Politics of Bangladesh has been criminalized over the last four decades resulting multi-level political violence. This study analyses the causes, manifestation and consequences of political violence in Bangladesh with clear historical insights. Moreover, in this study an attempt has been made to examine the current confrontational politics and the stake of political parties in ongoing political violence in Bangladesh. The analysis is mainly focuses on major political parties in comparative modes.
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Political Violence in Bangladesh: A Comprehensive Study

Abstract

Politics of Bangladesh has been criminalized over the last four decades resulting multi-level political violence. This study analyses the causes, manifestation and consequences of political violence in Bangladesh with clear historical insights. Moreover, in this study an attempt has been made to examine the current confrontational politics and the stake of political parties in ongoing political violence in Bangladesh. The analysis is mainly focuses on major political parties in comparative modes.

Introduction

Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 its politics have been featured by confrontations associated with outbursts of political violence. However, the current crisis in Bangladesh is a consequence of a series of complex issues: the politics of non-compromise, disenfranchisement and animosity have contributed to political instability in the country. It is evident that instability is a major political phenomenon in Bangladesh, which impedes good governance and democratization, and that the root of this phenomenon is confrontation between two main political forces (Kochanek, 2000). In an investigation into this political instability, Hossain (2000) argues that confrontational politics of two leading political parties, the BAL and the BNP, demonstrates such a political culture where both the parties seek to own state power and do not tolerate each other at all.
Table 1: Political Violence 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Number of incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>1330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured</td>
<td>79,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average killed</td>
<td>22 Per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average injured</td>
<td>44 per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 (see Table-1) indicates the confrontational political atmosphere over the period of 2009 to 2013. During the regime violent character of Bangladeshi politics is showed which resulting in 1330 people killed and in an average 22 citizen of the country are victimized every month. The violent nature let 44 people injured in an average every day totaling in 79,883 people are injured during the period.

In true sense, both parties do not trust each other to organize free and fair election. Consequently, after a prolonged violent movement of Bangladesh Awami League and its allies, Caretaker Government Bill was passed in the Parliament in 1996. But, to keep the state power in own grief, both parties had striven to politicize the institutions especially the judiciary from which the chief of caretaker government was drawn. The main source of contemporary violence (before 10th National Election) lies in Bangladesh Awami League government’s 2011 decision to abolish the 13th Constitutional Amendment (1996) that required that a neutral, three-month caretaker government be set up in order to oversee general elections in every five years. Ostensibly, Awami League government’s attempt to consolidate its 'popularity' by establishing a War Crimes Tribunal to deal with unfinished political discourse arising from the 1971 Liberation War. Whereas, very popular perception of country people is to formulate a neutral, transparent and responsible tribunal, which should be accepted nationally as well as internationally with the standard of international laws, for cleaning the stigma of the history of Bangladesh, while, others see extant politically motivated domestic tribunal as a distraction from the country’s contemporary challenges such as power shortages, growing social inequalities, and to consolidate power further.
Table 2: Political violence only in January to March of 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Injured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>178</strong></td>
<td><strong>7470</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Political violence was intensified from the first three months of the year 2013. As table 2 (see table 2) indicates that only in first three months of that year 178 people were victim of conflicts while 7470 people were injured. On an average 2 people were killed and 83 people were injured during the period.

In this study, political violence refers as acts carried out by individuals or groups with an explicit desire of accomplishing a particular political objective or directed at the party in power to secure political concessions or compromises those are otherwise not possible. Further, a discussion of political violence in Bangladesh would refer to violent tactics employed by political parties and groups opposed to the government in power with an explicit desire to secure a political concession. It would also include protest actions that often transform into violence such as hartals, blockade and other non-parliamentary methods adopted by various political parties. Indeed, it is the vitiating climate that enables political groups to resort to violence in order to express and achieve their political ends.

**Political Violence in Bangladesh: Historical Perspective**

To understand the current violent politics, and to forecast where Bangladesh is heading, an understanding of its history of confrontational politics is essential. To begin with, Bangladesh has a history of political violence, including the assassinations of two presidents and 19 failed coup attempts since its independence from Pakistan in 1971. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that, since its inception in 1971, Bangladesh has suffered from the problems of nation-building, sharpening ideological and religious contradictions. However, the ongoing unprecedented

political crisis largely stem from lack of commitment by the political parties to basic norms of democracy. As such, one of the biggest challenges Bangladesh faces is that its two main political parties remain at loggerheads with each other over various issues, which made political culture of Bangladesh hostile in nature, making synthetic dividends on two demons: 'pro-liberation' and 'anti-liberation' forces. The recent political crisis is nothing but a continued repercussion of that line, which brought a new polarization in Bangladeshi politics.

Figure 1: Awami League Regime 1972-1975

During the Awami League period 1972 to 1975 just after the independence of the country national politics got confrontational. As the figure 1 (see Figure 1) shows there was 19,000 politically motivated killing while 27,000 people were killed at the hand of Rokkhi bahini (a special Para military force created at that time). Keeping only four media, more than 400 media were banned.

Accordingly, postwar conditions proved to be conducive for violence and social unrest. Unfulfilled popular expectations resulted in the alienation of different sections of society from the mainstream and popular discontent and disappointment, which often manifested itself in aggression and violence. Thus, Mujib’s short tenure sowed the early seeds of political intolerance in Bangladesh and this was sharpened under the prolonged military regime.²

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catastrophic change of regime and its aftermath created a sharp political division among the general population that still divides the nation right down the middle.³

In the political history of Bangladesh, the extreme left is a major source of organized political violence. Disillusioned with the ‘abandoning’ of its leftist ideologies, soon after the liberation of Bangladesh, a large group of young cadres broke from the Awami League to take up a more radical stance. “We had been Leftists for long. The national liberation struggle was the first step in the total revolution. The unfinished revolution must now be completed.”⁴

However, during its 1972-75 rule, the then Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman turned a budding democracy into one party brutal dictatorship.⁵ The rampant forgery in 1973’s election put first mark of political torture. The then anti-government political party JSD faced the music for contending the regime of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At least 40,000 people, mostly freedom fighters were killed only in 3 years. Newspapers and other news related publications were shut down keeping only 4 newspapers, only the government supporting ones.⁶

**Table 3: Conflicting characteristics of BAL forces and anti BAL forces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAL forces</th>
<th>Anti-BAL forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ultra) Secular</td>
<td>(Non) - secular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Liberation</td>
<td>Anti-Liberation or confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Mujib</td>
<td>Anti-Mujib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-India</td>
<td>(Anti)-India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Pakistan</td>
<td>(Pro)-Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali nationalism</td>
<td>Bangladeshi nationalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of information: Huq, 1994; Hossain, 2001

³*ibid*
The table 3 (see table 3) the BAL forces are characterized with ultra secularism, pro liberation force, supportive to Mujib, supported by India, show anti Pakistani sentiment and promote Bengali nationalism. On the other hand the anti BAL oppose Mujib, anti India while encouraging Bangladeshi nationalism.

According to Chowdhury and Barman, by December 1974, more than 3,000 Awami League activists, including four parliamentary members, had been killed by the terrorists. Sheikh Mujib formed a new party ‘Bangladesh Krishak Sramic Awami League’ (BAKSAL). According to Maniruzzaman, Mujibur also announced an intention of increasing the strength of this ‘national guard’ from 25,000 in 1975 to 130,000 in 1980. By August 1975, an estimated 62,000 persons had been imprisoned by the government for political reasons. In addition, thousands of opposition political party members disappeared and all other political parties and most of the newspapers were banned, before Sheikh Mujib was killed, along with most of his immediate family members, by a group of junior army officers in 1975.

It was at this stage that the strained relations between the government and a large section of the regular army took the form of open confrontation. General Ziaur Rahman, the most prominent among the senior officers.

Table 4: Average Number of (Hartal) strikes (Including local and national) in Bangladesh, 1971-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Average number of Hartal per year including local Hartals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-1974</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1986</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1990</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1994</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1998</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>110.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 G H Peiris, Political Conflict in Bangladesh
9 G H Peiris, Political Conflict in Bangladesh
Table 4 (see table 4) indicates that there is sharp rise in hartal over the years. While there was 12 average hartals days during the 1971 to 1974, it stood 110 per year 1999 and 2000.

There is a strange and widely violent culture in Bangladesh regarding country wide down to dust strike in the name of democracy and political demand accomplishment. From 1991 to 2010 both the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) called 365 days down to dust strike where Awami League called 303 days against BNP government and BNP called 62 days against AL government when they were in opposition.\footnote{The Daily Nayadiganta, 25th November 2010, Dhaka}

Therefore, problems like violence, conflicts, and corruption still haunt Bangladesh society and the body politic, though there are some attempts to consolidate the country’s democracy. The country is still sharply divided along political lines, especially Bengali vs. Bangladeshi nationalism, or as political parties – Awami League (AL) versus Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) - with each political group seeking to recruit political cadres and divide the nation to its cause.\footnote{Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, WORKING OF DEMOCRACY IN BANGLADESH Ershad regime (1982-1990)} General Hussain Mohammad Ershad’s coming to power through a bloodless coup against a democratically elected few months old Abdus Sattar’s government in 1982, coincided with some deteriorating external and internal economic scenarios. His political strategy for the consolidation of his power was similar to that of the previous regime.

The first sense of this street power was evident in the initial years of Ershad’s tenure (1982-1991). All major opposition parties came together and called for series of hartals in November 1983 demanding an end to martial law and for the restoration of fundamental rights. A similar move in March 1985 resulted in widespread violence and led to hundreds of casualties among demonstrators and security personnel.\footnote{Sreeradha Datta, Political Violence in Bangladesh: Trends and Causes. Volume: 29. Issue: 3. Articles. July 2005.} In June and July 1987, there was a series of strikes of short duration followed by a prolonged general strike throughout the country in October, and the “Siege of Dhaka” in November that year. Government measures to quell the related disorder
took the form of military action which often resulted in death and injury, as, for example, it did during the strike of 24 July when the officially reported death toll was 11.

