

Bangladeshi woman killed after police open fire on protesting garment workers

Saturday 11 November 2023, by [BEGUM Thaslima](#) (Date first published: 9 November 2023).

Employees making clothes for fast-fashion brands have been demonstrating against a new minimum salary of £92 a month

A Bangladeshi woman was shot dead on Wednesday after police in Dhaka opened fire during a protest held by garment workers demanding a wage increase. Anjuara Khatun, a 26-year-old machine operator at Islam Garments in Gazipur, was on her way home after the factory closed suddenly as a large group of protesters gathered nearby.

Her husband told reporters he heard gunshots when police opened fire on about 400 workers and then saw people carrying his wife's motionless body. "She was shot in the head and died in the car on the way to the hospital," he said. "There was blood oozing out from a hole in her head."

Khatun, a mother of two, was quickly taken to Dhaka medical college hospital where she was pronounced dead. She is the third garment worker to be killed in the past two weeks, with hundreds of others badly injured, during clashes that have broken out in key production hubs in the capital, Dhaka, including Ashulia, Gazipur and Savar.

Three dead as police clash with garment workers in Bangladesh demanding a wage increase - video

Among the dead are Rasel Hawlader, 26, who had worked as an electrician at Design Express Ltd, and Imran Hossain, 32, who died from critical injuries inside ABM Fashions, after it was set on fire.

The minimum-wage-setting process for garment workers had been going on in Bangladesh since April 2023, but fresh violence broke out this week after the government's announcement of a monthly wage increase to just 12,500 taka (£92), which workers and rights groups deemed inadequate - and is half of what the workers are asking for.

As news of the revised wage spread, protests around the capital turned more violent. Thousands of workers blocked a main road while police used teargas and rubber bullets to break up the crowds. Buses were set alight, buildings were vandalised and the border guard was called in.

"We call on the prime minister to step in and stop the police brutality immediately," said trade unionist Nazma Akhter. "The proposed new wage is unacceptable. We reject it and demand a revision."

Akhter urged the Bangladesh government to ensure that a new wage provides equitable compensation and meets the needs of workers and their families. "Global fashion brands must also speak out," she said. "What use is all their talk of female empowerment when the women who make their clothes are being murdered on the streets?"

Thaslima Begum

P.S.

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