

Anatomy of BGB shootings in Rampura



ASHIQUIL ISLAM, 14

SHOT AT 6:14PM ON JULY 19
BANASREE, G BLOCK, ROAD 1
FATAL GUNSHOT TO THE HEAD

“I raised him with tears, sweat, and blood as a single mother. My world revolved around him. Seeing his body, I fainted. Will we ever get justice?”

ALISHA AFROZE, MOTHER OF ASHIQUL



RAMZAN, 24

SHOT AT 9:46AM ON JULY 19
DIT ROAD, RAMPURA
FATAL GUNSHOT TO THE NECK

“Ramzan used to live in his uncle’s house at Omor Ali Lane in Rampura. Around 10:00am on July 19, our relatives called us and said Ramzan had been shot. I asked, ‘Will he survive?’ They replied, ‘He is already dead.’ A bullet struck his neck. Later, witnesses told me the BGB shot him.”

LITON MIA, FATHER OF RAMZAN



MOSTOFA ZAMAN SAMUDRA, 17

SHOT AROUND 3:30PM ON JULY 19
NEAR RAMPURA TV CENTRE
FATAL GUNSHOT TO THE TORSO.
THE BULLET PIERCED HIS ARM AND PENETRATED HIS CHEST

“He took money from me to buy Kulfi, just like every Friday. When he did not return home, I called him around 2:30pm and said, ‘Baba please come home. I have cooked your favourite dish [polao and meat] for you. He replied, ‘Ma, don’t worry, I’ll be back in two minutes.’ That was the last time I heard his voice.”

MASUDA ZAMAN, MOTHER OF SAMUDRA



ISMAIL, 46

SHOT AROUND 4:50 ON JULY 19
IN FRONT OF DELTA HOSPITAL,
RAMPURA
FATAL GUNSHOT TO THE HEAD & CHEST

“The ambulance carrying his body was intercepted by BGB personnel twice. Once in Meradia and later after crossing Trimohoni bridge. They asked how he died. They let us go after we told them he died in a rickshaw accident.”

LUCKY BEGUM, WIFE OF ISMAIL



MD KAMRUL, 21

SHOT AROUND 3:30PM ON JULY 19
BANASREE END OF RAMPURA CANAL
A BULLET PIERCED HIS LEFT LEG, WHICH LATER REQUIRED AMPUTATION

“Police stopped the ambulance that was carrying me... they wanted to arrest me... I had to return home. By the time I reached the hospital, 48 hours had already passed. Following two operations, my leg had to be amputated.”

MD KAMRUL



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In addition, the images reveal at least one distinct bullet entry wound on his right chest, the dark puncture mark stark against his blood-soaked shirt. The bullet wound on his chest was still fresh with blood oozing out, suggesting he was shot a second time.
According to the guard, hospital staff and protesters twice attempted to retrieve Ismail’s body but were forced back as shots were fired in their direction.
As proof of the indiscriminate shooting, the guard pointed to bullet holes still visible on the hospital’s front walls.
The indiscriminate nature of the shooting is highlighted in another video, which shows hospital staff rushing back into the building as shots ring out just feet from where Ismail lay dead.
According to Ismail’s wife Lucky Begum, the ambulance carrying his



PHOTOS: STAR

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The use of force by Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) systematically failed to adhere to legal principles and that a large percentage of killings and injuries... violated international human rights law.

The UN Fact-Finding Report

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“We identified one officer, a lieutenant colonel who is also a battalion commander, who opened fire directly at protesters... We immediately removed him from his post the next day. After an inquiry, he was returned to the army, his parent force, and we have recommended the highest possible punishment for him.”

Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui
Director General, BGB

about 1km from Meradia and the exit point of Dhaka towards Kachpur.
“They asked us how he [Ismail] died and many other questions related to the protests. They let us pass only after we told them that Ismail died in a rickshaw accident and did not participate in the protests,” Lucky added.
THE UNSEEN KILLINGS
“Maa, don’t worry, I will be back in two minutes.”
It was 2:30pm on July 19 when Masuda Jaman heard those final, reassuring words from her son Mostofa Zaman Samudra, 17. Worried about the escalating violence on the streets of Rampura, she had called to tell him to come home.
But for the mother, the two minutes stretched into an agonising eternity of unanswered phone calls. After 4:00pm, a message arrived from one of Samudra’s friends: he had been shot.
The family rushed to Delta Hospital, but their son was already unresponsive. A single bullet had torn through his left hand and lodged near his left lung.
Eyewitnesses told his mother that Samudra was shot near the TV Centre road sometime between 3:00 and 4:00pm. While no direct footage of Samudra being shot has surfaced, the time and location of his death place him squarely in a zone of intense BGB activity.
Our investigation tracked BGB personnel, armed with lethal weapons, operating throughout the Rampura-Banasree corridor that afternoon.
Lt Col Redwan, the officer who was seen shooting in the direction where Ashiquil’s body was found, was also filmed firing his rifle at protesters beside an APC and below a footover bridge near the Rampura TV Branch of Agrani Bank, the same area where Samudra was fatally wounded.
An eyewitness told this newspaper that he saw Samudra’s body lying on top of a road divider opposite Delta Hospital.
SHIELD OF LIES
The legal framework for the use of lethal force by security forces against civilian assemblies in Bangladesh is strictly defined in Chapter IX of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (CrPC).