The resurgent democratic governance in Bangladesh soon began to be destabilized by several factors. First, there were the indelible memories of past hostilities which continued to haunt inter-personal and inter-party relations in the Sangshad. Both Prime Minister Khaleda as well as leader of the opposition Hasina had their inherited charisma to protect and perpetuate with conflicting interpretations of past events. The collaboration between the BNP and the Awami League in the latter part of the Ershad regime was no more than a temporary alliance of political strategy between two groups that had deep-seated mutual animosities. Ershad destroyed all the democratic norms and his regime is considered as the worst one as he promoted unprecedented corruption not only in politics, but in every sphere of life. In 1988 he amended the constitution to make Islam as the state religion. He followed the previous regime in organizing his own party, first in 1983 as the Jana Dal and later in 1986 as Jatiya Party (JP). Under state patronage he arranged many elections like a national referendum in 1985, a parliamentary and presidential election in 1986 and another parliamentary election in 1988 but these were farcical and were aimed at creating more legitimacy for his government. All these contributed to the damaging of people’s trust on the state machineries, if there was any.

Similarly, until 1991, the military and its frequent forays into the political arena contributed to violence in the country. The political violence, manifest often through street power, has a unique contribution to Bangladeshi politics. Even the absence of military rule and ushering of democracy has not fundamentally curbed the ability and willingness of various political parties to resort to violence in achieving their objectives. This lack of political tolerance coupled with weak democratic institutions make Bangladesh a unique case in South Asia. Khaleda Zia’s taking over power in 1991 created much enthusiasm at home and abroad for greater legitimacy of her government, but her regime failed to provide any qualitative change in the democratic

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14 Ibid
governance. The two major political parties joined their hands for establishing parliamentary democracy, but soon their rapprochement evaporated.

Notwithstanding the institutionalization of electoral democracy, political tolerance is lacking and criminalization of politics has become an established norm with criminals being the patrons and the main beneficiaries of the politicians. Money power plays a large role in this nexus between criminals and politicians.

Figure 2: Year wise political violence 2009-2013

As the figure 2 shows (see figure 2) the first year of the AL led grand alliance started with massive political confrontation with 251 people killed and 15559 people were injured. The second year it got lower with 220 people killed. The third year that is 2011 marked the lowest point of violence with 135 people killed 11532 were injured. The later year showed the rising trend of violence. However, the conflict touched its peak in 2013 with murder of 580 people and injury of 21574 people.

Similarly during the tenure of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001), the BNP led seven-party opposition alliance resorted to agitations to remove the Awami League government. The anti-Sheikh Hasina agitations held during October-November 1998 turned violent and seven people were killed in

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16 Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, WORKING OF DEMOCRACY IN BANGLADESH Ershad regime (1982-1990)
Likewise in February 2000, business in Bangladesh came to halt when the opposition protested against planned government legislation designed to prevent street disorder. According to some estimates, during 1991-96, when Begum Khaleda was in power the Awami League organized 173 days of hartals and the BNP retaliated by 85 days of work stoppage when Sheikh Hasina was in power (1996-2001). Thus, street power often brings Bangladesh to a grinding halt. Hartals have become common instruments for political parties to press for their demands. Various political parties depend on them for their growth, thrive on such street power and in the process contribute to violence in the society.

The national elections in 1996, 2001, and 2008 reversed fortunes for the two political rivals and brought BAL, BNP, and BAL to power in succession. In a bitter twist of irony, the BAL government abolished the caretaker government system in 2011, which has caused much angst to their political rivals. Since then, BAL has faced the same sort of political challenges from the BNP-led opposition, albeit on a much smaller scale, that they themselves had waged when they were demanding the installation of the caretaker government system. In 2013, several events related to the special War Crimes Tribunal unfolded in quick succession creating a severe political maelstrom that the nation had not witnessed since the fiery days of 1995/1996. It is likely that confrontational politics will continue to loom large on the political arena in the days to come. Available information shows that the average number of days of hartal per year (both local and national), which was 3 during 1947-70, 7 during 1971-82 and 17 during 1973-90, increased to 46 during 1991-2013 (Source: ASK and CPD).

Professor Rehman Sobhan in his recent article in The Daily Star states, “Each party questions the legitimacy of its rival unto a point where they behave as if they would like to drive out their rival from the political arena.” He further tells that the confrontational approach to politics in Bangladesh in now a decade old. The very issues, which now find the opposition on the street, have kept the Awami League on the streets during the term of office of BNP. In fact the source

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19 Ibid
21 http://archive.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/bangladeshssRemarkableProgressAndPoliticalViolence/
22 For details see: http://www.notundhara.org/index.php?page_id=241
of the problems lies in the culture of tolerance, compromise and confrontation among the principle political parties.

**Political Violence of BAL and its Units**

In the history of political violence of Bangladesh, Awami League has systematically been brutal in its treatment of rival political parties. For example, on 28 October 2006, its party men killed in broad day light nearly a dozen unarmed men on the streets of Dhaka. On the eve of the handover of power from the BNP-Jamaat ruling alliance to the caretaker government, like other political parties, Bangladesh Jamaat Islam organized a big rally in Dhaka to celebrate peacefully the successful power handover. Awami League President who is the Prime Minister of Bangladesh now had told her party men to bring 'logi-boitha' (pole-oar) to her rally on that day. Her party men brought – together with logi-boitha – fire arms, knives. Without any provocation whatsoever, her party men attacked Jamaat people who were caught on their way to the Jamaat rally. Awami hooligans beat up to death about ten Jamaat men on the streets of Dhaka on broad day light. Then they attacked the Jamaat-Shibir rally and tried to kill its senior leaders. Such killings were unprecedented on the streets of Dhaka for decades.

More cruelly, 17-year-old Tanvir Mohammad Toki, son of an activist affiliated to the ruling Awami League was found dead on 8 March 2013. The ruling Awami League, the Shahbag rally and the media immediately launched a campaign blaming Jamaat-e-Islami and the government used this opportunity to carry out mass arrests of Jamaat-e-Islami members. However, on 16 March, national media reported that Toki’s father and the local Awami League party mayor accused the local Awami League MP, Shamim Osman, of being involved in the murder of Toki in revenge for some internal infighting.

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23 Bangladesh Crisis Group, Briefing Paper, 26 March, 2013
24 Ibid
The figure 3 (see figure 3) shows the critical law and order situation of Bangladesh during the BAL government 2009-2013. In total 20,693 people were killed throughout the country. Politically motivated killing got intense as 1330 people were killed while extra judicial killing was going on unabated. 18 journalists were murdered in cold blood. The Number of injured people was 79883 people who were victim of different confrontation.

In another case, on 29th December, lawyers siding with the BNP staged a protest inside the main gate of the Supreme Court, where police tried to disperse them with water cannon and sound grenades. Ruling party activists caused mayhem inside the premises, pelting the Bar Association building, where opposition supporters had locked themselves in, with stones and burning a motorcycle. Law enforcers later entered the premises about 4.00 pm and evacuated ruling party activists while fire service officials put out the flames. Stick-wielding AL goons stormed the gate to beat the lawyers and chase them away, as the police stood by and watched. The men with sticks took to the streets vowing to take on their counterparts from the BNP, but there were none to be found.

Source: Odhikar, Centre for Research and Training, and Bangladesh police.

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Senior Supreme Court lawyer Rafique-ul Huq told New Age that he had never seen such an incident on the court premise in 50 years that outsiders had entered the area and attacked lawyers.

**Table 5: Disappearance 2009-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 5 (see table 5) indicates disappearance has increased over the years. It was 02 in 2009 but 25 in 2013. The disappearance touched its peak in 2011 as it was 30 in that year.

On the same day, ruling party men teamed up under Muktijoddha Prajanma League (a unit of BAL) attacked a procession of Dhaka University teachers, loyal to the opposition, leaving at least eight of them injured.

On October 8, 2010, at a scheduled rally of the BNP in Nator, Sanaullah Noor Babu, aged 40, the elected chairman of Boraigraam Upazila and president of the Boraigraam Municipality BNP, was mercilessly beaten to death in public by AL thugs. During this gruesome attack, another 35 people were injured. Video footage of the incident was later released and aired on television.

A Jubo league leader has raped a 35 year old woman at Rangabali Char, Patuakhali. The victim, mother of 3, was raped in front of her daughters by local Jubo league secretary Kawsar and his followers.

Chatra league activists have attacked and torched the office of Bangladesh Jamaat E Islami Baufol, Patuakhali branch. They also attacked the house of the correspondent of Daily Sangram, Prof. Abu Sufian and vandalized his house.
On 10th December, 2013 six Awami League cadres were burnt when they tried to throw petrol bomb to a shop owned by a Jamaat leader. The incident took place at Hapania village of Alamdanga upazilla in Chuadanga.

Table 6: Intra Party killing during AL government 1996-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>BCL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Police HQ, Ain& Salish Kendra, Dhaka; extracted from *Awami Dusshashon: Ekti Pramanno Dolil* Published by Bangladesh Gobeshona Kendra, July 2001; P. 34

Rivalry and grouping is common in political parties and it often shows its violent nature. As table 6 (see table 6) indicates that 196 people were victim of intra AL conflicts while it was 96 people for BCL. It was more severe in election year as only in 2001, 39 AL men and 22 BCL men were killed due intra party clash.

Table 7: Year wise murder during AL regime 1996 -2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996 (from July)</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001(till June)</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20612</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Table 7 (see table 7) shows that murder was going on unabated during the AL regime from 1996 to 2001. There were total 20612 murders during the regime. The number of people killed over those years was increasing as 4000 were in 1997 and 4501 in 1999.

