High Court order cancelling the new voter list and also protesting the BNP-led alliance government's miserable failure to run the state.

The major incident of the day took place near the GPO at about 12-32 pm when Dhaka City Awami League general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya (Bir Bikram) and joint secretary Haji Mohammad Selim reached there leading a procession and all of a sudden the marchers began to shower brickbats and stone chips on the policemen deployed on the other side of the barbed wire fencing near Pir Yameni Market.

In retaliation, police pelted brick chips first and then indiscriminately lobbed tear gas canisters on the agitating activists to disperse them and after that the riot police chased the fleeing demonstrators. Taking position at different lanes and by-lanes, the retreating activists again started pelting stones on the police and set fire to old tyres and furniture of pavement vendors.

Police charged batons on the opposition activists, who tried to break open the barbed wire fencing. The agitators pelted stones on the police. The police then lobbed tear gas canisters on the demonstrators. At least 50 people, mostly activists of the 14-party combine, and a photojournalist of daily News Today Tapan Dey, suffered injuries.

Soon the pitched battle spread across South Gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Bangabandhu Avenue, Gulistan Square, Golap Shah Mazar crossing, Syed Nazrul Islam Sarani and other adjoining areas which continued for half-an-hour. The entire area was engulfed by thick columns of smoke emitting from exploded tear gas canisters. No shop could be opened since early in the morning as police put up barricades preventing movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

Movement of vehicles was also restricted on Bangabandhu Avenue, from Golap Shah Mazar to Paltan crossing, on Syed Nazrul Islam Sarani, Gulistan Square to Noor Hossain Square, Abdul Ghani Road in front of Secretariat, Paltan intersection to Kadam fountain, Prof Ibrahim Road at Segunbagicha to Matsyabhaban intersection via Carpet crossing and lanes and by-lanes due to barbed wire fencing put up earlier on all crossings since early in the morning.

In another incident, at least 20 activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League and the Dhaka University Correspondent of Daily Samakal Imtiazuddin suffered injuries as club-wielding police swooped on them near Doel Chattar as the students in a procession from Dhaka university campus tried to break open the barbed wire fencing and proceed towards the Secretariat.

The student marchers pelted stones on the police and in retaliation police also chased them and indiscriminately charged batons. The fleeing demonstrators damaged a taxi-cab parked near Bangla Academy.

A big procession from Khilgaon led by Awami League organising secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Dhaka City Awami League leaders Faezuddin Miah and Kamal Chowdhury was blocked by police near Dainik Bangla intersection at about 11-45 am when they staged demonstration there.

Another procession led by Asaduzzaman Noor MP, Advocate Sahara Khatun and Shahjahan Khan MP that marched towards secretariat from Malibagh crossing was halted by police near Kasturi

restaurant at Bijoy Nagar at about 11-30 am. The marchers sat on the street and staged demonstration there.

Police also stopped another big procession of Awami League led by Mohammad Nasim MP, Major General (Retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan and Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed near Matsyabhaban crossing in the morning. As the marchers could not proceed further they staged demonstration on the spot.

Earlier, speaking at a rally from a truck-dais in front of Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, central leaders of the 14-party combine blasted the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for violating the people's constitutional rights of staging political programmes like rallies, marches and demonstrations by imposing Section 144 during their peaceful Secretariat siege programme.

They said people have already expressed their 'no confidence in the alliance government' for its miserable failure in all sectors, soaring prices of essential commodities and rising terrorism.

Presided over by Awami League Presidium member Tofail Ahmed, the rally was addressed by, among others, Abdul Jalil MP, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Mukul Bose, Akhteruzzaman and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya (Bir Bikram) of Awami League, Mainuddin Khan Badal of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu), Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party, Haji Abdus Samad of Gano Azadi League, Dilip Barua of Samyabadi Dal and Md Nurul Islam of Ganatantri Party.

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[http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-04-19T132310Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRJONC\\_0\\_India-245406-2.xml&archived=False](http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-04-19T132310Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-245406-2.xml&archived=False)

## **Bangladesh police fires rubber bullets to break march**

Wed Apr 19, 2006 1:34 PM IST

DHAKA (Reuters) - Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells at Bangladesh opposition activists on Wednesday, injuring about 60, as thousands of them began a march to lay siege to the prime minister's office in capital Dhaka.

Riot police sealed off all roads leading to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia office complex in the capital's Tejgaon area and authorities banned rallies and marches within a 5 km radius.

