

TIMELINE
STUDENT PROTESTS

FROM PAGE 1

July 18, 2024

Police and BCL men attack students at Brac University and other institutions. At least 29 die in daylong mayhem as clashes break out in 19 districts. Agitators vandalise, torch BTV Bhaban, Setu Bhaban and other government establishments. Internet service blocked across the country; Metro rail operations suspended for indefinite period.

July 19, 2024

Effective from midnight, government announces nationwide curfew and deploys army after daylong violence kills at least 66 people. More government establishments, including Narsingdi jail, metro rail stations, BRTA offices, vandalised, torched.

July 20, 2024

At least 21 killed on the first day of curfew amid army deployment. Curfew extended until further notice and a two-day general public holiday announced. Key organiser of quota demo 'picked up' and several BNP leaders detained.

July 21, 2024

Supreme Court curtails quotas to 7pc as at least seven killed amid curfew. Chiefs of three forces meet Hasina, as UN, EU, UK voice concern over violence.

July 22, 2024

Six more hurt in previous days' clashes die, taking death toll to 146. Hasina warns BNP and Jamaat of consequences; army chief hopes for return of normalcy. Arrest of BNP and Jamaat leaders continues.

July 23, 2024

Govt issues circular reforming quota system, but four quota reform protest organisers reject it. Arrests and raids targeting opposition leaders and demonstrators continue amid curfew. Broadband internet is back in selected areas.

July 24, 2024

Inter-district bus and launch services resume partially.

July 25, 2024

JP leader Partha Andaleeve, businessman David Hasnat, among dozens, arrested, as social media remains off-limits. UN, Amnesty International, US, Canada call for end to crackdown. Hasina makes first public appearance since army deployment and visits damaged metro rail station.

July 26, 2024

Detective Branch of police picks up three organisers. BNP calls for national unity and ouster of government. Hasina visits Dhaka Medical College Hospital on the second day of public appearance after the curfew announcement. UN calls for an end to crackdown and full restoration of internet services.

July 27, 2024

Block raids targeting protesters, mostly students, continue as DB picks up two more quota protest organisers. Fourteen foreign missions urge govt to hold law enforcers accountable for wrongdoings. Hasina visits Pangu Hospital, says violence was committed to cripple economy.

July 28, 2024

Nationwide crackdown goes on, with over 2.13 lakh people made accused in over 200 cases in Dhaka city alone. Mobile internet is back, but social media remains shut. After having a meal with DB chief Harunor Rashid at his office, six organisers earlier taken into custody read out a written statement, lifting the movement. Outside, a section of

organisers vow to press on. Government announces death toll for first time, setting it at 147.

July 29, 2024

Protesters take to streets again in some districts, face police obstructions, dozens detained. Government announces plan to ban Jamaat-Shibir. HC rebukes DB over handling of the six quota organisers, including sharing the photograph of sharing a meal with them on social media.

July 30, 2024

Students and teachers of JU hold silent procession, teachers of several universities hold rallies, guardians protest death of children, obstructed by cops. Eminent citizens blame

July 31, 2024

Protesters reject government-called nationwide mourning, stage demos in capital, elsewhere. Six quota movement organisers were still in DB custody. Eminent citizens form probe body, urge public support. EU delays partnership talks with Dhaka. Hundreds of HSC students announce boycott of exams if fellow examinees not released from police custody/jail.

August 1, 2024

Government issues gazette banning Jamaat-Shibir under anti-terrorism act. UN offers sending fact-finding team, PM says "UN free to probe violence". Six organisers freed from DB custody. Protesters hold mass processions and prayers for those killed. Teachers, students of five public universities stage demos.

August 2, 2024

Demonstrators continue protest against killings, thousands join march for justice. Protesters attacked by AL activists and police in capital, elsewhere, leaving two more dead. Protesters announce countrywide demo for next day and non-cooperation movement from Sunday. Facebook blocked again for seven hours. Six organisers say "statement of withdrawal made from DB office was not voluntary".



Count of a carnage

FROM PAGE 1

in the head, chest and abdomen with bullets, not pellets.

The Daily Star shared the descriptions of the nature of the injuries with firearm experts and former army officials, who said shootings targeted at these vital areas are meant to kill, and not to disperse.

Such shootings with lethal weapons are a violation of the rules of engagements during civilian protests, they said.

The UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch also called out the excesses by law enforcers that led to the killings of so many people, who were mostly unarmed.

