

Opposition decries Bangladesh arrests

by UPI

DHAKA, Bangladesh -- Mass arrests in Bangladesh that have swept up thousands of political leaders, students and others won't stop anti-government movements, opposition leaders say. The country's military-controlled government has arrested 10,000 people, including political party activists, trade union members, students and many others who have been seized in a large-scale crackdown on dissent in the country, the New Age daily newspaper of Dhaka reported Tuesday. But, it says, opposition political leaders say the repression won't stifle efforts to bring down the government. "The blanket arrest and repressive measure cannot stop mass movement," Awami League president Sheikh Hasina said in a statement released by her lawyer. "In the past, every autocratic government tried to stop mass movements with blanket arrest and repressive measure, but failed." The crackdown began on Saturday, when about 2,000 people were arrested within the first 24 hours, with most of them detained under an emergency powers decree, the New Age said. Government officials deny there have been any politically motivated arrests, saying it is merely an effort to maintain law and order in the run-up to elections.

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