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21-30 July 2024: The quota is overturned, protests temporarily ebb

On 21 July 2024, the Supreme Court advised a reduction of the job quota for descendants of independence fighters to 5 %[1709](#) and ruled that 93 % of jobs should be merit-based.[1710](#) During the following days there was a 'relative calm',[1711](#) and protests temporarily subsided.[1712](#) There were, however, 'scattered incidents of violence',[1713](#) including the clearance of the Dhaka–Chattogram Highway (more information is available in the previous section covering 20 July 2024).[1714](#) Clashes were also reported in the city of Narsingdi,[1715](#) killing at least four people, according to Prothom Alo,[1716](#) and people were lethally shot during clashes in the Dhaka neighbourhoods of Rayerbagh and Jatrabari.[1717](#) Prothom Alo reported on chases between police and protesters in various locations in the city of Gazipur, injuring more than 100 people, and on protesters attacking and vandalising the mayor's house and confining her for 45 minutes.[1718](#)

On 22 July 2024, coordinators of the student movement suspended protests for 48 hours and launched an ultimatum for the government to withdraw the curfew, restore internet, and stop targeting student protesters.[1719](#) No protests or clashes were reported.[1720](#) Security forces, however, carried out block raids[1721](#) and mass arrests of individuals suspected of being involved in protests, including students and opposition supporters.[1722](#) Thousands of arrests took place across the country in the following days,[1723](#) and several coordinators of the student movement[1724](#) and leaders of BNP and Jamaat-e Islami were arrested.[1725](#) They were allegedly subjected to torture while in detention.[1726](#)

On 23 July 2024, the government announced that it would accept the Supreme Court's ruling[1727](#) and partially restored broadband Internet.[1728](#) Social media applications such as Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and TikTok continued to be restricted,[1729](#) and mobile internet was not restored until 28 July 2024, which kept many disconnected.[1730](#) The curfew was gradually relaxed with extended hours of public movement,[1731](#) as well as public office hours.[1732](#) However, the students refused to accept the government's adjustments as a final resolution.[1733](#) They had expanded their demands on the government to also dismiss senior officials, arrest police officers and Chhatra League supporters involved in killings of students,[1734](#) and issue a public apology from Hasina.[1735](#) Many among the population were reportedly speaking about the need for Hasina to resign.[1736](#)

On 26 July 2024, BNP called for 'national unity' among 'all democratic political parties, social and cultural organizations, and other forces' to demand the fall of government.[1737](#) In the period

26–28 July 2024, six student leaders were arrested by security forces,¹⁷³⁸ some being arrested for a second time while being treated at a hospital for injuries received during their previous detention.¹⁷³⁹ On 28 July 2024, the head of DB published a video with six student coordinators withdrawing the protests,¹⁷⁴⁰ which ‘sparked public outrage’.¹⁷⁴¹ Other coordinators took to the streets and denounced the statement.¹⁷⁴² The DB head was dismissed the next day, and the coordinators were released on 1 August 2024.¹⁷⁴³

On 29 July 2024, as the government failed to meet the students’ new demands and arrested several coordinators, protests resumed.¹⁷⁴⁴ Several protests took place,¹⁷⁴⁵ including at Rajshahi University,¹⁷⁴⁶ BM College in Barishal,¹⁷⁴⁷ and Jahangirnagar University.¹⁷⁴⁸ Local media did not report on any clashes or casualties,¹⁷⁴⁹ but there were reports of police obstruction,¹⁷⁵⁰ and dozens being detained.¹⁷⁵¹ At Barishal University, Chhatra League members attacked protesters with sticks, rods and pipes,¹⁷⁵² injuring at least 15 protesters.¹⁷⁵³ The police dispersed a crowd in ECB Chattar in the Dhaka neighbourhood of Mirpur,¹⁷⁵⁴ reportedly by charging with batons. They also detained 10 persons. According to one of the police personnel, protesters were throwing bricks from the alleys in the area.¹⁷⁵⁵

On 30 July 2024, the government announced a national mourning day for those killed during protests,¹⁷⁵⁶ but the student movement rejected it and launched a counter-protest online.¹⁷⁵⁷ The government also banned Jamaat-e-Islami and associated organisations,¹⁷⁵⁸ accusing them of being involved in protest-related violence.¹⁷⁵⁹

On 31 July 2024, the student movement announced a protest programme called ‘March for Justice’, to protest killings, mass arrests, attacks and enforced disappearances during protests,¹⁷⁶⁰ to take place at courts, campuses and streets.¹⁷⁶¹ Demonstrations inter alia took place outside the High Court in Dhaka and at Dhaka University,¹⁷⁶² and in several other major cities.¹⁷⁶³ In some locations, students clashed with the police,¹⁷⁶⁴ that fired teargas, stun grenades, charged with batons¹⁷⁶⁵ and arrested many protesters.¹⁷⁶⁶ Students meanwhile reportedly threw bricks at the police.¹⁷⁶⁷ According to the Daily Star, at least 100 persons were injured across the country.¹⁷⁶⁸ The city of Khulna experienced intense clashes,¹⁷⁶⁹ with some areas turning into ‘warzones’ as reported by Prothom Alo.¹⁷⁷⁰ At least 60 persons were injured and 100 were arrested, according to Dhaka Tribune.¹⁷⁷¹ In the city of Sylhet, police made use of teargas and stun grenades to disperse a crowd marching towards the court premises,¹⁷⁷² injuring at least 50 persons, according to the Daily Star.¹⁷⁷³ The police also charged with batons at protesters in the cities of Thakurgaon and Jashore, according to Dhaka Tribune,¹⁷⁷⁴ as well as in Barishal¹⁷⁷⁵ – leaving 11 people injured, including five journalists.¹⁷⁷⁶

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