It mandates that a force like the BGB can only use force to disperse a crowd after a verbal command from an executive magistrate or a police commissioner.
The use of military-grade force is a final resort, permissible only when an assembly cannot otherwise be dispersed and only upon the explicit order of the highest-ranking magistrate present. Even then, the force used must be minimal, aiming to “do as little injury to person and property” as possible.
Recently, the deputy commissioner’s office in Dhaka sent a document detailing the deployment of executive magistrates alongside BGB units to the International Crimes Tribunal. The Daily Star has obtained a copy.
On July 19 in Rampura, it recorded the firing of at least 972 rounds from military-grade weapons like SMGs [Type-56] and rifles. It details a morning shift (8:00am-1:00pm) where 693 rounds were fired, and an afternoon shift (1:00pm-8:00pm) that saw another 279 rounds discharged.
According to this log, Lt Col Redwan fired 17 shots on July 19 under the supervision of a magistrate.
However, our extensive investigation and video footage from the scenes of the shootings in Rampura on July 19 shows BGB forces operating independently, without the presence of any executive magistrates as required by law.
Multiple magistrates we contacted confirmed the list was prepared by the BGB and was submitted to the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner’s office. They claim they were pressured to sign the documents on July 26-28, days after the killings, and that their signatures were backdated to July 18 and 19.
They claimed BGB officials coerced them into signing the papers by claiming that only “blank shots” had been fired and that “no casualties occurred.”
“The day we had to sign the papers, there was a heavy presence of the BGB on the premises of the DC office and inside our superior’s room. Although the military did not talk with us directly, our superiors threatened us with consequences if we did not sign the documents,” one magistrate said.
Multiple others we talked to separately echoed the same.

According to the Border Guard Bangladesh Act, 2010, BGB falls under the control of the home ministry.
“The force shall be under the overall superintendence of the Government and the Director General... shall direct and control the force per the general orders and instructions given by the Government from time to time,” according to section 10(1).
All other BGB personnel operate under the command of the director general.
During the July uprising, a “Core Committee” operated as the central command and control hub for the violent crackdown. This committee, led by then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, brought together the chiefs of all major

security and intelligence agencies to devise and direct the suppression, the UN fact-finding report found.
The report says BGB director general, Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui, as a regular attendee of these meetings where the operational decisions to commit “systematic and widespread extrajudicial killings” were made.
According to the report, on July 18, the day before the killings in Rampura intensified, “The home minister instructed the BGB, armed with military-grade 7.62mm rifles... to use more lethal force to suppress the protests.”
Meanwhile, in a recent documentary aired on Al Jazeera, Siddiqui is seen consulting with

Lt Col Redwan in Rampura. Two journalists we talked to said the BGB chief visited the Rampura area for a brief period on July 19 shortly after Juma prayers. The Daily Star could not independently verify this.
A year after the uprising, most key members of the “core committee” are either in hiding or have been sacked. Maj Gen Siddiqui remains in his post.
In a press conference after the fall of the Awami League government, he said he ordered his troops to show restraint, particularly on August 5.
He repeatedly said that the order to deploy did not come from a single source but from “the country’s highest, numerous former ministers” and “many senior figures.” He said he was operating “from within pressure”.
He, however, acknowledged that “one or two incidents happened,” singling out a specific officer, but without naming him.
“We identified one officer, a lieutenant colonel who is also a battalion commander, who opened fire directly at protesters,” he said.
“We immediately removed him from his post the next day. After an inquiry, he was returned to the army, his parent force, and we have recommended the highest possible punishment for him.”
“The punishment will be executed by the army,” he added.
Two high-level sources confirmed that the “antedate seniority of Redwan has been receded for six months in a summary court martial” after he returned to his main force: Bangladesh Army.
On August 2, 2025, an ISPR spokesperson declined to comment on the current status of Lt Col Redwan, citing the matter sub judice.
The Judge Advocate General of BGB declined to comment on our findings, directing us to Shariful Islam, the public relations officer of BGB.
The Daily Star contacted him via phone and email and, as requested, sent him questions in writing. On August 3, 2025, he said they would not comment on our findings.
*Additional reporting: Zyma Islam
Research: Keero Adhnan Ahmed, Sharmin Joya
Visualisation: Muhammad Imran
Graphics: Anwar Sohel
Editing: Martin Swapan Pandey*

VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Bangladesh is bound by a number of international treaties that set clear limits on the use of force by state authorities. According to legal experts the following laws have been violated in the case of Rampura shootings:

- The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979)
- The United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1979)
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)



body to Brahmanbaria for burial was intercepted twice by BGB later that night, once in Meradia and then right after crossing Trimohoni bridge,