Witnesses said security forces attacked the activists at six places in the sprawling city of 10 million after they gathered to start the march, adding to fears that the volatile country was headed for a new political crisis.

About 60 people were injured, they added.

"We have defied the ban and broken through cordons braving barbaric attacks by police. We want to push ahead," said Obaidul Kader, a senior leader of the main opposition Awami League.

Opposition parties say they hoped to make Khaleda accept their demands by laying siege to her office, but the prime minister says their plans were aimed at creating chaos and lawlessness in the country.

Their demands include reform of the electoral system, reduction in prices of essential commodities and improvement in supply of electricity and water.

"We called for the siege ... to demonstrate our anger over years of her (Khaleda's) misrule and to put pressure on her to accept our demands," Tofayel Ahmed, a former minister and senior Awami leader.

Bangladesh has been rocked in recent months by a series of Islamist bomb attacks, including suicide bombings. At least 30 people have been killed and 150 wounded since August.

Fears of a new political crisis heightened as the Awami League refused to sit down to talks with a government Islamist coalition partner and at least 50 people were injured in clashes between police and opposition activists in Dhaka on Tuesday.

Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League disagree on the inclusion of the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party in hoped-for talks on electoral reforms.

(Additional reporting by Nizam Ahmed)

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<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1496619.cms>

## **Security ring around Khaleda Zia's office**

[ Wednesday, April 19, 2006 08:28:08 pmREUTERS ]

DHAKA: Thousands of riot police sealed off roads leading to the office of Bangladesh prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Wednesday as opposition activists prepared to besiege it in their attempt make her accept their demands.

Police also threw a tight security ring around the office complex in capital Dhaka's Tejgaon area as authorities banned rallies and marches within a 5 km radius.

Security forces kept a watchful eye on opposition activists as they began gathering at 15 points in the sprawling city of 10 million for the big march, adding to fears that the volatile country was headed for a new political crisis.

"We will start the march any moment and defy the police ban," said Tofayel Ahmed, a former minister and senior leader of the main opposition party Awami League.

"We called for the siege... to demonstrate our anger over years of her (Khaleda's) misrule and to put pressure on her to accept our demands," he added.

Opposition demands include reform of the electoral system, reduction in prices of essential commodities and improvement in supply of electricity and water.

Bangladesh has been rocked in recent months by a series of Islamist bomb attacks, including suicide bombings. At least 30 people have been killed and 150 wounded since August.

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[http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/index3.asp?cnd=4/20/2006&section\\_id=1&newsid=22139&spcl=no](http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/index3.asp?cnd=4/20/2006&section_id=1&newsid=22139&spcl=no)

## **Many parts of city come under virtual siege Violent clashes mark opposition sit-in**

4/20/2006

A series of clashes between the police and the opposition activists over 14-party combine's sit-in programme in front of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the capital left over hundred injured Wednesday, report agencies.

Violent clashes took place at Dhanmondi and Bangla Motor crossing with the law enforcers bringing at least 20-square kilometres area surrounding the PMO at Tejgaon under virtual siege by putting barbed wire barricades.

The police charged batons indiscriminately to disperse the agitators at Dhanmondi and Bangla Motor crossing and lobbed tear shells creating widespread panic. The agitators threw brickbats, damaged minibuses and windowpanes of buildings in Bangla Motor area.

Witnesses said opposition agitators attacked and damaged the house of BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid Khan Monno at Dhanmondi Road 27 after shots were fired on them from the house. Later, the police were deployed to guard the house.

At Dhanmondi, the police fired rubber bullets and more than 200 rounds of tear gas shells as opposition activists being intercepted by the law enforcers damaged the Rapa Plaza shopping complex.

Witnesses said a car owned by S-TV was set afire at the Bangla Motor crossing at about 11:55am as police fired a hail of teargas shells on the unruly demonstrators, who came out in their tens and hundreds.

"Several vehicles were stoned and damaged at Paribagh and Sheraton Hotel points at the city's heart in retaliation of police actions," said a spot account of the violence.

Opposition activists and the police also threw brickbats at each other at Mirpur, Jhikatala and in Farmgate areas. Dozens of people were arrested from different parts of the capital.

Eye witnesses said some protesters at Dhanmondi Road no 27 chased the car of Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain at about 11:30am.

After Bangla Motor, clashes broke out at Dhanmondi Russel Square and Agargaon at 12:25pm where opposition workers and riot police were locked in bitter skirmishes. The police used teargas shells to disperse the stone-throwing activists in those areas.