Salauddin Ahmed Bacchu, the younger brother of Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, and 13 others were implicated in the murder of Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain, after a long drama over filing a case. Kamruzzaman, immediate younger brother of the slain mayor, named Bacchu as the main accused in the case filed with Narsingdi Model Police Station.27

**Figure 4: At a glance AL regime 1996-2001**

Following the figure 4 (see figure 4) it is clear that there were 659371 crimes of which 20,000 people were killed though filed murder case was 15000. In total 255,000 people were arrested during the regime. 9 journalists were killed.

The ruling party men snatched tender boxes and documents in three districts, sparking clashes between contractors that left nine people injured. The cadres of Awami League and its front organizations snatched a tender box from the UNO office in Haluaghat upazila of

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Mymensingh.28 The activists also brought out a procession at the upazila headquarters chanting slogans against the UNO and local police administration. When the local journalists went to the spot for taking snaps of the procession, the AL men swooped on them, injuring two reporters.

Table 8: At a Glance 1996-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat and Violence</td>
<td>26,100</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Violence</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb blast</td>
<td>9364</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra Party clash</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious death</td>
<td>5953</td>
<td>5953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning Media (print)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartal and Blockade</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BHRB, Evidence special edition, Year 19th; extracted from Manobotor Artonad Published by Itihas Songrokhan Parishad, Bangladesh, September 2001; P. 159

Table 8 (see table 8) indicates that violence during the period killed 319 people. There was 387 campus violence which killed 21 students, 521 intra party clashes took place during the regime which left 106 people died. 6 print media were banned and 5953 people were victim of suspicious death.

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28 The Daily Star, March 16, 2010
Figure 5: At a glance 2001-2006

![Pie chart showing figures for 2001-2006]

Source: Ittefaq, 3 May, 2006, P.05

According to the figure 5 (see figure 5), more than 40 thousand people were murdered during the regime while releasing 70,000 criminals.

A scuffle between two wings of the ruling Awami League at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital disrupted the bidding procedure for supplying foods to patients.29

Jubo League cadres clashed with rivals for possession of a fish trading centre in Barisal while Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL) men snatched tenders from contractors in Manikganj. In Manikganj, leaders and activists of BCL snatched tender papers at the local LGED office when the contractors were going to drop them. Failing to drop the tender papers, Dayan Khan of Air Engineering Service, who had come from Dhaka to drop the tender papers, filed an FIR with Manikganj Sadar Police Station, reports our correspondent. According to FIR, BCL activist Anjan and others took Dayan and project manager of their farm to a corner room and confined them in it. Later they snatched the tender documents and gave them death threat if they try to drop the tender or seek police help.

On April 19, 2010, hundreds of BCL activists attacked the police station at Swarupkathi in Pirozpur in protest against the arrest of eight BCL activists. At least 30 people, including nine police officers, were injured during the attack.

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29 The financial Express, July 27, 2009
Sajjad Molla, District religious-affairs secretary of Chatra League along with two Chatra league activists Limon and Rana have been detained with two bottles of Petrol and match from Parnanduali central bus terminal area of Magura city. According to the police, these three guilty were caught on the spot while they were trying to set fire to a bus.

On 15th December, 2013, three leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL), the student wing of the ruling party Awami League, were arrested with three petrol bombs while they were about to attack on the house of Justice Jahangir Hossain, judge of International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-1), at Kabilpur village in Senbagh upazila of Noakhali district.

**Political Violence of Chatra League**

After the national election in 2008, student wing of present ruling party Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL) became too much furious in different campuses and outside of the campuses. Their violence was unbridled in almost all tertiary educational institutions. Hall dominance, campus capture, intra BCL clashes, tender politics and in other crimes they were so active and visible for last five years.

**Table 9: Victims of BCL 2009-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCs, principals and vice principals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and female students</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortured journalist</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist beaten up</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On local people</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halting development works in different colleges</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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30 [http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/1/1/56646#.UsfXzNfW0jY](http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/1/1/56646#.UsfXzNfW0jY)

31 [http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/1/4/56418](http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/1/4/56418)
According to table 9 (see table 9) 80 teachers were under attack of BCL gang while 23 VC, principals & vice principals of different education institution were harassed by BCL. 156 journalists and 142 women & female students were beleaguered. Development works of 80 educational institutions were halted due to subscription demand.

During the last five years BCL did rampant violence in different education institutions. They keep trying to maintain dominance of different education institutions resulting violence is escalating in different institutions. Interestingly, intra-party (within BCL itself) campus clashes have been reported more than interparty clashes. Dominance over hall, managing tender, and corruptions among other issues were the main factors to fuel campus violence. As a result, during this present government tenure up to June 2012, more than 500 incidences of campus violence in different institutions occurred through direct and indirect involvement of Chattra League in which hundreds of people were killed leaving thousands injured including student, teacher and other people.

Table 10: Campus Violence 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Massive Incidence</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1711</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The daily star, the daily new age, daily prothom alo.

As table 10 shows (see table 10) there were 187 massive clashes took place in different campuses which left 1711 and 20 students injured and killed respectively.

For example, Al Amin, an activist of the Magura district unit Chatra League, was killed in a clash between two factions of the organization on December 26, 2011 over distribution of food after an Awami League meeting. Abidur Rahman, a third-year dental surgery student of Chittagong Medical College who is a college unit Chatra Dal activist, was killed by the college unit Chatra League activist on October 22, 2011. BCL Rangpur district unit former joint
secretary Masud Rana died in a factional clash on September 2, 2011 at Alamnagar in Rangpur city after a conflict over share of some money made from a Power Development Board tender. On February 12, 2011, Dhaka Cantonment thana unit Chatra League president Faruk Hossain was killed on the premises of Adarsha Bidya niketan at Manikdi in Dhaka in an infighting centering on extortion and drug peddling. On July 12, 2010, rivals killed BCL activist Udayendu Singha, a third-year student of mathematics at Sylhet MC College. Narail sadar unit BCL president Amirul Islam Apu was killed by a rival group of the organization on March 20, 2010. Eight days later, on March 28, Harunur Rashid Kaiser, a student of marketing at Chittagong University, was found dead near Bara dighirpar in the port city while AAM Mohiuddin Masum, a final-year student of political science at the university, was hacked to death at the Sholashahar railway station a month and a half earlier on February 11, 2010. Chittagong University unit Chatra Shibir leaders claimed that the both were their activists and termed the murders to be of political in nature, holding the Chatra League responsible for the killings. On February 3, 2010, Abu Bakar Siddique, a third-year student of Islamic history at Dhaka University, died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital from the injuries he sustained in a clash between two BCL factions centering on supremacy in the Sir F Rahman Hall the night before. On January 7, 2010, a BCL group of activists killed Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute unit Chatra Maitree vice-president Rezanur Chowdhury Sunny, six days after another BCL group in Khulna allegedly killed JCD leader Raihanul Islam Rabbi, a student of the Khulna Government City College, on January 1. On March 31, 2009, Dhaka Medical College unit BCL general secretary Abul Kalam Asad Rajib was killed in an infighting over extortion. Earlier on March 13, the Rajshahi University unit Chatra Shibir secretary was killed in a clash with BCL activists on the campus. BCL activists of Dewanganj Madrassah in Jamalpur were also blamed for slaying Hafej Ramzan Ali, a Chatra Shibir activist of the same institution.

- Normal student of different institutions were not safe from BCL for last five years periods. A Chittagong university student named Abul Hasanat has to jump from a dormitory building to escape from BCL activists in 26th may 2012.

- Abul Hasanat is a student of international relations department of CU and the former general secretary of CU Mirasarai Students' Association. BCL chased him because he did not agree to

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32 The daily New Age, the daily star
33 The daily star, 26th May 2012
give money from his organizations while he was a general secretary. Not only student even street vendor were also not safe from BCL during this time. A group of BCL activist of Dhaka University beat up a Fuska vendor and damaged his stall near TSC of Dhaka University in 1st April 2012 for his denial to pay toll money to BCL activists. Seriously injured Akash, 24, was rushed to Dhaka Medical Collage after that incidence

- Three students of BCL have beaten a senior student of BUET named Tousif Ahmed Eshan student of the computer science and technology department in 1st January 2012. This incidence has erupted agitation throughout the campus immediate after the incidence. University authority had to close the University for this Matter.

- A group of Bangladesh Chatra League activists including 10 BCL activists severely beat a student of Rajshahi University in 29th December 2011

- A general student of Rajshahi University has severely been beaten up by BCL activists in 29th December 2011

- BCL men also involved along with tender business, admission business, money extortion business and sex business. Clash has been erupted between BCL and contractors in three districts while BCL were trying to snatch tender boxes and documents left nine people injured.

- Sex crime of BCL leaders has been got new dimension after 2008 election. National dailies have been published news report after the scandal of Eden Women College. Senior Chatra League leaders of Eden College, with the collaboration of the College Principal, regularly send their juniors to the houses of male leaders, sometimes to hotels, to ’please’ them at night.

- On 31st December 2012, Chatra League activists beat up a senior student of BUET which sparked a three-day student protest.

- In 5 June 2012 BCL activists severely beat KUET student as he protested against the poor food served. This incidence later sparkled throughout the campus and at least 25 people have been injured due to this incidence.

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34 The daily star, 2nd April 2012
35 The daily star, 30th December 2011
36 The Daily Star, 31December, 2011
37 The Daily Star, March 16, 2010
38 The daily star, 7th January 2012
- BCL activists harassed several teachers in different public universities of Bangladesh during last five years. At least 20 teachers of the Bangladesh Agricultural University were wounded when a group of Chatra League activists attacked them on August 8, 2011. The Chittagong University proctor, Mohammad Akhtar Hossain, and assistant proctors Mohammad Monjur Morshed, Mohammad Moinul Islam, and Shipak Krishna Devnath on August 1, 2011 tendered their resignation in protest at their harassment by groups of Chatra League activists. They, however, withdrew the resignation letters later, after a meeting with the university authorities.


