



"It is necessary more than ever before to remind ourselves that the security, freedom, and future of Europe are closely tied to the fate of Ukraine."
French President Emmanuel Macron

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Ruins that whisper love and legacy

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Myanmar junta offers cash rewards to anti-coup defectors

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ATROCITIES DURING JULY UPRISING

Of pellets and lost eyesight

20 lose both eyes; scores of people still bear the scars of eye injury

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

On the afternoon of July 18 last year, Zakia Sultana Neela, an assistant professor at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital (NIOH), stepped out of a routine surgery into a scene of unfolding horror.

Downstairs, the ground floor was swarming with several hundred people, mostly teenagers and youths, many clutching their eyes.

"Some were covering one eye with a hand, others with both. Blood was oozing from their eyes. It was a horrifying sight," Neela recalled.

For the next 72 hours, doctors at the 250-bed specialised hospital – the country's largest public eye hospital – were overwhelmed. They tirelessly performed surgeries on victims of attacks by law enforcers during the mass uprising. "The operation theatres were occupied

for three days in a row," said HEM Rejwanur Rahman Shohel, an assistant director at the hospital.

The facility recorded peak admissions on July 18 and 19. The numbers began to decline from July 20 but surged again on August 4 and 5, Shohel said, referring to hospital documents.

Neela said, "The injured were struck by two types of projectiles – metal pellets and bullets. Most had suffered wounds from metal pellets."

Hospital records show 1,074 injured people, including 736 requiring hospitalisation, received treatment at the hospital as of April this year. Of them, 20 lost both eyes. Doctors performed 504 emergency surgeries and 278 retina operations.

Till June, more than 50 of the injured received treatment at the hospital. Though no injured patients are now

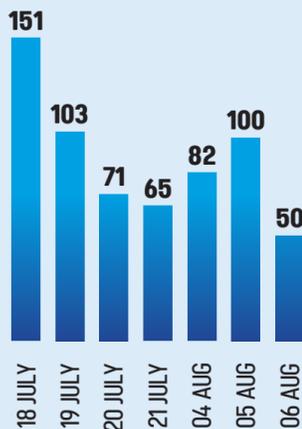
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INJURED PATIENTS RECEIVING TREATMENT AT EYE HOSPITAL

(FROM JULY 17, 2024 UNTIL APRIL 2025)

Patients treated	Required hospitalisation	Lost both eyes	Injury in one eye	Emergency surgeries	Retina operations
1,074	736	20	573	504	278

NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED AT NIOH



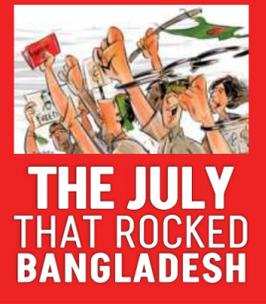
SOURCE: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY AND HOSPITAL (NIOH)

"The injured were struck by two types of projectiles – metal pellets and bullets. Most had suffered wounds from metal pellets."

ZAKIA SULTANA NEELA
Assistant professor at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital (NIOH)

"Pellets struck my ear and lips. I didn't immediately register that another pellet had hit my left eye. A friend alerted me that my left eye was bleeding,"

TANVIR HASAN TUSHAR
A third-year honours student at Dhaka College



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 19, 2024

Country descends into deeper crisis

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

By July 19, 2024, Bangladesh stood at the brink of collapse as the quota reform movement spiralled into its deadliest phase. The air in Dhaka and beyond was thick with smoke, teargas, and dread. Blood mixed with dust on city streets as state brutality reached new heights.

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GOPALGANJ VIOLENCE

164 arrested in series of raids

2,800 sued in 3 cases; tense situation prevails

DIPANKAR ROY from Gopalganj

At least 164 people were arrested in different parts of Gopalganj till yesterday evening as the curfew enforced on Wednesday rolled onto the third day.

So far, police have filed three cases at different police stations, accusing a total of 2,800 people.

A man who suffered bullet injuries during the violent clashes between Awami League supporters and law enforcers over an NCP rally on Wednesday died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early yesterday, raising the death toll from the incident to five.

Dozens of people injured in the clash remain under treatment at DMCH and other hospitals.

Meanwhile, Gopalganj Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Kamruzzaman extended the curfew till 6:00am today.

