

20 July 2024: A 'shoot-on-sight' curfew

The government imposed a national curfew,[1672](#) effective from midnight 19 July until 10:00 on 21 July 2024, with one window of two hours (from 12:00–14:00) for public movement.[1673](#)

Security forces were ordered to shoot-on-sight,[1674](#) and over 27 000 army soldiers were deployed.[1675](#) Metro railway services were furthermore closed.[1676](#) The Daily Star reported on 'systematic government efforts' to cover up medical records and hide the bodies of those killed during protests in recent days, for example by burying bodies in unnamed graves.[1677](#)

The streets of Dhaka City were largely empty[1678](#) except for army troops on patrol[1679](#) and setting up checkpoints.[1680](#) In some areas, protesters defied the curfew[1681](#) and sporadic clashes erupted[1682](#) between protesters, police, army and Ansar forces.[1683](#) According to the Daily Star, the neighbourhoods of Rayerbagh, Jatrabari, Mohammadpur and Mirpur experienced some of the 'fiercest clashes'.[1684](#) Police opened fire on protesters in several locations,[1685](#) and a DW correspondent noted that protesters did not back down although shots were fired.[1686](#) At least 26 people were reportedly killed in the cities of Dhaka, Mymensingh,[1687](#) Savar (where three were shot dead by police fire[1688](#)) and Narayganj.[1689](#) DMCH received injured patients and dead bodies from the Dhaka neighbourhoods of Jatrabari and Shanir Akhra,[1690](#) and the Daily Star reported that over 100 people suffered bullet and pellet injuries in Mymensingh and Savar.[1691](#) From 20 July 2024 and onwards, law enforcement officers reportedly pushed medical staff not to treat protesters and prevented one hospital from admitting patients.[1692](#)

Army personnel hesitated to shoot at protesters despite the 'shoot-on-sight' order,[1693](#) especially many junior and mid-level officers as reported by UN OHCHR.[1694](#) Nevertheless, there were instances of soldiers shooting at protesters,[1695](#) including in the Dhaka neighbourhood of Mohammadpur where soldiers fired several rounds of lethal ammunition at a peaceful crowd, according to UN OHCHR.[1696](#)

On 20–21 July 2024,[1697](#) security forces attempted to clear the Dhaka–Chattogram highway from protesters in the Dhaka neighbourhood of Jatrabari.[1698](#) Police fired live and rubber bullets, as well as teargas, while protesters were throwing bricks and stones.[1699](#) UN OHCHR reported on teargas being launched from RAB and police helicopters in the area, and further reported on the police and RAB 'systematically using lethal force' while army units provided coverage. The same source stated that the police had been 'authorized to shoot rifles and shotguns loaded with lethal ammunition' as they had been ordered to clear the highway 'at all costs'.[1700](#) Witnesses told the Daily Star that law enforcement 'fired indiscriminately at protesters' and more than 70 people were admitted to DMCH, most with bullet wounds.[1701](#)

Four deaths were reported in connection to clashes in the area¹⁷⁰² – including a 10-year-old boy who was shot twice.¹⁷⁰³ UN OHCHR reported on the police firing at unarmed protesters, including protesters trying to run away, and one protester lying injured on the ground and pleading for mercy.¹⁷⁰⁴

According to Netra News, a group of unidentified individuals in plainclothes opened fire against protesters and killed at least three persons in the Dhaka neighbourhood Uttara.¹⁷⁰⁵ The same source reported on thousands of protesters attacking and torching a police building in Narayanganj City.¹⁷⁰⁶

The general curfew was extended indefinitely,¹⁷⁰⁷ leaving a window of two hours between 15:00-17:00, and the government declared 21-22 July 2024 public holidays.¹⁷⁰⁸

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