

## 'People now united against misrule'

### Bomb blasts, gunshots stop Khaleda's speech

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has said the people have now united to free the country from the grip of this "oppressive, liar and killer" government.

"Our programmes are being successful one after another as people are now spontaneously joining those because they want to get rid of the misrule of Awami League government," said the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Begum Zia was addressing a huge gathering at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque in connection with the Opposition's sit-in-demonstration around the Secretariat yesterday.

She started her speech at 12:58 pm and could speak only for about three minutes. She had to leave the spot as unidentified elements exploded bombs and fired shots indiscriminately and police lobbed tear gas shells. Thousands of peo-

ple's ran for safety.

Begum Zia said that the Opposition took up the sit-in programme as the government continued to sign 'anti-state agreements' one after another and 'loot' people's wealth.

The AL government during its rule has completely ruined the national economy, there is virtually no trade and business

in the country and production in mills and factories has stopped, she alleged.

The BNP chief further educational institutions have now become 'criminals' dens. There are no academic activities as terrorists and rapists have camped on the campuses.

Referring to AL's claim that

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it believes in and practises democracy, she said that in the past the nation had witnessed how that party introduced one-party Baksal system in the name of democracy. Then it banned all political parties, closed down all newspapers and snatched away independence of the judiciary. Moreover, they resorted to killing and kidnapping by raising "private forces", she added.

Now coming to power again, Begum Zia said, AL resorted to repression, torture and killing of opposition leaders and activists by forming "party's private force".

At this time, a powerful bomb exploded near the barbed wire barricade put up by police and close to a policeman standing beside a riot car.

Despite the explosion, she tried to continue her speech but she could not as indiscriminate explosion of bombs and firing of shots started.

The BNP Chief joined the sit-in at 10:25 am and sat in on a chair among the party leaders and activists a few yards from the barricade. Her white jeep and a pick up van of SB police were kept close to her.

As the trouble started, government security personnel and private security men instantly cordoned the Opposition Leader, took her into the jeep and left the spot. A close aide of Begum Zia claimed that tear gas shells hit her car.

Begum Zia then went to her 29 Minto Road official residence and stayed there up to 6:30pm.

Violence at the sit-in spot and its adjoining areas continued for about two hours.