- In Dinajpur Government Collage, Chatra League leaders has confined their principal and 15 teachers inside the principal’s room for collage academic council’s refusal to admit some students on political consideration in 15th March 2009

**BCL's Attacks on Rival Parties**

For the last five years, BCL went berserk on rival parties. Particularly, clash between BCL and BICS happened for taking dominance in campus. BCL was so much desperate for taking control over campus in different public universities by using political favor of present ruling party and their muscle power. Most of the violence between BCL and BICS was more violent and bloody. Violence was bloodier where Shibir had predominance and BCL wanted to take over the control of those institutions by using muscle power. Especially Rajshahi University, Chittagong University and Islamic University in Kostia were more violent during the present ruling government. Here are few incidences.

- At least 20 persons were injured in the clash between BCL and BICS in Shahjalal University of Science Technology (SUST) campus in 11th January 2012. BCL men brought out a rally around 5:00pm and announced that they would force Shibir out of the campus. The members of BCL

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39 The daily star, 5th June 2012
then went on to vandalize halls of residence of Shibir activists, where the two student fronts clashed\textsuperscript{40}

- At least 20 students have been injured during the clash between BCL and BICS in Sylhet Agriculture University in 22th January 2011.\textsuperscript{41}

- A bloody battle occurred between BCL and BICS in Chittagong University at 8th February 2012 where 2 Shibir activists died and minimum 40 activists of both BCL and BICS have been injured. CU has been shut down for one week. It all began with an altercation between Shibir activist Al-Amin and BCL activist Sharier Shahin, both second year students of Islamic history, teachers and witnesses said. At one stage of the squabble, Al-Amin slapped and punched Sharier, pushing him to the ground. On information, Shibir and BCL men -- both groups equipped with sticks, iron rods and machetes -- started bringing out processions from different dormitories at 12:30 pm, each side chanting slogans against the other. When the Shibir men reached Suhrawardy Hall around 1:00 pm, BCL activists swooped on them with iron rods, sticks, machetes and with other local weapons. The Shibir men counter-attacked with similar weapons. It was then that the violent clashes spread to Gol Chattar, Amanat Hall and the areas adjacent to Shah Jalal Hall, leaving many activists of both the groups badly injured and turning the campus into a battle zone.\textsuperscript{42}

- Massive vandalism occurred in Rangpur Medical Collage (RMC) due to clash between Bangladesh Islami Chatra Shibir and Bangladesh Chatra League in 30th April 2012. According to the newspaper, Shibir had opted to hold the rooms which were previously under the control of BCL at 11.30 pm in 30th April. Due to this incidence there were chase and counter chase between BICS and BCL in the campus and therefore this vandalism occurred.\textsuperscript{43}

In Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute (RPI) campus BCL engaged with violence with Chatra Moitree in 17th January 2009 left at least 10 injured.\textsuperscript{44}

In 14th March RU was closed for an indefinite period following sporadic clashes between Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL) and Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS) that left university unit ICS closed.

\textsuperscript{40} The Daily Star 12\textsuperscript{th} January, 2012
\textsuperscript{41} The daily star 23 January, 2011
\textsuperscript{42} The daily star 09 February, 2012
\textsuperscript{43} The daily star 01 May, 2012
\textsuperscript{44} The Daily Star, 18\textsuperscript{th} January, 2009
general secretary Sharifuzzaman Nomani killed and at least 100 people injured. Rajshahi Medical College and Rajshahi College were also shut down following the RU clash.

In Chittagong Polytechnic Institute 8 person have been injured and campus has been closed for two days where residential halls have been vacated for indefinite time in 27th May 2009 due to clash between BCL and BICS. The clash took place between BCL and BICS in several phases since 3.00pm.\(^\text{45}\)

**BCL: Intra-party Clashes**

BCL has been continuing extensive violence in different education institutions, not only brutally murdered many of their political opponent students, but also killed their own activists due to factional rivalry and power clashes within the party. Several public universities and government college authority had to close due to avoid deadlock violence created by BCL activities during AL 5 year's tenure including BUET, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Jahangir Nagar University, Jagannath University, Different government polytechnics and government colleges.

One of the bloody battles within BCL happened in Jahangir Nagar University in 5th July 2012. At least 33 student were injured, two by bullets, during a factional clash of BCL at Jahangir Nagar University in 5th July over control of a male dormitory. According to the newspaper clash ensued after Enayet Kabir Emil and four to five others, all loyal to university unit BCL General Secretary Nirjhar Alam, beat up Kazi Mostofa Monwar Sajib, of unit President Rashedul Islam Shafin's group, at Al-Beruni Hall around 9:00am. Emil took control of the dormitory following the incident. As the news spread, around 45 BCL men led by Shafin and Organising Secretary Shahadat Hossain Reza attacked the dorm brandishing iron rods, cleavers and machetes. They beat up 30 to 35 activists of Nirjhar group. The Shafin group also threw some of their rivals out the windows from the second and third floors. Sounds of gunshots spread panic through the area.

- Zubair hossain, student of English Department, Jahangir Nagar University and activist of BCL Jahangir Nagar University unit has been stabbed by other BCL activists from another faction and died after being severely injured in 9th January 2012.\(^\text{46}\)

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\(^\text{45}\) The daily star 28 May, 2009  
\(^\text{46}\) The daily Star 09\(^\text{th}\) January, 2012
- Factional clash of BCL in Dhaka University was much more widespread during last five years period of this government. A student named Abu Bakar from Sir A.F.Rahman Hall has been killed in Dhaka University due to factional clash between two groups of BCL in Sir A.F.Rahman Hall. At least 10 BCL activists of Kabi Jasim Uddin unit have been injured due to Factional clash in 25th August 2009. Another most violent factional clash happened in Haji Muhammad Muhsin Hall in 13th October 2009. Two factions of Bangladesh Chatra League exchanged at least 20 shots during a clash over giving shelter to a BCL activist at Haji Muhammad Muhsin Hall.

- BCL activist Khlaed Hossian Alias Nahiyan, a final year student of management department has been stabbed by rivals at RU in 2nd January 2012.\(^{47}\)

- Two Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL) activists of Chittagong University (CU) unit were injured in an attack allegedly launched by a rival group of the party on the campus 9th January 2012. The injured are Abdul Malek, a third year student of Sociology Department and Sajedur Rahman, a second year student of Economics Department.\(^{48}\)

- In 11 March 2012 BCL activists beaten KUET staff named Imran Hossain in Khulna. This incident occurred following a dispute over sharing of bribe for appointment. Earlier Kuet was shut for over a month from January 2 following a violence led by a group of non-student BCL cadres.

- In 12Th February 2012, BCL factions in Dinajpur Textile Institute unit clashed on the campus and left seven activists from both sides injured. And another factional clash of BCL in Rajshashi University of Engineering and Technology has left two injured on the same day. Later one of them named Aziz Khan Sajib, 25, an organizing secretary of RUET’s Zia Hall Units BCL died. RUET’s authority closed RUET campus for 13 days to avoid tension.\(^{49}\)

- In Dhaka collage clashed was not limited to using only physical violence rather BCL faction used weapons and shot the rivals. In 29th April clashes between two groups of BCL over establishing supremacy on Dhaka collage campus left at least 15 injured, two of them bullet hit.

\(^{47}\) The Daily Star 2\textsuperscript{nd} January, 2012  
\(^{48}\) The daily Star 10\textsuperscript{th} January, 2012  
\(^{49}\) The daily star 12\textsuperscript{th}, 17\textsuperscript{th} March 2012. The daily amar desh
Clashes between two groups led to a gunfight around 5.00 am when they exchanged at least 15 shots during that time.\(^{50}\)

**Media Outlets and News Personnel Attacked by BCL**

Bangladesh has never been a safe place for media outlets and its news personnel. However, under the ruling BAL government, the media faces increasing pressure. The present government is strictly controlling some media for their critical stance on the policies of government. Government is either stopping the media or harassing the editors by arresting and taking into remand for extracting information. After the win in election in 2008, ruling party Awami league showed clamp down on web-based media promoting citizen journalism. Temporary closure of YouTube and Facebook in addition to closing down permanently of private satellite channel Channel 1 and temporary shutdown of Daily Amar Desh are examples of media control during present government. In an apparent attempt to cut off opposition coverage of the events, two television stations that widely cover opposition political gatherings, Islamic TV and Diganta TV, were taken off the air by the government on the night of May 5-6 while reporting from the Hefazat protest in Dhaka.

The editors of some media who are critical of government have been victim of suppression by government. The editor of daily Amar Desh “Mahmudur Rahman” and second editor “Waliullah Noman” were arrested and tortured extremely in custody in 2010. Police arrested Enamul Haque, the editor of Sheershaw news on July 31 in an extortion case and taken into remand.

On September 20, the daily Sangram editor “Abul Asad” was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab). Police said that he was involved in violence with law enforcement agencies.\(^{51}\) But it was proved that he was in office far from the place of violence. Besides, media reports that, journalists are frequently harassed and threatened by the Awami league leaders if the cover the news of corruption, extortion and other bad news of them.

According to Odhikar, 2012 was a bad year for journalists with five journalists being killed. In 2011 none were killed, in 2010 four journalists were killed and in 2009 three journalists were

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\(^{50}\) The daily star, 30\(^{th}\) April 2012, the daily new age

\(^{51}\) Sangram editor held”, the daily star, September 21, 2011.
killed. The journalists and the media continue to be victims of attacks, physical assault, threats and intimidation from different powerful quarters, specially the government and the ruling party leaders and activists. From January to December 2012, according to Odhikar’s documented statistics, apart from the five journalists killed, 161 journalists have been injured, 63 have been threatened, 10 have been attacked and 50 have been assaulted and two journalists were tortured by RAB and the Detective Branch (DB) of police. The Inter Press Service reported that during the first half of 2013, 120 media practitioners were subjected to severe attacks and 24 received some form of threat during the course of their professional duties.

