



In Pictures

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Bangladesh bans rallies as violent protests spiral out of control

Student protests against quotas for government jobs have escalated into the country's worst unrest in years.



People walk past burned vehicles after students set them on fire amid the continuing anti-quota protests in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]

19 Jul 2024



Police in Bangladesh's capital have banned all public rallies after the deadliest day of ongoing student protests so far saw government buildings torched by demonstrators and the imposition of a nationwide internet blackout.

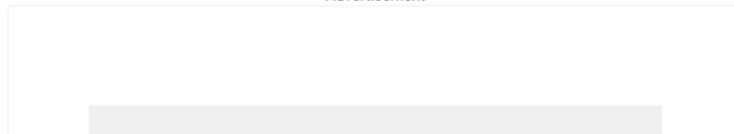
This week's unrest has killed several people. The AFP news agency reported at least 39 people dead, including 32 on Thursday alone, with the toll expected to rise after reports of clashes in nearly half of the country's 64 districts. The death toll could not be independently verified.

Students took to the streets again on Friday ahead of pro-government counter-demonstrations slated to begin after midday prayers in the Muslim-majority nation.

Police in the capital, Dhaka, took the drastic step of banning all public gatherings for the day – a first since protests began – in an effort to forestall another day of violence.

"We've banned all rallies, processions and public gatherings in Dhaka today," police chief Habibur Rahman told AFP, adding that the move was necessary to ensure "public safety".

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Police in Dhaka earlier said protesters had torched, vandalised and carried out “destructive activities” on numerous police and government offices.

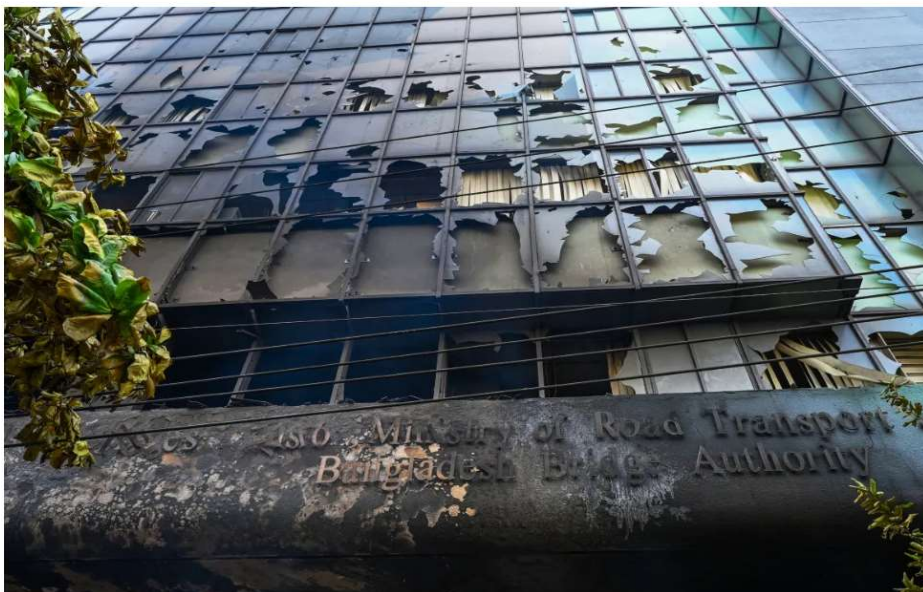
Among them was the Dhaka headquarters of state broadcaster Bangladesh Television, which remains offline after hundreds of incensed students stormed the premises and set fire to a building.

“About 100 policemen were injured in the clashes yesterday,” Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Faruk Hossain told AFP. “Around 50 police booths were burnt.”

Busy streets around the capital were deserted at daybreak on Friday but showed signs of the previous night’s mayhem, with burned vehicles and bricks thrown by protesters strewn across the roads.



Police stand guard at the headquarters of state broadcaster Bangladesh Television. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]



The charred building of the Bangladesh bridge authority after students set it on fire. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]



At least 26 districts around the country reported clashes on Thursday, Independent Television reported. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]



The network said more than 700 people had been wounded throughout the day, including 104 police officers and 30 journalists. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]





People woke on Friday to survey the destruction left by the deadliest day of the continuing student protests so far. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]



Telecommunications networks were reportedly down, with only some voice calls working in the country and no mobile data or broadband. [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]



Police said that if the destruction continued they would "be forced to make maximum use of law". [Munir Uz Zaman/AFP]