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance had announced the sit-in in front of the PMO demanding reform of the caretaker government system and the Election Commission (EC) and protesting killings at Kansat, power crisis and price spiral of essentials.

The government and the 14-party combine came face-to-face over opposition-sponsored PMO siege programme and a planned hartal for Thursday buoyed by massive clashes Tuesday in the capital during a youth grand rally.

The police had ordered a 24-hour ban on rallies and marches around the PMO from Tuesday midnight to thwart the planned march while the 14-party combine said they would defy the ban.

With an aim to demonstrate from 11am to 1:00pm, the opposition earlier planned to move towards the PMO with processions from several spots - Mahakhali, Dhanmondi Road 27 and Asadgate, and Farmgate.

However, the authorities orchestrated a massive showdown with deployment of police, armed-police battalion, women and plainclothes police personnel and water cannon.

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<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=30218#>

BBC News  
April 20, 2006

## **Bangladesh strike disrupts life**

Source:Bangladesh

A one-day strike called by opposition parties has disrupted normal life in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka.

Transport was absent from most roads while many schools, shops and offices were closed, reports said.

The 14-party opposition alliance, led by Awami League party, is demanding election reforms and resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The opposition has stepped up protests ahead of Bangladesh's elections which are due early next year.

A local news channel reported that the police fired tear gas shells to break up an opposition protest in Mahakali district, reports said.

'Over-use of strikes'

There was no official confirmation of the incident.

Riot police patrolled Dhaka and prevented opposition workers taking to the streets, witnesses told the Associated Press news agency.

The protesters shouted slogans like 'Down with corruption' and 'We want Khaleda Zia to go' from their party offices.

On Wednesday, least 50 people were injured in clashes between police and opposition supporters in Dhaka. Police fired tear gas and fired rubber bullets as thousands of activists marched on the prime minister's residence.

Opposition leaders told Reuters news agency that the police had detained some 70 activists ahead of Thursday's demonstrations.

"The government let loose its pet police forces and hired goons to take us on. They unleashed extreme barbarism during our peaceful march towards the PM's office," Awami League leader Abdur Razzak said.

The opposition group, led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, have been organising protests to compel the government to make the Election Commission more independent, ahead of elections due early next year.

A ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader told Reuters that strikes "as a political tool have become blunt due to over use".

"So the opposition should exercise a little cool and wait for the people's mandate in a few months," Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said.

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<http://www.voanews.com/english/2006-04-20-voa9.cfm>

## **Bangladesh Police Attack Protesters in Capital**

By VOA News  
20 April 2006



Riot police in Bangladesh fired tear gas and used batons Thursday against opposition activists during a general strike that shut down the capital, Dhaka.

Details are incomplete, but witnesses say at least 30 people were hurt, bringing the injury toll from a series of clashes between security forces and demonstrators this week to well over 100.

Normal activity in Dhaka, a city of 10 million, came to a halt today during the general strike - the fifth mass protest action ordered this year by the opposition Awami League and a coalition of 13 other parties.

Riot police chase opposition activists during a general strike in Dhaka, April 20, 2006

Police also used tear-gas Wednesday to break up a march on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's headquarters. Witnesses reported at least four separate clashes, and authorities ordered a 24-hour ban on rallies near the prime minister's office.

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and her supporters are demanding electoral reforms ahead of elections expected later this year, after the current government's term expires in October. Ms. Zia, who has ruled Bangladesh since 2001, insists that any talks between the two sides must include the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party, one of her coalition partners.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/04/21/d60421020121.htm>

Editorial

## **Nation concerned over growing violence**

Fri. April 21, 2006

### **Settle back into dialogue mode**

Mounting political violence is taking on ugly and sinister forms, which if not arrested soon enough, is sure to lead us to a path of self-destruction. But equally dreadfully, in the immediate terms, ruling



and opposition parties risk destroying the lately emerging hopes, both nationally and internationally, for a constructive engagement between them. It could be a sea change from their no-holds-barred confrontational posturing on electoral and caretaker government reform issues.

A dialogue seemed tantalisingly close in a long-drawn but hope-ascending sequel to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's tabling her reform proposals in parliament and Prime Minister Begum Zia asking for formation of a committee to start a dialogue on them.