One of the first victims of a targeted shooting was Abu Sayed, 23, a student of Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur. He was standing with his arms stretched out in defiant protest in front of the university, with just a stick in his right hand. Police were clearly seen shooting him multiple times in the chest, wounding him fatally.

"We used whatever little we earned to support his education, hoping that one day he would be successful and better days would come. But bullets ended all that," his brother Ramjan told The Daily Star after his death.

SHOTS THAT KILLED

Of those fatally hit in the upper parts of the body, 39 were shot in the head, 35 in the chest, 11 in the stomach, eight in the abdomen, eight in the back and two in the neck. The rest 10 of the 113 victims who were killed by live rounds were shot in the leg, arms and other parts of the body.

Four of the victims who were hit in the head were inside their homes and were likely struck by stray bullets. The 35 others were shot while on the streets, according to family members.

Our analysis of the date-wise casualties shows that deaths from gunshots spiked after the Border Guard Bangladesh was called in alongside an overwhelming number of police, Rab, Ansar, riot police, Armed Police Battalion and SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) members.

BGB was first deployed on July 17 in six districts on a small scale, but at least 229 platoons of the border guard force were dispatched across the country the next day.

The killings by gunfire continued even after armed forces were called in to contain violence on July 19 – by this time the quota protests boiled over into a larger movement joined by thousands of members of the public.

"Under the law, a written government order [gazette] must be sent to the forces to empower them to shoot at sight. The government order clearly outlines the circumstances under which the forces are allowed to shoot at sight, for example for breaking the curfew. I have not heard of any such written order being published," Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain told The Daily Star.

On August 1, this newspaper visited the Bangladesh Government Press's online archive and the home ministry's online bulletin board, but did not find any such written order. The gazette of the nationwide curfew, imposed at midnight on July 19, did not mention any shoot-at-sight order, although Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader told reporters that evening that it was a "shoot-at sight" order.

Chiefs of police and BGB did not respond to our calls and text messages seeking their comments if

perforating bullet wounds where the bullet entered and exited the body. A ballistics expert, speaking to this newspaper in the background, said it is possible that they too were shot from close range.

One video of a close-range execution was captured in Rampura on July 19. It shows a man hiding by hanging from the cornice of an under-construction building and two law enforcers shot him point-blank, one after another within seconds.

The video was verified by

Club. In Rampura, a BGB man armed with the same AK47 version was photographed firing at protesters on July 19.

In the capital's Khamarbari on July 20, Bangladesh infantry were seen carrying light machine guns. The Gazipur-made BD-08 Type 81 assault rifle was spotted in Bijoy Sarani the same day.

"The 7.62mm rifles used by police have two modes – single firing and rapid firing. In the videos we have seen, they have mostly used the rapid-fire mode or automatic mode

Chittagong Road despite the heavy firing of live bullets, sound grenades, and teargas shells from the ground as well as from the air, as Rab and BGB helicopters were called in for the first time in independent Bangladesh to tackle a civilian movement.

At least 44 people were killed in these areas, mostly in shootings. Of them, at least 30 died in Jatrabari alone – six on July 18, 12 on July 19, seven on July 20, three on July 21.

One of the July 19 victims is a policeman, who was hacked to death. Other hotspots in Dhaka include

dead bodies ended up in the major hospitals or graveyards tracked by The Daily Star. For example, this newspaper has a photo of a dead bearded man wearing a lungi with a gunshot wound to the head lying on the steps of a clinic in Rampura, but failed to get any records of a man matching that description from the corresponding morgues on that day. As a result, that man has not been counted in our tally. Many hospitals did not keep any records of the dead, while many families collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene and The Daily Star could not contact them.

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OCCUPATIONS OF THE VICTIMS

Student	↔	43
Worker	↔	54
Jobholder	↔	25
Journalist	↔	3
Police	↔	3
Ansar	↔	1
Trader	↔	21

AGE OF THE VICTIMS

Under 18	↔	32
18 to 25	↔	64
26 to 35	↔	33
36 to 45	↔	20
46 to 60	↔	5

there was indeed an explicit order to shoot at protesters, and if not, why law enforcers shot so many people indiscriminately.

In a written statement to The Daily Star on August 1, Rab said, "During the recent quota protest, no directive was given to open fire."

Under the rules of engagement, forces are supposed to crouch in a lying position in situations like this, Sakhawat said.

"This way, they are certain to shoot below the hip to incapacitate the opponent. If they are standing or aiming upwards, then they will hit the fatal parts of the human body. We have seen people dying because of gunshots to the head and chest," he said.