According to journalists, on multiple occasions government officials asked privately owned television channels not to broadcast the opposition's activities and statements. For example, ETV, Bangla Vision and Islamic TV defied unofficial requests not to broadcast a live opposition alliance rally on 12 March 2013. Government intelligence officials allegedly forced cable operators to suspend the transmission of the three channels until after the rally had finished.

Amnesty International reports that Mahmudur Rahman was arrested at his office on 11 April 2013 after the newspaper he works for, Amar Desh, published articles that criticised the government. On 17 April, after 5 days in police custody, during which time his lawyers say he was tortured, he was produced before a magistrate who ordered that he be transferred from police to jail custody. Reporters Sans Frontiers reported that around ten journalists covering Islamist rioting in the central Dhaka district of Paltan on 5 May 2013 were injured in attacks by protesters, supporters of Hefajat-e-Islam, and two were hospitalized in a critical condition. The rioting was followed by the closure of two Islamist TV stations.

Shamim Osman, the notorious AL leader in the district of Narayangonj, allegedly threatened to shoot a reporter of the daily Prothom-Alo and his family members. Recently a gathering of the AL led 14 party alliance was postponed due to some of the allied party members reservation against Shamim Osman’s inclusion as one of the AL speakers in the programme. Mr. Osman threatened the reporter not to publish the news of the postponement.

The Ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chatra League activists beat up a photojournalist and manhandled four others on Dhaka University campus. The BCL activists beat up daily

Prothom Alo photojournalist Hasan Raja indiscriminately while he was taking snap of BCL men who were manhandling Andrew Biraj of Reuters, Sony Ramany of New Age, Harun-or-Rashid Rubel; of banglanews and freelance photographer Apu at the Plassey intersection at about 5:30pm.

Table 11: Freedom of Media 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Assaulted</th>
<th>Ban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1 TV Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1 TV Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 TV Channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table 11 indicates (see table 11) a total of 21 journalists were murdered during the 2009 to 2013 while another 592 were injured. Four (04) electronic media were shut down during the period.

Between January and June 2010, journalists have been attacked, assaulted and harassed in various ways. During this time, 02 journalists were killed, 52 were injured, and 35 threatened and 29 were assaulted. 15 journalists were attacked.

On May 21, 2010, the President of the Gazipur Pouro Awami League, Advocate Waziuddin Miah and several others attacked Sohrab Hossain, a physically disabled editor of the local Daily Mukto Khobor over the publication of a certain news item.
# Table 12: Oppression on Journalists 1996-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Injured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: extracted from *Awami Dusshashon: Ekti Pramanno Dolil* Published by Bangladesh Gobeshona Kendra, July 2001; P. 47

According to the table 12 (see table 12), in total 9 journalists were mutilated while another 373 were injured from 1996-2001.

Sayyed Nur, Farid Ullah and several other Chatra League activists led by the President of the Naikhongchori Chatra League, Taslim Iqbal, attacked Abul Bashar Noyon, the Naikhongchori, Bandarban representative of the Dailies Amardesh and Karnafuli. The Chatra League members also ransacked Noyon’s office located at ‘Media Palace’ adjacent to the Union Parishad, where Noyon was working when the attack took place. The attack was related to the publication of a certain news item on May 1, 2010.

Senior journalist and regional correspondent of the Shaptahik 2000 in Sylhet Foteh Osmani, who was stabbed by a group of criminals on April 18, 2010, succumbed to his injuries at the Apollo Hospital in Dhaka on April 28, 2010. He was attacked with sharp weapons by criminals in front of the Eidgah in Sylhet while he was returning home from the Doladoli area of the city with a friend.

The supporters of the Awami League-backed Chatra League attacked two journalists in the Dhaka University campus. On April 4, 2010, a group of activists of Awami League-backed Chatra League led by Sajid Jahan Saikot, President of S M Hall17 unit of Chatra League beat up Fayez Ahmed, reporter of the weekly ‘Budhbar’ and Anis Raihan, reporter of ‘Shaptahik’ in front of the Public Library on the Dhaka University Campus.
On March 1, 2020, Monirul Islam, the Sharsha representative of the Daily Lokshamaj of Jessore was beaten with a hammer and was severely injured by 10-12 persons including Rashed, Monir, Samaul, Hamaj and Yunus who were all members of the Jubo League. The Daily Lokshamaj published a series of articles disclosing the criminal activities and trade that went on in Sharsha.

On February 23, 2010, Nurul Kabir, the Editor of New Age received death threats from an unidentified person.

On February 14, 2010, Touhodi Hasan, the Kushtia representative of the Daily Prothom Alo and Sharif Biswash, the Kushtia representative of Desh TV were beaten in front of the police by the Chatra League of Kushtia Government College unit, when they had gone to the scene to report the shutting down of the admission process by the members of the Chatra League.

Odhikar expresses deep concern over the attacks and threats by the political activists, mostly supported by the government party on journalists who are engaged in their job.

Shamim Osman, the Awami League-backed mayoral candidate defeating at the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) polls, on November 3, 2011 warned that nobody will be able to stay in Narayanganj if the intimidation does not stop," anyone intimidating his loyalists would face dire consequences.53

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**Minority Communities Victimized**

In Bangladesh, minority communities are very often being used as a political instrument. Almost every political party does so when it comes to question of gaining their political ends by cruelly victimizing these communities. Particularly, BAL ruling party and its organizations subtly makes minority communities victimized to maneuver political narrow benefits, while putting all blames put on a particular political party attempting to mark question of its democratic demonstrations. And even sometimes minority communities are orchestrated to project JIB as a militant organization in international arena. Recently this has been visibly proved in social media posts, reported news in national and international media outlets, and in published reports of national and international human rights organizations.

Table 13: Attacks on Minorities by BCL 2010-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Incidence</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Injured</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows there were 27 incidence of attack on minorities which left 175 people injured.

Jamaat has denied involvement with minorities attack and has instructed its members to guard temples and help prevent such attacks. Over the past four years the evidence of news reports as well as the plethora of cases, documented in detail by human rights organizations overwhelmingly reveals that most of the cases of minority persecution which can be attributed to those affiliated to a political party, have been carried out by members and groups belonging to the ruling Awami League.\(^{54}\)

A spokesperson for the Bangladeshi Hindu community in the UK, Mr Biplab Kumar Podda, has stated that those affiliated to authoritarian Bangladeshi government in the past have commonly taken advantage of their powerful position to oppress religious minorities. He further states that it is unlikely that Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir are involved in persecuting minorities as they themselves are struggling under government harassment, and would be unable to organize such an offensive.\(^{55}\)

However, in the immediate aftermath of the RAMU attacks, the government and so-called secular and liberal civil society establishments were quick to blame Jamaat-e-Islami. On 22 December 2012, “A group of eminent citizens, comprising 15 academics, writers and human rights activists, have called for a convention to resist the "communal, fundamentalist and militant forces" in the country … and to protest against the "heinous attacks" on the Buddhist community in Ramu Upazila of Cox's Bazar district and its adjoining areas, and the violent activities carried out across the country to foil the ongoing trial of the "war criminals."\(^{56}\)

However, on 17 March 2013, a statement made by two different Hindu Temple committee representatives, Nitta Gopal Muzamdar and Babu Shudep Mozumdar of Lokhhipur, in the presence of more than 100 representatives of the Hindu community, asserts that “although some media have claimed that Jamaat/Shibir have been involved in the destruction of temples, this is

\(^{54}\) Bangladesh Crisis Group, Briefing Paper, 26 March, 2013
\(^{55}\) Ibid
not actually the case”. A number of analysts in newspapers which are normally very critical of Jamaat-e-Islami have written that the attacks on the minority community are being carried out by members of the ruling party.  

Human rights auditor Odhikar reported in January 2013 that: “On September 29, 2012, 12 Buddhist monasteries and temples and 40 houses belonging to members of the Buddhist community were vandalized and torched by criminals with the help of local leaders of the ruling party in Ramu of Cox’s Bazaar. Local Buddhist monks alleged that “those people who led the attacks and processions are roaming around. However, innocent people are being arrested.” The responsible police officers of Cox’s Bazaar also admitted this to the daily Prothom Alo. They said, there is a restriction to arrest leaders and activists of the ruling party that came from the ‘top levels’.

On 14 the December, 2013, one leader of Jubo League, the youth wing of ruling Awami League party, has been handed over to police by locals while he was escaping after setting fire on several Hindu residences at Debhata in Satkhira. Detained Jubo League leader Abdul Gaffar said, he torched the Hindu houses as per his local Awami League leader's order. He mentioned three more names of his assistants to police. Locals said, 15-20 miscreants with faces covered with masks torched the resident of Suneet Sarkar at Parulia village in Debahata upazila, causing two of the houses to burn completely.

According to Bangladesh Crisis Group, Briefing Paper, 26 March, 2013 reports that, a Bangladeshi daily, reports on 19 March, ‘Hindu leader Kajol Debonath said that Hindu people are tortured and forced to leave the country in order to seize their property. He accused the government activists Awami League for involvement in these crimes. An Assam influential daily newspaper published a report on this matter. Under the heading “Hasina failed protecting Hindu people” the report states, with reference to Gobindro chondro Pramanic, the Secretary General of Bangladesh Hindu Grand Alliance, stated that Hindu people are being tortured and their houses are being burned and looted with a master plan to destroy their claim to 26 lac Acres of land.’

