

Nationwide clashes as violence returns

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After nearly two weeks of tense calm, Bangladesh once again plunged into violence on August 2, 2024, as widespread clashes broke out between protesters and police – often aided by ruling party activists – across multiple districts. At least two people were killed and around 150 injured in a day marked by defiant protests, state crackdowns, and growing demands for justice and accountability.

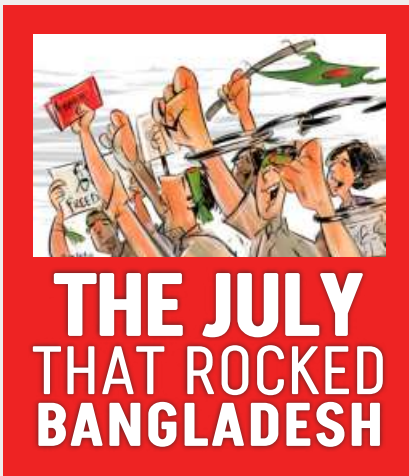
The violence erupted during processions organised by the Students Against Discrimination in Dhaka, Sylhet, Khulna, Chattogram, Habiganj, Narsingdi, Noakhali, and other districts. Thousands of students, cultural workers, and members of the general public defied rain to demand justice for the victims of recent state violence and the immediate release of detained protesters.

In Habiganj, Chhatra League members and students clashed near the Town Hall. Police intervened with teargas and firearms, leaving at least 50 people wounded. A labourer, caught in the crossfire, was killed.

In Khulna, a police constable died after being assaulted during clashes around Khulna University. Police responded with rubber bullets, batons, and teargas, injuring at least 50 protesters.

In Sylhet, violent clashes between law enforcers and protesters in front of Mount Adora Hospital in Akhalia left over 30 injured, including a child, seven policemen, and several protesters.

Chattogram witnessed a police box being torched at Wasa intersection after Juma prayers, while demonstrations



AUGUST 2, 2024



Protesters gather in large numbers at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital on the afternoon of August 2, 2025, demanding justice for those killed during the quota reform protests.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

took place on Laldighi Rifles Club Road.

In Noakhali, at least 10 were injured in clashes near Chawkbazar Masjid. In Narsingdi, Chhatra League, Jubo League, and Mahila League members attacked a protest in Court Road area, injuring 12.

A massive rally titled "Droho Jatra" was held in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka. People from all walks of life – students, teachers, guardians, lawyers, civil society members – gathered, braving rain and shouting anti-government slogans. They announced a mass procession for the following day, demanding the resignation of Sheikh Hasina.

At the rally, Prof Anu Muhammad stated, "We don't want anything from this government. The government must resign. The people must take back control of the country and ensure

a democratic transition."

Throughout the capital, protests blocked key intersections – Uttara, Science Lab, Mirpur-10, Shahbagh, and Aftabnagar. Students of East West University and BRAC University led processions, while performance artists staged street dramas and symbolic protests. Human chains were formed by groups of doctors, urban planners, authors, poets, and teachers demanding an end to the killings, curfew, and arrests.

STATEMENTS OF SOLIDARITY

At least 626 faculty members of BRAC University expressed concern over the violence and reaffirmed students' rights to peaceful protest. Authors and academics condemned the police brutality under the banner of "Poets and Writers Against Countrywide Arrests and Oppression".

In the afternoon, Students Against Discrimination announced a countrywide non-cooperation movement starting the next day, reinforcing their nine-point demand, which includes justice for the July killings, release of detainees, withdrawal of curfew, and resignation of the government.

Meanwhile, the six key organisers of the quota reform movement issued a statement declaring that the video of them withdrawing from the protests had been filmed under coercion while they were in custody at the Detective Branch office.

To control the narrative, the government once again imposed a social media blackout, cutting off Facebook and Messenger services for about seven hours starting around noon.

Cambodia to nominate Trump for Nobel Prize

Says deputy PM following his intervention in halting border conflict with Thailand

REUTERS, Phnom Penh

Cambodia will nominate US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, its deputy prime minister said yesterday, following his direct intervention in halting the Southeast Asian country's recent border conflict with Thailand.

Asked via text message to confirm Cambodia's plan to nominate Trump for the prize, Chanthol responded, "yes."

Speaking to reporters earlier in the capital, Phnom Penh, Chanthol thanked Trump for bringing peace and said he deserved to be nominated for the prize, the highest-profile international award given to an individual or organisation deemed to have done the most to "advance fellowship between nations".

'India an ally, but can't align 100pc of time'

Says US top diplomat Marco Rubio on Trump tariffs

NDTV ONLINE

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday said that India's purchase of oil from Russia is "most certainly a point of irritation" in New Delhi's relationship with Washington.

Speaking to Fox Radio a day after US President Donald Trump announced a 25 percent tariff on India and an additional penalty for buying Russian military equipment and energy, Rubio said that India's purchases of Russian oil are helping to sustain Moscow's war efforts in Ukraine.

