

EXPAT EXPO TOKYO 2024
For International Residents

Date: **November 8th - 9th, 2024**
10:00 - 17:00 / 10:00 - 18:00

Venue: **Tokyo Metropolitan Industrial Trade Center Hamamatsucho-kan**

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WORLD / POLITICS

Bangladesh police disperse march over excessive use of force



Protesters are being detained in a police van while protesting outside the High Court building as they demand justice for the victims arrested and killed in the recent countrywide violence in Dhaka on Tuesday. | AFP-JIJI

BY RUMA PAUL AND SUDIPTO GANGULY
REUTERS

SHARE/SAVE Aug 1, 2024

DHAKA - Police in Bangladesh fired tear gas and stun grenades to disperse people who were demonstrating on Wednesday against the excessive use of force by authorities during protests earlier in July that left at least 150 dead.

The unrest is the biggest test facing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 76, since she won a fourth term in January elections boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which were also marred by deadly protests.

Police said they used force when people in the northeastern district of Sylhet broke through barricades to march toward the courts.

"We requested the protesters to move from the road, but they didn't listen and instead attacked the police, forcing us to disperse them with tear gas and stun grenades," said regional deputy commissioner Azbahar Ali Sheikh.

Police and protesters scuffled in Dhaka, the capital, and the southern port city of Chittagong, witnesses said.

It was not immediately clear if there were any fatalities.

At least 10 people, including four journalists, were injured in southern Barishal district, where police used batons to disperse protesters.

Police detained at least seven students in Dhaka near the high court, where lawyers and university teachers joined the demonstrators.

Student group calls for march

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Wednesday's nationwide "March for Justice" was called by the Students Against Discrimination group that was at the forefront of protests against quotas in government jobs.

That initial unrest earlier in July left thousands wounded as security forces fired rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades to disperse those gathered.



People shout slogans during a protest march outside the High Court building demanding justice for those arrested and killed in the recent countrywide violence in Dhaka on Tuesday. | AFP-JIJI

Although the students agreed to halt their protest after the Supreme Court scrapped most quotas on July 21, they recently returned to the streets to call out the dozens of deaths, arrests, and government intimidation.

"We will also demand a United Nations investigation into the violence," Mohammad Mahin Sarkar, a coordinator of the movement, said in a statement.

International rights groups have condemned close to 10,000 arrests over the past two weeks on charges of involvement in clashes and destruction of government property.

They say Hasina has become increasingly autocratic during her last 15 years in power, which have been marked by arrests of political opponents and activists — allegations she denies.

Hasina, at an event in Dhaka, said Bangladesh had appealed to the United Nations and various international bodies for help

Bangladesh shut down the internet after the earlier unrest and imposed a nationwide curfew as the protests, which began in educational institutions in June, became more widespread.

Jamaat ban

Hasina's government said it was set to ban the main Islamic party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and its student wing, both of which Dhaka blames for violence during the protests.

Dhaka has set up a judicial inquiry to investigate the violence, Law Minister Anisul Huq said.

In a statement, Jamaat condemned the proposed ban as "illegal, extrajudicial and unconstitutional."

The party's chief Shafiqur Rahman, along with the opposition, have denied they had stoked the violence.

Jamaat was effectively barred from elections after a court said in 2013 its registration as a political party conflicted with Bangladesh's secular constitution.

The United Nations, global rights groups, the United States and Britain criticized Dhaka's use of force against the demonstrators, asking it to uphold the right to peaceful protest.

KEYWORDS

DHAKA, BANGLADESH, SHEIKH HASINA

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