57 Bangladesh Crisis Group, Briefing Paper, 26 March, 2013
On Dec 2012 just within few month of Buddhist massacre in Ramu BAL activists chopped Biswajit Das to death, amid most brutal murder of contemporary Bangladesh, if not the world. League activist's involvement was clearly proved from the video reported in printing media on that day. This caused much anger amongst the Hindu community, who pointed out the government for attempting to shift the blame away from the Awami League members. On 5 March 2013, twenty one members of Chatra League were indicted in connection with Biswajit’s killing.

On September 25, 2009, an adolescent was gang raped by 10 BCL activists as she was returning home from a puja mandap (a Hindu temple) in Kolapara Upazilla in the Patuakhali District. The rapists threatened the victim’s family not to take any legal action, and Rafiqul Islam, the general secretary of the Upazilla AL, forced the victim and her father to sign a blank sheet of paper.

On 28 May the vice-president of the local Krishak League was accused for torching the house of a Buddhist family in Thakurpara of Comilla.

Awami League Men Occupied Church Asset of 300 million taka in Barishal – Sep 2012

Buddhist temple vandalized by Awami League MP’s son (Odhikar report, February 2012)

Awami League Leader occupies land belonging to Christian family in Pabna – 30 July 2012

Awami League leaders usurp land belonging to murdered Hindu journalist

Chatra League leaders attack Ramna Temple

Ruling Awami League party members illegally occupy Indigenous tribal land at Tangail, Madhupur.

Political Violence of BNP-JIB

Political violence also remained almost unchanged in Bangladesh during BNP-Jamaat tenure from 2001 to 2006. The ruling BNP had become extremely unpopular because of misrule, misleads, misuse of power, murders, tortures, rapes and extra judicial killing during its tenure

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60 Daily Jugantor, September 10, 2012; and Daily Prothom Alo, September 11, 2012
61 Kaler Kantha, 30 July, 2012
62 Daily Samakal and Daily Prothom Alo; 27 February, 2012
63 Daily AmaderShomoy; 12 April, 2012
64 Daily Shamakal and Daily ProthomAlo, 15 September, 2012
from 2001 to 2006. During the tenure, approximately 400 people have been killed and more than 17000 have been injured, primarily in street clashes between members and supporters of competing political camps.65

BNP and its key allay Jamaat continued torture over opponents especially Awami League during their tenure from 2001 to 2006. 1,61767 political activists have been harassed and 77950 women and children have been tortured, raped by BNP. Average 9 people have been killed in a day of BNP terms.66

In addition, extra judicial killing got new dimension after founding Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) during BNP terms. From the founding of RAB on 26 June 2004 till 30 September, at least 600 people have been killed at so called crossfire and more than thousand badly injured in physical tortures. At least 53 people have been killed in army custody and more than seven thousand physically tortured by operation Clean Heart that lasted 86 days.

### Table 14: Murder in Feni 1996-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>BNP</th>
<th>Common People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 8 December, 2000, Manabzamin; extracted from *Awami Dusshashon: Ekti Pramanno Dolil* Published by Bangladesh Gobeshona Kendra, July 2001; P. 23

According to table 14 (see table 14), 137 people killed only in Feni (a district of the country). Of them 45 from the then ruling AL, 50 from opposition party BNP and other 42 were general people.

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The judicial commission formed to probe the 2001 post-polls violence has found evidence of over 3,625 major crimes, including murder, rape, and arson and looting by cadres of the BNP in the first 15 months of its tenure from October 2001. 13 journalists have been murdered by BNP.

Under the current regime, police have not been allowing any meeting, procession, protest rally of Jamaat & Shibir in any place around the country since February 2010. In reaction, during the period Jamaat-Shibir went berserk. Going by media reports one would find that attacks on the police by Jamaat-Shibir activists have been well planned and deliberate since war crimes convict Delwar Hossain Sayeedee was given capital punishment on February 28 this year. Since then, 74 people have been killed including eight policemen have been killed and 267 injured 37 critically, in clashes with Jamaat-Shibir protesters across the country.

Human Rights Watch notes that from February to May 2013, more than 150 people were killed in the violence linked to demonstrations, including at least 15 members of the security forces; at least 2,000 people were injured. Some demonstrations were entirely peaceful; in others protesters threw rocks at or otherwise attacked security forces.

A 12-year-old child was shot dead and 10 injured as the activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chatra Shibir, clashed with police in Sirajganj Sadar upazila during the Jamaat-enforced countrywide hartal.

Satkhira became a deadly place for the Awami league activists during the long blockade of the 18 party alliances from 26 November. 12 men were died including 9 Awami league leaders in Satkhira. In 3 days of violence they had set in to fire and looted of at least 60 households including 30 minority houses.

Five persons were injured when around 40 to 50 Shibir men attacked law enforcers and hurled at least 10 cocktails at the policemen from a procession at Binodpur in Rajshahi around 10:00am. At least 15 policemen including an officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station were stabbed by the activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chatra Shibir, in Narail town.

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68 http://www.thedailystar.net/upload/gallery/image/arts/11b6700.jpg
71 http://www.newagebd.com/newspic/08b35e9a43eca0939a4a997de55ab7de20131214.jpg
Shibir men set fire to more than 100 vehicles, including trucks and covered vans, across the country. In Bogra alone, over 50 vehicles, mostly trucks, were torched.

At least seven people were killed and scores injured as activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chatra Shibir went on the rampage at different places across the country after the execution of their leader Abdul Quader Molla for committing crimes against humanity in 1971.

On December 16th they killed five Jamaat supporters in Satkhira, a district that, like many Jamaat strongholds, borders India. In the north, members of Jamaat’s youth wing have burned down homes and shops owned by members of the Hindu minority. League cadres have fled the countryside to the capital, Dhaka.

Political analysts think that, the present government has a fear that, Jamaat-e-Islami can create an obstacle to sustaining its power. Therefore, from the very beginning of this regime, ruling party Awami league has been keeping a strict eye on this political party.

**Repressive Policies of Ruling BAL Government on JIB**

Awami regime has been using the police and administration in an obscene manner to repress people of opposition parties including Bangladesh Jamaat Islam and Islamic Chatra Shibir. Jamaat-Shibir people have been denied their democratic rights to organize political rallies and have been detained illegally from demonstrations and even from residences. Police hunted hundreds of them and put them in prison. In some cases police arrested guests or parents who came to visit. After arresting them, the police fabricate false accusations and sue them in law courts where the magistrates have to comply with the government wishes of incarcerating them. As a result, the recent political setting in Bangladesh has become heated due to the fact of Government's tyrannical stand even against performing the fundamental democratic rights of people. Particularly, pro-Islamic parties and its activists appeared to have been the victim of the BAL government.

An overview based on newspaper reports shows that present Bangladesh Awami League-led (BAL) government has been appeared to use the administration and its party wings for suppressing opposition; particularly the leaders and activists of BJI and its associated student
organization Bangladesh Islami Chatra Shibir (BICS). In doing so, BAL government seemed to use randomly tools of arrest, opposition attack and politically motivated prosecutions in the name of war crime trial. Even after having representation in parliament, BJI cannot hold public meetings and processions. Statistic confirms that during the current regime police has arrested more than 20000 activists of BJI on various political cases. Frequent attack on BICS by BCL, the ruling Awami League’s associate students wing, has taken a serious nature.

Since this government came to power, Jamaat-Shibir people have been arrested from the street, from their homes and from their party offices. The police have sometimes stopped and searched buses and trains to identify and arrest Jamaat-Shibir people. Banks have been raided to arrest Jamaat-Shibir activists. The police have locked Jamaat’s and Shibir’s central offices for a very long time. Jamaat-Shibir leaders and activists cannot hold their usual meetings in their offices. When they try to organize party meetings in private houses, on a tip, the police go there and arrest them. In most cases, the police carry some extra weapons and place them in the hands of Jamaat-Shibir people only to parade them as possessors of illegal weapons. And then the anti-Jamaat-Shibir media write interesting news stories to present Jamaat-Shibir people as outlawed. Another common excuse the police use for arresting Jamaat-Shibir people from their meetings is that, they may have been planning anti-state activities!

Thus Jamaat-Shibir’s democratic right of holding demonstrations in the street or arranging party meetings in private facilities has been systematically and drastically curtailed. For the fear of police raids, thousands of Jamaat-Shibir leaders and activists cannot sleep in their own houses. About a dozen topmost Jamaat leaders are in prison on false charges and the remaining topmost leaders are in hiding or on the run for fear of being arrested. And the torture in police custody on Jamaat-Shibir people once arrested is proverbial in today’s Bangladesh.

For last 53 months, the authority is not allowing the party to hold any demonstration or processions. Since the government came into the power, 2200 Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chatra Shibir activists had been taken into police remand. Police had made more than 400 hundreds men crippled forever by carrying inhuman torture against them. Unbelievably, some 21,000 cases had been filed against some 5 hundred thousand Jamaat-Shibir activists nationwide. Central, city and several districts level offices of Jamaat-e-Islami have been vandalized and ransacked by the clamp down of the police and the ruling party cadres. The atrocities of the police force have
reached into severe inhuman level. There are some incidents which will lead the humanity to burst into tears. Such as; after arresting a Shibir activist, officer-in-charge of a police station of Chittagong town killed him by pulling his eyes up. While, a police official in Dhaka’s Tejgaon police station shot 7 rounds of bullet to the leg of a detained Shibir activists in order to make him cripple forever.

Now continued attacks and harassment aiming JIB leaders and its activists have been a great concern for Bangladesh. For example, on December 11, 2011, Dhaka courts sent seven Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and activists to jail, hours after their surrender, in connection with two cases filed allegedly for assaulting police and obstructing them from discharging their duties on September 19 2010. While security forces have been quick to arrest hundreds of protesters and suspected Jamaat supporters, Human Rights Watch found no indication of any meaningful investigations by authorities into alleged security force violations, including unjustified or improper use of live ammunition, mass arrests, and extrajudicial executions.