Suddenly, through the dark clouds flickered a hope that the government and the opposition may have come round to the view that if elections are to be held at all then the reform issues will have to be thrashed out to the workable satisfaction of both sides. But within less than a month and a half since the positive signs appeared, the whole scenario has literally turned violent, ballistic and mutually so souring between the parties that the nation and the world are stupefied at the thought whether they had at all entertained the prospect for talks in the first place. If not, then what they are up to? The public are baffled.

The audacious manhandling of senior AL leaders, street-fights between opposition activists and the police in full riot gear, merciless beating of pickets and even passers-by, hounding out of workers on to police vans in full public and international glare, all transformed political rights into human rights issue plummeting national image another abyss lower. With each dose of greater violence the chance of initiating talks is becoming remoter.

In an ascending order of confrontation, the opposition has called for economy damaging and anti-people hartals. There was one yesterday and the other one is on the cards for Sunday, summing up to four days in a row with the weekend in-between, all of it spelling huge business losses and compounding political violence. And the BNP is taking to the field with a mass demonstration planned. As though the nation is made up of two political forces, where people are only their playthings.

Our deepest concern over the political hell-fire of a tinderbox-match stick scenario which is about to enflame into a cauldron. So, our fervent appeal to both sides is to immediately take the process set in motion by exchange of letters forward in a substantive manner. It is our belief that the issue of BNP and AL alliance adopting diametrically opposite positions on Jamaat's participation in the talks can be disposed of in the light of revelations about Jamaati links to JMB with all their militancy ramifications.

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<http://www.edicom.ch/fr/news/international/index.php?idIndex=270&idContent=1102290>

23 avril 2006 - 07:23

## **Bangladesh: intervention de la police contre des manifestants de l'opposition à Dacca, plusieurs blessés**

DACCA, Bangladesh (AP) -- Des policiers anti-émeutes ont utilisé de matraques pour repousser dimanche des centaines de militants de l'opposition qui tentaient de défiler dans les rues de la capitale du Bangladesh, à l'occasion d'une grève générale visant notamment à demander la démission du gouvernement, selon des témoins.

Quelque 300 manifestants qui essayaient d'aller au-delà de barricades de fils de fer barbelés ont été chargés par les policiers dans le quartier de Mahakhali à Dacca, a constaté un journaliste de l'Associated Press en faisant état de plusieurs blessés dans les violences.

La grève générale était organisée dans tout le pays par une alliance de 14 partis de l'opposition pour réclamer des réformes électorales et la démission du gouvernement, l'accusant de corruption, d'incompétence et d'autoritarisme, allégations que dément le Premier ministre Khaleda Zia. AP cr/v101

24 April, 2006

## BANGLADESH

### About 150 people injured in anti-government protests

*In four days, two general strikes hit the capital as police and demonstrators clash. Opposition parties are leading the protest movement demanding reforms in anticipation of next year's elections. Analysts tell AsiaNews that an agreement between the two sides will be difficult to reach and times ahead will be hard.*



Dhaka (AsiaNews) – Political instability is rising in Bangladesh as tensions between the opposition and the government continue unappeased. Yesterday, a second general strike in four days left 150 injured in clashes between the police and protesters in Dhaka and various parts of the country.

Sunday's work action was spearheaded by the *Awami* League, the main opposition party, and other 13 parties that are part of an anti-government coalition. The capital was blocked and 35 people, including some political leaders and activists, were arrested.

The anti-riot squad used truncheons and tear gas against crowds in the streets; many cars and stores were torched. The transport system, offices, schools and industry were shut down on Sunday, a working day in Muslim countries.

The current protest comes on the heels of another general strike last Wednesday and Thursday. For months now, the opposition has been demanding current Prime Minister Khaleda Zia reform the electoral system ahead of next year's elections. In October the government is expected to hand over power to a transitional, unelected administration that will organise elections for January. But the opposition is convinced that the ruling coalition led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will cheat and wants parliament to appoint members to the transitional administration on the basis of a broad support.

Local analysts interviewed by *AsiaNews* said that the situation is not going to be settled any time soon. The opposition does not want tensions to de-escalate between now and the elections in order to score political points by discrediting the government, whilst the BNP is too closely tied to fundamentalist elements within its coalition who are opposed to any dialogue.

When the government recently proposed to discuss the transitional administration, the opposition agreed because public opinion was in favour, one analyst said. But there was a stumbling block: the government wanted members of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a group accused of collusion with terrorists, on the Bilateral Commission. The *Awami* League wanted them excluded as a precondition for joining; instead it demanded that only representatives from the main parties of the two opposing coalitions be appointed. For now, the government has refused to budge on the issue, leading some to fear that the impasse will continue. The BNP needs *Jamaat-e-Islami* to retain its parliamentary majority, the source told *AsiaNews*.

