



"Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

Volodymyr Zelensky
Ukraine President ahead of expected meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin

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BANGLADESH POLICE

Equipped to inflict heavy casualties

A closer look at police's arms procurement records reveals a brutal truth behind the July killings: the force bought 7 times more lethal weapons than non-lethal in 2021-23

MOHAMMED SUMAN
and ZYMA ISLAM

Long before bullets ripped through crowds during the July uprising, the Bangladesh Police had already been configured not as a force to keep peace, but a heavily armed institution with deadly intent.

Beyond Sheikh Hasina's now-infamous phone call on July 18, 2024, where she admitted ordering the use of lethal weapons against protesters, a closer look at the police's armoury explains the high death toll during the movement that eventually toppled the Awami League government.

Based on official data, The Daily Star has now uncovered that, in the years leading up to the uprising, the Bangladesh Police stocked nearly three times as many lethal weapons as non-lethal ones.

When protests intensified, the police responded with what they had, and what they had were weapons designed to kill.

A BUDGET FOR BLOODSHED

Between 2021 and 2023, Bangladesh Police bought 2.49 crore pieces of lethal ammunition, more than seven times the 30 lakh units of non-lethal rounds it purchased, including tear gas and rubber bullets.

Import documents, including customs records, show that Tk 240 crore was spent on lethal weaponry in those three years, roughly 1.5 times more than the Tk 191 crore spent on non-lethal arms. This investment in lethality proved devastating during the July-August uprising. The scale and sophistication of arms used, some meant for the battlefield, have raised alarming questions about the militarisation of a civilian force.

COMBAT RIFLES FOR CROWD CONTROL

In 2022, just two years before the uprising, the police imported 18,000 pieces of 7.62mm semi-automatic rifles.

The arms would later be seen in chilling photos and videos of police firing on protesters, as was found by previous investigations by The Daily Star, as well as the United Nations Fact Finding report, published in February 2025. These rifles were backed by a stockpile of 10 lakh live rounds.

"This is a type of ammunition designed for use in combat situations against persons wearing body armour and not for law enforcement applications. It would normally be available only to the Army or paramilitary forces such as the BGB and RAB. This ammunition is not available for civilian purchase in Bangladesh," said the UN report.

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30,000
Tear gas hand grenade

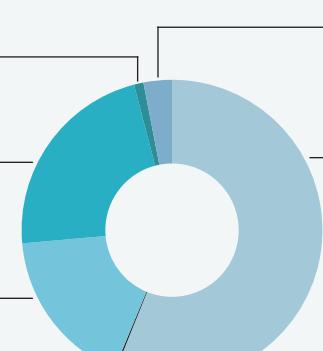
6,60,000
9 x 19 mm blank cartridge

5,12,239
38 mm tear gas shell

5,000
26 mm illumination flare pistol cartridge

64,99,865
9 x 19mm cartridge

10,00,000
7.62x25mm cartridge



Non-lethal bullets procured by the police

90,100

Tear gas shell long range

16,57,367

12 bore shot gun cartridge (rubber ball)

1,73,44,788

12 bore shot gun cartridge (lead ball)

Lethal bullets procured by the police



Protesting the alleged mismanagement and falling standards of healthcare services at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, students block the central bus terminal in Nathullabab, Barishal city, halting traffic on the Barishal-Dhaka highway for three hours yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

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PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Just a month ago, vast sandbars stretched across the Padma. Now, the river is overflowing and has flooded the adjacent Lalor Shah Park in Rajshahi city. A man was spotted fishing at a market in the park yesterday.

Student politics banned at DU halls: proctor

Legality of the move questioned

DU CORRESPONDENT

All forms of student politics will remain banned in Dhaka University halls, according to the July 17, 2024 framework, Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed said early yesterday.

"The July 17 framework clearly states that all forms of overt and covert politics in the halls will be banned," he told protesters in front of the DU vice-chancellor's residence around 2:50am.

Around midnight on Friday, students broke into demonstrations, demanding a ban on student politics in the dormitories. The agitation followed the unveiling of hall committees by the DU Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) convening body.

Around 2:45am, after an almost half-hour heated debate with students near his residence, VC Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan told the protesters, "The hall administration will be able to make decisions on this. Political activities will be controlled and carried out according to the hall administration's wishes."

"We don't want any repressive politics at the hall level and that is very clear. The decisions made between the hall administration and the students on July 17 [2024] will be considered by them as they see fit; we have no objections to that."

Regarding the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU), he said hall-based student organisations must work as they wish. "How this will take shape – whether they can hold processions in the halls or conduct poster campaigns – must be discussed with the student organisations and agreed upon ... When the panel forms, they will have to work in the halls. Consensus is needed on this matter."

Incensed at the VC's remarks, the protesting students began chanting slogans demanding a complete ban on student politics in the halls.

A few minutes later, Proctor Saifuddin took the mic and announced that all types of hall politics would remain banned.

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How law was manoeuvred as a tool for human rights violations



Why opinion polls still matter



A lifelong investment in health and well-being

P10

বাংলাদেশ টেলিযোগাযোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কমিশন

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শের-ই-বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭।

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জনস্বর্গে-

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