Sadly, the state has staged a new type of torture to opposition politicians. Jamaat leaders were taken to the Dhaka metropolitan court in shackles. There was country wide criticism for such atrocious acts by the ruling party. People showed denunciation to this. In a democratic Bangladesh, such scene was never seen before. The Daily Star editorial said “It was utterly repugnant to norms of civility and dignity of the human person”. The state has created an example of human disrespect which many say would be followed by future regimes in the country. Opposition parties are alleging that government is using remand and such other types of unprecedented brutal punishments for intimidating the opposition. This kind of act is never healthy for democratic environment.

On 28th February 2012, millions of angry protesters took to the streets and the police fired thousands rounds of bullets to foil the peaceful demonstration of the protesters. The result was 73 men, women and children died in a single day, just within 8 hours. In the 5 day lock brutal crackdown and indiscriminate fire of police, a total of 147 men were killed.

Alarmingly, female political activists are also being victimized by government repressive policies. For example, on 3rd July, 2009, three girls of Islamic Chatri Sangstha (student wing of Jamaat Islami) were arrested in Pirojpur namely Tania Akter, Syeda Fowjia Akter and Jesmin Nahar accused them as JMB members. They were wearing Borkha with Hijab. At first, under the
article 54 they were arrested then sent to police custody with three days remand. According to the report of the Daily Naya diganta on 21st July, 2009, police arrested two members of Islami Chatri Shangstha and one woman teacher by the indication of local Chatra League cadre with the mal objective of making them the member of JMB and then they were sent to court under the article 54.

More, on 17 Dec 2012 night, the police raided the central office of Islami Chatri Sangstha and arrested twenty of them and their mentor. One of them was five-month pregnant and was not shown any mercy by the police! These women were paraded in the media and were later remanded. On 5 January 2013, Islamic women came to the National Press Club to attend a round-table meeting to protest the police raid and repression of 17 Dec 2012 night on women. When they came out of the round-table meeting, the police arrested them in front of the Press Club gate. The Daily Star report on this police arrest reads: “Police detained at least 13 women from the Jatiya Press Club area suspecting them as members of pro-Jamaat-e-Islami female students’ body, Islami Chatri Sangstha. (Daily Star, 6 Jan 2013). It is obvious that, if the police suspect people as members of Jamaat-Shibir, it is enough justification for the former to arrest the latter.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Benazir Ahmed, himself instructed his officers to shoot Shibir on sight in late 2012. The protests met with a shower of live police fire that wreaked nationwide civilian massacre. Police are also becoming known for shooting unarmed people suspected of protesting from close range. An example is seen in the killing of Jamaat member, Gulam Rabbi, by a shot to the forehead by police that had all appearance of being live fire from close range.

The families of the arrested have reported inhumane torture being inflicted by police on the detained whilst in police custody. This has included but not been limited to removing nails, breaking limbs and using electric shock equipment.

Is Ruling BAL government's likely Ban on Jamaat-e-Islami Democratic?

Recently, the Tarikat Federation, a marginalized religious political party based on rural Chittagong which never secured any representation in national parliament, claimed Jamaat should be disqualified as a political party. Soon in tuning with Tarikat's claim, Shahbag Square, a
government backed movement suddenly came from nowhere demanding death penalty for top JIB leaders who are currently facing alleged war crimes. The Shahbag movement seems to have taken on the guise of an anti-Jamaat movement. This is not what it started out as, and not the most progressive direction the movement could have taken. With this line, BAL and GHADANIC have been advocating in a section of media outlets to create pressure on government and donor agencies to actualize ban.

The way they claim banning JIB seems to target Jamaat but there are polemical opinions that weather JIB should be immediately banned as a political party. Many argue that if it is banned most of it will go underground and create more anarchy. The counter argument is what more anarchy can it creates than what it is doing at present? What is more, recently the JIB has been repeatedly linked to terrorist organizations by a section of society mainly due to the fact that recently it went violent to express their democratic rights, from which they are deprived for long, illegitimately.

Table 15: Election Performance of BJI 1979 to 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seat won</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19,41,394</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13,14,057</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41,17,737</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,653,013</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,385,361</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,186,384</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on election data from national election commission

According to table 15, BJI always has impression in every national election. It participated in 1979's election and won 20 seats while getting 10.08 % of total cast. Its best performance was in 1991's election when contested as a single party. It managed to win 18 seats through getting 12.2% of total cast.
It's pertinent to note that, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islam is a legitimate political force having representation in all parliaments since the country’s independence in 1971 (see table 15). Its student wing, Bangladesh Islami Chatra Shibir is the country’s largest and most organized student organization that has impressive presence in college and university campuses.

Meanwhile, the Jamaat-e-Islami party, an ally of the B.N.P., has been banned from participating in the upcoming elections. Many Bangladeshis who support the Awami League fear that Islamist parties are threatening the foundation of a country that fought bitterly to separate from Pakistan in 1971. But banning Jamaat-e-Islami from participating in the electoral process is only forcing frustrated supporters into the streets.72

Earlier immediate before raising voice of banning JIB, based on a petition, the Bangladesh court issued a decree, which annulled JIB registration as a political party,73 though the issue is not still settled finally. The petitioners had argued that the JIB's charter 'violated' the country's secular constitution as it called for "the rule of Allah" and 'discriminated' against minorities and women. But a number of analysts consider this is a politically motivated verdict. For example, William Milam, a senior scholar at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson Center and former US ambassador to Bangladesh wrote, "The message I am seeing in this verdict is that the High Court is completely politicized, and its verdicts are to be viewed with much caution and skepticism.74

Milam believes there is one main political reason behind the ban, and that is to win the election. The expert argues that this is related to "a feeling of desperation" of the leaders of whichever political party running the government in Bangladesh that dare not lose the next election.75 "In Bangladesh, leaders seem to consider losing an election a near-death experience, and the Awami League leaders probably view losing the election as a sure death experience."

Milam also explains this is due to the fact that in the formal democratic process that has developed in Bangladesh since 1991, the incumbent always loses, and the winner always wreaks vengeance on the loser. "It is, in truth, a zero-sum-game political culture. And the vengeance gets worse each time around."

73 http://www.dw.de/tensions-rise-in-bangladesh-after-ban-on-jamaat/a-17004879
74 http://www.dw.de/tensions-rise-in-bangladesh-after-ban-on-jamaat/a-17004879
75 Ibid
In some recent political gatherings before election, the current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also claimed banning JIB, perhaps in order to bolster Tarikat Federation, Shahbag Square, and GHADANIC demands.

But recorded political history of Bangladesh speaks against their position. In the beginning of 1990's decade, BAL started accepting JIB and changed its strategy toward the Jamaat.\(^\text{76}\) Being frustrated by the uncertain future of the movement by using Gulam Azam and Jamaat leadership’s anti-BNP sentiment, the AL accepted the Jamaat as a political reality and adopted the strategy to woo the Jamaat.\(^\text{77}\)

The BAL chief Sheikh Hasina later justified it by saying that the AL’s alliance with the Jamaat was sangsad-centred as the AL, being the largest opposition in the Sangsad, formed liaison with all parliamentary opposition Parties and the Jamaat was the fourth largest and 3rd largest opposition party in the Sangsad.\(^\text{78}\) Hasina also called the joint movement with the Jamaat as a political reality by saying that since the people have elected the Jamaat members in the Sangsad, we must accept the Jamaat as a political reality.\(^\text{79}\)

It also allowed the Jamaat to form an understanding and liaison with the AL and JP against the BNP and Launch a fierce, destructive, ad violent movement against the BNP government during the 1994-96 periods.

While playing hard ball is nothing new in Bangladesh politics, it certainly caused, if not complete but partial, loss of credibility and momentum for the anti-Jamaat and anti-Islamist movement of the GHADANIC.\(^\text{80}\) That was because the AL, the chief patron of the secular-liberal GHADANIC, accepted the Jamaat as its ally in its agitation against Khaleda Zia’s BNP government. This acceptance by the AL, in a stealthy sort of way, “re-legitimized” the Jamaat during and prior to the 7th Sangsad elections. The senior AL leaders, including Abdus Samad Azad, Amir Hossain Amu, Mozaffar Hossain Poltu and Tofael Ahmed, all champions of secularism in governance and politics, regularly met senior Jamaat leaders—most of who were actively involved against the War of Liberation in 1971 – to design agitation programs against

\(^{76}\) Dhaka Courier, August 5, 1993. P-9  
\(^{77}\) Ibid  
\(^{78}\) For details see Sheikh Hasian’s interview with Prothom-Alo, December 12.13.1999. PP. 1.4  
\(^{79}\) Ibid  
\(^{80}\) BHUIAN MD. MONOAR KANBIR, *Politics and Development OF THE JAMAAT-E-SLAM BANGLADESH*
the BNP government.\textsuperscript{81} In Chittagong and Sylhet, the AL leaders and the Jamaat Leaders organized rallies and gatherings jointly. Arguably, this minimized whatever negative impact the movement of the GHADANIC had on the Jamaat.\textsuperscript{82}

History always repeats itself. It is at this stage, that the AL once again made serious attempts to play its old and “overused” card of bringing about political polarization along the pro-liberation ad anti-liberation line on the one hand and liberal-democratic-secular and communal-Islamic fundamentalist line on the other. It portrayed itself as the champion of the pro-liberation and liberal-democratic-secular forces in the country.

It is not sure about coming to power. It is very unpopular. The Awami League knows that it will fail in elections. That’s why they are banning the political opposition.\textsuperscript{83} Senior BNP leader Ahmed Azam Khan further opines, “This is the people’s republic. Let the people decide who they want to vote for in the elections. Why ban the party?”

Still, the question remains: Can a democracy stamp out an ideology by banning it, rather than engaging it politically and testing its strength in the electoral arena?