Demands on the government are economic as well as political. The opposition wants lower prices and better supplies of electrical power and diesel fuel to the countryside, where blackouts are frequent and affect especially irrigation.

At present, there seem to be no room for manoeuvre between the two sides. Without an agreement the opposition threatens to boycott the upcoming elections.

There is none the less a silver lining in the current crisis according to analysts: Bangladeshis' campaign for democracy and against terrorism and corruption. For instance, the press has highlighted how people have formed human chains or organised sit-ins to demand honesty from future local candidates.

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<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/05/11/d6051101107.htm>

# The Daily Star

**Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

Thu. May 11, 2006

## **Thousands denounce 'fake' voter list**

### **14-party demands scrapping of the roll**

Staff Correspondent

Several thousand demonstrators under the banner of the 14-party opposition line-up yesterday took to the streets in the capital and elsewhere in the country protesting what they termed the newly prepared 'fake voter list' and demanding immediate cancellation of it to ensure free and fair general elections.

In Netrokona, armed BNP men along with law enforcers attacked a procession of the Awami League (AL)-led opposition combine, leaving more than 50 injured, including 15 policemen and two journalists.

Those injured include District AL President Mohammad Samsujjoha, General Secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru and police officials Saidur Rahaman and Osman Ali.

Protesting the attack, the 14-party called a dawn-to-dusk hartal today in the district.

The opposition activists also caused damages to the office the superintendent of police.

On the other hand, ruling BNP activists went on a rampage at the district AL office and the house of district AL general secretary.

In the capital, a big 14-party procession started from Muktangan amid tight security measurers and ended at the Central Shaheed Minar. The participants raised slogans against the 'fake' voter list and vowed to resist any election in the country without electoral reforms.

The demonstrators also demanded immediate removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and two 'politically appointed' election commissioners (ECs) for making the 'fake' voter list in a 'planned way' to create uncertainty about the next election and destroy democracy.

Addressing a rally that followed the procession, senior leaders of the opposition line-up vowed to intensify the movement for realising their demands that include cancellation of 'fake' voter list, preparation of voter list as per a High Court verdict and other electoral reforms.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak, MP, said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has included more than two crore fake voters in the voter list. "The people will not allow the government to hold any election, even one like the February 15 polls in 1996, using the fake voter list," Razzak said. AL stalwart Tofail Ahmed said the 'controversial' CEC and two ECs loyal to him have virtually made the EC a 'front organisation' of the ruling BNP. The coalition government does not want free and fair polls in the country and for this it has prepared the 'fake' voter list and is not accepting the opposition's proposed reforms.

But the people will foil any bid to rig the next elections, he said.

Chaired by Dhaka City 14-Party Coordinator Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the rally was also addressed by, among others, Motia Chowdhury, Jahirul Islam, Nurul Islam, Shahara Khatun and Hazi Mohammad Selim.

Maya, also general secretary of the city AL, said they would stage demonstrations at Azampur today, Shanir Akhra tomorrow, Mirpur-10 on May 13 and at Lalbagh on May 14 to press the demand for uninterrupted supply of power and adequate water supply.

Our Netrokona Correspondent reports: Over 100 riot police and 200 armed BNP activists attacked a procession of the 14-party alliance at Mukterpara bridge while it was heading for the deputy commissioner's office to lay siege to it, demanding cancellation of 'fake' voter list and protesting power and fuel crises.

The opposition activists countered the attack with brickbats during an hour-long clash between the two sides. Police fired over 40 rubber bullets and teargas shells to bring the situation under control. Those injured in the incident include District AL Joint Secretary Nur Khan Mitu, Krishok League President Kashob Ranjan Sarker and local journalists Saidur Rahaman Mintu and Goutom Sarker Babul.

Bullet-hit Sweschchasebak League leader Yusuf Jubary was later taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

In Satkhira, several hundred leaders and activists of the opposition combine laid siege to the DC office and barricaded Satkhira- Jessore highway protesting the 'fake' voter list and demanding its immediate cancellation, reports our Satkhira correspondent.

Earlier, they brought out a procession from Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park and held a rally in front of the DC office with district AL General Secretary Nazrul Islam in the chair.

In Tangail, the opposition alliance brought out a procession and held a rally in front of the AL office in the town to press the same demands, said a report from our Tangail correspondent.