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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 where 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 raids1721 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 movement1724 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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