While most leaders and activists of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations have reportedly gone into hiding, a tense situation persists across Gopalganj town following Wednesday's clash.

On Thursday night, law enforcement agencies launched a series of raids across various parts of the district. House-to-house searches were conducted throughout the town.

Around 10:00am, this correspondent witnessed

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'He went out with his rickshaw and got shot'

Injured Ramzan dies at DMCH

DIPANKAR ROY

Ramzan Munshi, 35, was not involved in politics. He spent his days pulling a rented rickshaw and lived alone in a small room in the yard of his family's home in Gopalganj town.

"He was not married yet. We were looking for a bride for him," said Parveen Begum, Ramzan's sister-in-law, as she wept upon hearing the news of his death in Dhaka.

Ramzan died early yesterday while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He had been injured by gunfire during the violence centring the National Citizen Party's (NCP) "July March" in Gopalganj.

The son of the late Akbar Munshi,

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Govt to cut power subsidies under 3yr IMF-backed plan

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government is drawing up a three-year roadmap to gradually cut subsidies in the power and gas sectors, aiming to ease the growing fiscal pressure.

The roadmap, covering FY26 to FY28, is being developed with assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and is expected to be finalised by September. An IMF technical mission visited Dhaka in May and has already drafted a plan.

According to the IMF, the strategy will be based on a realistic projection of electricity supply costs over the next three years. It will set out a clear timeline for tariff adjustments and specify protective measures for vulnerable groups.

Subsidies in the power and gas sectors in the last fiscal year soared by nearly 80 percent and around 41 percent, respectively, according to finance ministry data.

The subsidies could shoot up further without timely government measures, the draft roadmap warns. It explores two main approaches to easing the subsidy

burden: introducing a dynamic tariff policy and reducing production costs.

"If a tariff adjustment is necessary, social safety measures will need to be integrated to shield the poor," said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office. "The entire tariff structure should be reformed to bring subsidy levels down to a minimum."

Hussain, also a member of the national committee to review the power sector deals, said the three-year plan may also classify the primary beneficiaries of the subsidies.

According to the finance ministry, the revised subsidy allocation for the power sector in FY2024-25 was Tk 62,000 crore, of which Tk 59,600 crore was spent. The gas sector used Tk 8,500 crore out of a Tk 10,000 crore allocation.

In FY2023-24, power sector subsidies amounted to Tk 33,000 crore, while gas subsidies stood at Tk 6,000 crore. Officials say the spike in the revised allocation last fiscal year was due to the clearance of arrears accumulated for years under previous administrations.

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POWER SECTOR SUBSIDY

FY24 - Tk 33,000cr

FY25 - Tk 59,600cr



If a tariff adjustment is necessary [for cutting subsidy], social safety measures will need to be integrated to shield the poor.

ZAHID HUSSAIN
Ex-lead economist, World Bank, Dhaka office



Govt to blame if 'July Charter' not ready by this month

Says Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed has said if the "July Charter" is not formulated by this month, the reform commissions, consensus commission, and the government will be held responsible.

He also said that those who are demanding a proportional representation system (PR) and the local government polls before the national election are trying to delay the parliamentary election by creating confusion.

"There is a constant attempt to put the blame on us over the issue of reforms, as if reforms are not happening because of the BNP. I've been telling journalists every day. It needs to take the BNP's opinion to reach a consensus ... that's why we're meeting with the commission day and night to discuss, resolve, and build consensus on various issues,"

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Law enforcers patrol parts of Gopalganj town during curfew, checking whether people are outside for valid reasons. The photo was taken yesterday at the Chourangi intersection.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

UN human rights mission to open in Bangladesh MoU signed

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and the UN Human Rights Office this week signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to open a mission in the country to support promotion and protection of human rights.

The memorandum was signed by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, according to a statement of the UN Human Rights Office yesterday.

Since last August, the UN Human Rights Office's engagement with Bangladesh has significantly increased. The office has been working with various stakeholders in advancing human rights reforms and conducting a comprehensive fact finding inquiry into deadly repression of mass protests.

"The signing of this memorandum sends an important message of the country's commitment to human rights as a cornerstone of the transition," said Türk in the statement.

"It will enable my office to better

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