More precarious is the argument put forth by the Prime Minister that the Jamaat should be banned because of its violence and contempt for democratic values. Unfortunately for her, the Jamaat is not the only political party in Bangladesh one can level this charge against, and if they start banning parties for this reason then people would be forced to ask some uncomfortable questions about the armed wings of the other political parties and the terror they routinely unleash.\textsuperscript{84}

More importantly, the ruling party and its front organizations seem to have been involved in almost all these killings resulting from inter- and intra-party violence. The recent killings in political violence seem to fall under two general categories. In the first category belong those resulting from the crude power struggle between the ruling party and the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the partners of the alliance that it leads. It is worth noting that, in most such cases, the violence in question has generally been triggered by the apparent intent of the ruling party or its front organizations to dominate their political opponents in, or drive

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid
\textsuperscript{83} http://thediplomat.com/2013/08/is-bangladesh-ban-on-jamaat-e-islami-democratic/
\textsuperscript{84} Zafar Sobhan, www.sunday-guardian.com/profile/zafar-sobhan
them away from, educational and many other institutions. Such impulses are decidedly undemocratic and even run counter to the pre-2008 general elections pledge of the ruling party that ‘courtesy and tolerance will be inculcated in the political culture of the country.’

In the second category fall those killings that stem from internecine conflicts within the ruling party and its front organizations, especially the Bangladesh Chatra League, its students’ wing, and also the Juba League, its youth front. In fact, in the past few days and weeks, several leaders and activists of the Chatra League and Juba League have been killed in what appear to be intra-party squabbles over the control of extortion, rent-seeking, tender manipulation, admission business, etc.

The first Awami regime after the birth of Bangladesh introduced a one-party political system in the country by banning all other political groups and shutting down all opposition news outlets. The political strategy the current Awami regime is following gives all a clear signal that Sheikh Hasina’s government wants to remain in power for a very long time by re-establishing the one-party political system in Bangladesh; and that is why she is stifling political dissents and disallowing opposition rallies, which she may dare to believe will lead to the perpetual rule of her party.

Government and ruling party should be fair to Jamaat people and should respect their rights to do politics in a democratic manner. In democracy all political parties are equal. Jamaat-e-Islami is legally registered a democratic party who have all rights to expression of dissent. Compelling a democratic party to conduct their activities in secretly is a bad example for and harmful for a healthy democracy. Any secret or hidden activities don’t bring good result for any country. Ironically, government is creating coercion for this party to run secretly. Hundreds of leaders and members are in jail and cases are filed against many so that they can’t do their activities on the street. Preventing any political party from their rights of expressing dissent and holding meetings is contrary to democratic practice and a denial to the inalienable rights of individuals.

Many national and international political analysts opine that discourse of banning JIB goes with the calculation of electoral politics of ruling BAL party. Dr. Amena Mohsin, a senior academic and political analyst at Dhaka University, tells “secular democracy accommodates all kinds of

ideological parties. This kind of system gives you space. It is up to the people to accept a party or not.”

Senior BNP leader Ahmed Azam Khan told, “Bangladesh is a moderate and liberal democracy and we should be allowed to practice democracy in a liberal atmosphere.” Banning an organization stifles the atmosphere and subverts the political process which is dependent on people’s will.” It is hard to see what such a ban would even accomplish. Banned parties can simply reform under a new name and new constitution. Such a ban could drive people underground and away from the path of electoral politics. Dr M Shahiduzzaman, a professor of international Relations in Dhaka University points out that “USA and EU made the right decisions to consider Jamaat as a democratic party while Jamaat practicing democracy on their internal and external matters since party forms after independence. The ruling AL and India are trying to prove Jamaat as terrorist or extremist organization in international arena which is not acceptable in sense of democracy. Jamaat strongly follow the roles and regulation of democracy from very beginning of their party formation”

The politics of religion matters in Bangladesh. Even the supposedly secular Awami League talks up its Islamic credentials before elections. In 2006, for example, the League struck an electoral deal with the ultra-orthodox Khelafat-e-Majlish party, promising to do much of what Hefajat wants today. It was never tested, since the subsequent elections were scrapped.

A particular political party with ill-motivated agenda along with some follower's leftist's ideology have been working behind the scene to demolish Bangladeshi image as a secular and tolerant country. They believed branding Bangladesh with Islamic terrorism will open new doors and opportunities for them. By both political manipulate national voters and convincing donors in the global communities.

In many cases, Top AL leaders found personal or political links to terrorists' leaders. For example, the founder of most notorious terrorist organization JMB, Sheikh Abdur Rhaman, was the brother in-law of the parliamentarian Mirza Azam. Even after having published close

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86 http://thediplomat.com/2013/08/is-bangladeshs-ban-on-jamaat-e-islami-democratic/
87 http://www.sunday-guardian.com/analysis/to-ban-or-not-to-ban-the-jamaat
88 Ibid
89 http://www.newsevent24.com/2014/01/05/%e0%a6%9e%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a7%9f%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%b0%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%b0%e0%a6%87-
90 Ibid
relationship with Sheikh Abdur Rhaman. Miraza Azam was not held responsible by the AL, no discerned by the party

The AL kept creating the social instability and political violence exploiting the terrorist from behind the scene and manipulating public consensus through information fabrication. No murder or violence committed by Chatra League prompted any call for banning its politics, there was no mobilization of police forces, no police officer was suspended for negligence of duties, no ministers appeared on the media with a declaration of war criminals, no ministers called on the police to launch a crack-down on Chatra League, no offices of Awami-Chatra-Jubo League were attacked or burnt down, no senior police officer had to rush to the scene, so on and so forth. The list of such non action upon the hooliganism of Chatra League goes on.

Perhaps, this section has specially targeted the Jamaat e Islami which is a constitutional and democratic movement, based on Islamic principles. The principles which the Jamaat e Islami has been following, since its inception, have not the slightest connection with terrorism.

The Jamaat e Islami has been strictly following its declared principles incorporated in its constitution. In the same way, the Jamaat e Islami has been strictly and sincerely following the constitutional and democratic process in the light of the guidelines enunciated by its founder.

While members of the Islami Chatra Shibir have been the main targets of the mass arrests, Bangladesh Chatra League activists have continued to clash and attack opposition supporters, with no accountability. There are also massive random attack on the activists and offices of Jamaat throughout the country by the student and youth wings of the ruling Awami League party.

It is a matter of further concern that the government also denies any democratic right of Jamaat activists to protest against the politically motivated unjust arrest of their beloved leaders and demand their release. In the past two years law enforcing agency has refused to permit any protest and demonstration by Jamaat activists. In such situation whenever there is any protest or gathering by Jamaat police is there to arrest and torture the protesting Jamaat men. According to a claim by the Home Minster of Bangladesh police has arrested more than 2500 Jamaat activists

92 Ibid
in the month of October, 2012 alone. From all these it is evident that attempt to ban JIB is a political discourse and does not go with democratic norms.

**Conclusion and Key Findings**

This study highlighted some major political developments that led to political violence and demonstrates that there are clear signs of stress on democracy in Bangladesh. The acrimonious relationship between the ruling party and the opposition has not only returned but has reached a new low. The constitutional amendment has created significant roadblocks towards holding an election participated in by all parties. The study further revealed that there is a cyclical relationship between inter-party conflict, political violence, and inter-party enmity, and violence at the horizontal level leads to political non-cooperation and stalemate at the vertical level between the ruling party and the opposition. Political violence emerges from a deep rooted political culture of intolerance, antagonism, revenge and arrogance. Apparent immediate causes of political violence are expressions of underlying differences and rifts along the lines of ideological, political, religious and institutional dimensions. It has also demonstrated that the ruling regime is increasingly relying on coercive measures rather than engaging in a dialogue with the opposition parties to reach a compromise, which indicates that the country is already on the path to another round of political confrontation. However, for this, no single political party is solely responsible, rather, confrontations between the two major political parties with their political allies, and their internal clashes, are main reasons for the continuation of political violence.

Looking at past Bangladesh national polls held under partisan governments in 1973, 1979, 1986, 1988 and 1996, 2001, 2008 and recently held one-sided election the experience is really unpleasant – the ruling parties used force, intimidation and state-owned media to win elections. On the contrary, no government has ever won a successive term after non-partisan caretaker government had been formed in 1996.

The article found that the country is once again in the grip of authoritarianism and political violence. Politics in Bangladesh has increasingly become confrontational and violent, making political sphere highly politicized and increasingly intolerant. It is argued in this article that political dividing line in Bangladesh is indeed rather narrow and does not justify the
confrontational mode of politics which drives principal political parties. Moreover, for the Awami League, keeping up the division between pro- and anti-liberation forces is critical for sustaining its political grip. As such, there is a growing need to reassert the innate pluralism of Bangladeshi politics, which has not favored strong ideological parties so far. In this regard it's pertinent to mention UN warnings against further violence saying “Whatever their differences, political leaders on both sides must halt their destructive brinkmanship, which is pushing Bangladesh dangerously close to a major crisis,” Therefore, the search for Politics of Reconciliation has become a national necessity – a peaceful unity among BNP, Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami can make Bangladesh stronger than ever before and give an enrich and secure future.

At the core of political violence as examined in this study are divergences of interests, perceptions and aspirations that are based on ‘primordial group identities’. Furtherer, the findings of this article congruently opines with Azad (2012) that in the political history of Bangladesh, direct undemocratic tools generally appeared tyrannical and went directly against democracy. The main such undemocratic tools used for political gains were the (1) cancellation of voting rights of some people who allegedly collaborated with Pakistani forces during the war of independence in 1971; (2) banning religion-based political parties in 1972; (3) introduction of one-party system in 1975; and (4) all the military coups, while, among indirect undemocratic tools have been generally based on political cunning and disguised as democratic. The main such indirect undemocratic tools used for political gains are: 1) financial corruption; 2) abuse of democratic rights; and 3) political corruption.

93 http://www.thedailystar.net//upload/gallery/image/arts/8105e90.jpg
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