In many cases, fatal shots were also fired from close range. For example, more than two dozen people died from rubber bullets. This means they were likely shot at point-blank range, Sakhawat said.

At least six victims sustained

Qadaruiddin Shishir, the fact-checking editor at AFP news agency.

"There are international guidelines on proportionate use of force for law enforcement. Bangladesh security forces violate those standards if they shoot at unarmed protesters, or fire indiscriminately," Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, told this newspaper on Thursday.

WHAT GUNS WERE USED?

Naima Sultana, 15, a student of Milestone School from Uttara, had gone to the balcony to fetch the clothes hung out to dry when she was hit by a bullet on July 19.

"When the bullet hit her head, she fell to the floor and her brains spilled out. We took her to the hospital immediately but the doctors declared her dead," said her father Golam Mostofa.

From the photos and videos captured by this newspaper's reporters and photographers, we have been able to identify some of the lethal weapons used by law enforcement and security forces during the protests.

They include automatic and semi-automatic rifles, light machine guns, machine guns, Chinese AK47, Bangladesh-made BD-08 Type 81 assault rifles and semi-automatic 7.62mm Type 56 assault rifles. Handguns were also used. (Firearms were used against the protesters also by alleged ruling party activists in Dhaka and elsewhere.)

Two gun-experts who have seen the photos and the videos taken by our team helped us identify these weapons used by law enforcers and security forces.

In front of the Jatiya Press Club on July 19, Ansar members were found wielding AK47 guns, as well as the semi-automatic 7.62mm Type 56 assault rifle.

"Chinese" AK47 assault rifles were spotted in the hands of BGB members also in front of Jatiya Press

Club. In Rampura, a BGB man armed with the same AK47 version was photographed firing at protesters on July 19.

"The 7.62mm rifles are one of the best Chinese killing machines, which were earlier used by the Bangladesh Army and are now available to the BGB and police," he added.

The spotting of such lethal weapons on key dates corresponds with the death toll on those days. According to The Daily Star's latest tally, July 19 was the deadliest day, with 62 people dying only in fatal shots across the country.

A vast majority of them succumbed to their injuries that very day, while a handful hung on to life for the next two or three days.

The second deadliest day was July 20, with 30 people suffering fatal shots. The rest of the people were shot between July 16 and July 24.

On the dates, including July 19 and 20, that saw some of the highest casualties in areas such as Jatrabari, Rampura, Badda, Mohammadpur and Mirpur in Dhaka, The Daily Star reporters and photographers witnessed and documented heavy firing by police, Rab, BGB members and Armed Police Battalion on the ground, as air support was also called in.

"These forces [army and BGB] were deployed to aid the police, and are armed with lethal weapons. They will not be coming to the ground with sticks and rods. The question is whether they should have been called in to tackle unarmed protesters in the first place," said Sakhawat.

KILLING HOTSPOTS

As violence spread across Dhaka and elsewhere, Jatrabari and its adjacent areas, including Kadamtali, Matuail and the Chittagong Road leading into Narayanganj's Siddhirganj, saw some of the fiercest clashes between heavily armed law enforcers and protesters, both students and non-students.

For over a week, demonstrators blocked the commercially important

Rampura, Badda, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Uttara and Savar.

Outside Dhaka, there were reports of protests and violence in over 20 districts, including Rangpur, Rajshahi, Bogura, Chattogram, Khulna and Narsingdi.

At least 52 people were killed outside Dhaka.

DISREGARD FOR LIFE

Although many died in direct clashes, attacks and counter-attacks, many also had nothing to do with the protest but got killed anyway.

Abdul Ahad, 4, is one of them. The boy from Jatrabari was watching the protests from his balcony, when a bullet struck his head. He died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Mohakhali, Goni Mia was going home, parking his rickshaw in a garage. He was hit by a bullet in the chest, and he died at DMCH a few hours later, his brother Hafiz Uddin told The Daily Star.

Although most people were killed in shootings, several died of beating and at least one was hacked.

Overall, the victims, aged between four and sixty years, come from various professions and backgrounds. As many as 50 were low-income people, 26 private jobholders and 21 were traders or businesspeople.

"The high death toll is a shocking indictment of the absolute intolerance shown by the Bangladesh authorities to protest and dissent. The unlawful force used against protesters, including lethal force as verified by Amnesty International, shows a callous disregard for the right to life and an abject failure by law enforcement officials to uphold their obligations under domestic and international human rights law," said a spokesperson of Amnesty International, speaking to this newspaper.

Note: This newspaper's list of victims is as of August 1, and is not comprehensive because not all the