



News | Protests

# Bangladesh authorities detain student protest leaders in hospital

Home minister says three student leaders taken into custody 'for their own security' and were being questioned.



Bangladesh curfews, internet blackout batter economy amid quota protests

27 Jul 2024



Bangladeshi authorities have taken three student leaders, who helped coordinate rallies against government job quotas, from a hospital following days of deadly nationwide protests and state-imposed curfews and communication blocks.

Officers reportedly forced the discharge of three leaders of the [Students Against Discrimination movement](#) from the Gonoshasthaya Kendra hospital in the capital, Dhaka, on Friday.

### RECOMMENDED STORIES

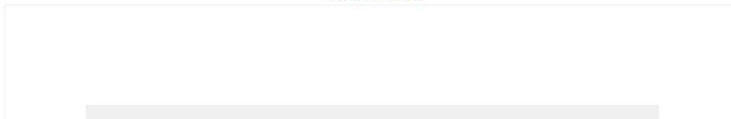
- Bangladesh minister defends gov't response to protests amid calls for probe
- How Bangladesh rickshaw pullers saved lives amid quota protest clashes
- Photos: Dozens injured in Bangladesh clashes as students protest job quotas
- Shot in the eyes, victims of Bangladesh protest violence face dark future

Police had initially denied that Nahid Islam, Abu Bakar Mazumdar and Asif Mahmud were taken into custody. But Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan subsequently told reporters: "They themselves were feeling insecure. They think that some people were threatening them."

While Khan did not confirm whether the three had been formally arrested, he told reporters late on Friday, "We think for their own security they needed to be interrogated to find out who was threatening them. After the interrogation, we will take the next course of action."

Security forces also picked up a ward boy from the hospital in the Dhanmondi area and seized the phones of Islam's mother and wife, along with those of Mazumdar and Mahmud.

Advertisement



### AL JAZEERA PODCASTS



Al Jazeera News Updates  
Steve Bannon released from prison, Argentina strike

▶ START LISTENING

+ FOLLOW



CNN bans conservative commentator after verbal attack on Mehdi Hasan

Read More

The incident took place an hour after an Al Jazeera team tried to interview them, but their rooms had been cordoned off.

Sign up for Al Jazeera  
**Weekly Newsletter**  
The latest news from around the world. Timely. Accurate. Fair.

E-mail address

[Subscribe](#)

By signing up, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#)

protected by reCAPTCHA

Islam had told reporters last week that he feared for his life after being taken from a friend's house and tortured.



At least 150 people have been killed and thousands have been arrested since the protests turned violent last week as pro-government student groups attacked rallies.

The protests were initially peaceful and focused on opposing a quota system that reserved 30 percent of government jobs for family members of those who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence from Pakistan in 1971.

The Supreme Court last week [scaled back the reservation](#) to make 93 percent of jobs merit-based, and the government formally accepted the move.

Advertisement

Advertisement

But after the deadly crackdown on protesters and imposition of a curfew in tandem with a heavy throttling of internet access and phone communications, [student leaders have made nine demands](#), including a public apology from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the sacking of police officers, multiple ministers and university chiefs.

The curfew has been relaxed for increasing hours each day, limited internet connectivity has been restored and a number of businesses have been allowed to reopen.

But many restrictions remain in place – amid a suspension of protests by the student leaders due to the bloodshed – further hurting the economy, which was already dealing with high inflation and youth unemployment.

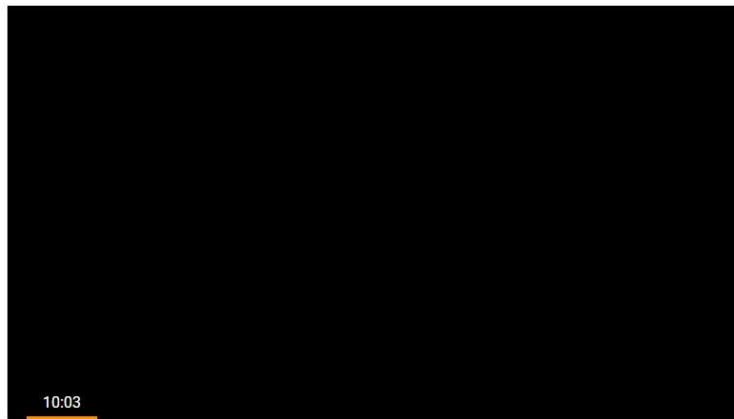
[Mohammad Arafat](#), Bangladesh’s minister of state for information and broadcasting, told Al Jazeera in an interview that “third-party” actors, including “extremists and terrorists”, have been fuelling the unrest.

The United Nations high commissioner for human rights, Volker Turk, [called](#) for an independent investigation into alleged human rights violations, saying many people “were subjected to violent attacks” by government-affiliated groups.

Advertisement



A group of UN experts also separately called for an independent investigation into what they said was a “violent crackdown on protesters” by the government.



SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

## LISTEN TO THESE PODCASTS ■

From: The Inside Story Podcast

### Is Iran likely to respond to Israel's latest attacks?

Israel attacked Iran and said its objectives have been achieved. Its military said the strikes were precise and warned Teh...



From: The Take

### Will Iran retaliate to Israel's latest attack?

Israeli forces launched strikes on military targets across Iran early