"Look, global trade - India is an ally. It's a strategic partner. Like anything in foreign policy, you're not going to align 100 percent of the time on everything," Rubio said when asked if Trump is "upset" with India getting a "great portion" of the discounted oil from Russia.

Breathing room for exporters, but concerns persist

FROM PAGE 1

and the Office of the United States Trade Representative in Washington.

Exporters were deeply concerned about losing competitiveness in the US market, the single biggest destination for Bangladesh's goods, after the Trump administration announced a 35 percent tariff, albeit lower than the initial plan of 37 percent, which would be added to the existing average of around 16 percent.

"While the revised rate is 20 percent on Bangladesh's exports to the US, it could raise the effective duty to as high as 35 percent in some cases," said AK Azad, chairman and managing director of Ha-Meem Group, a leading exporter to the US.

"Still, we remain competitive. With India facing a higher duty, some US orders may shift towards Bangladesh."

He added that the 20 percent duty is not uniform across all goods.

"Many of our exports fall under lower tariffs, but there's concern that buyers may use this hike to pressure us for price reductions. Negotiation pressure from buyers is expected. The industry must act collectively and strategically to handle this."

Azad, a former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said that since Vietnam faces similar tariffs in the US market, there is no added competition from their side.

But Cambodia and Indonesia face 19 percent tariffs in the American market, placing Bangladesh at a mildly disadvantageous position.

"There's still scope for negotiation," he said, "Government efforts must continue, and trade bodies can play a key role. Even a one percent tariff reduction could significantly ease pressure on exporters."

"We must remain cautious," he said, mentioning that India is in talks for a reduction from the 25 percent tariff.

Pakistan, having access to local raw materials, enjoys a 19 percent tariff. This will increase its competitiveness."

Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, said, "Though we'll not face intense competitive pressure from our competitors from Vietnam, US buyers will try to pass the extra burden of the tariff on to us. Middle and small manufacturers will face a significant challenge to retain US buyers as they will bargain for a

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Chairman of Ha-Meem Group

"Though we'll not face intense competition from Vietnam, US buyers will try to pass the extra burden of the tariff on to us. Middle and small

price cut."

He expressed concern that prices of imported goods would rise in America due to the new tariff, leading to a decline in consumer demand.

"So, the volume of orders from US buyers will fall," added Parvez, who is also a former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. Riad Mahmud, managing director of N Poly, a non-leather shoe exporter to the US market, said, "We expect that orders which have been put on hold by buyers will come back, as the tariff rate remains the same as that of our main competitor, Vietnam. But I assume that US buyers will bargain for a price reduction in a way that we absorb part of the tariff burden," he added.

"Ultimately, US customers will suffer. They will have to spend extra because of the import tariff," he said.

Asif Ibrahim, former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), said the final 20 percent tariff imposed by the US on Bangladeshi exports, following three rounds of negotiations, offers much-needed breathing space for the country's exporters.

He said that while the tariff presents challenges, it also opens the door to recalibrate and chart a path for strategic growth.

"As global competition heats up, Bangladesh now has the chance to diversify its export markets and upgrade its value proposition."

He said the tariff may act as a catalyst, accelerating the shift towards higher-value, sustainable apparel production and enhanced industry standards. By investing in efficiency, technology, and design, the readymade garment (RMG) sector can retain its edge in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

"With the right strategy and bold initiatives, this could be a turning point, transforming Bangladesh into a more agile, innovative, and globally respected sourcing hub," he added.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and CEO of Pran-RFL Group, expressed concern that the 20 percent tariff will directly impact the group's exports to the US.

He cited a recent conversation with a US buyer and added that the buyer reportedly asked the company to absorb part of the tariffs by lowering export prices.

"This is quite challenging for us," he said. "We operate on very thin

manufacturers will face a significant challenge to retain US buyers as they will bargain for a price cut."

Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez) President of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries

"Our buyers are under pressure and are asking us for more concessions. We need to work wisely, not just by offering low prices, but by providing excellent service and maintaining strong, trustworthy relationships."
Ahsan Khan Chowdhury

margins, and as a developing country, we have limited financial resources. But we still need to hold our ground in the US market."

He termed the move a "step backwards for global trade," adding, "Tariffs like these don't just hurt us but disrupt the entire global trade ecosystem."

"The burden of this tariff will ultimately fall on American consumers. Prices will go up, and it will become increasingly difficult for middle-class families in the US to bear the cost."

Chowdhury emphasised the need for consistent engagement with the US market.

"The battle isn't over yet. Tariffs change over time, and we need to stay alert to seize any opportunity that comes our way."

"We must continue working proactively with American stakeholders, build stable trade relations, and look for ways to reduce our production costs in order to remain competitive."

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CEO of Pran-RFL Group