

ADVERTISEMENT

Asia

'We saw things we do not want to see': Fear and trauma as 123 Malaysians evacuated from deadly protests in Bangladesh

The violence in Bangladesh had sparked concern in Malaysia, which has 139 students studying in the South Asian nation.



Malaysian students evacuated from Bangladesh hug each other and their families upon arrival at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2). (Photo: CNA/Fadza Ishak)

Aqil Haziq Mahmud @AqilHaziqCNA

23 Jul 2024 08:08PM (Updated: 24 Jul 2024 08:57AM)



Listen to this article



8 min

This audio is generated by an AI tool.

KUALA LUMPUR: Families hugged each other and cried as 123 Malaysians evacuated from Bangladesh arrived safely at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Tuesday (Jul 23).

These included medical and agricultural students as well as private-sector employees and family members of embassy staffers working in Bangladesh.

Related Topics

- Malaysia
- Bangladesh
- mass protests

ADVERTISEMENT

Protests against admission quotas for government jobs in the South Asian country have spiralled into deadly violence since Friday, leaving at least 163 people dead, AFP reported on Monday, citing police and hospital reports.

Thousands of university students have for weeks protested against what they feel is a discriminatory system that reserves one-third of public-sector jobs for relatives of

ADVERTISEMENT

veterans who fought for the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Students started demonstrating earlier in July demanding a merit-based system. The protests on university campuses started peacefully but have now transformed into nationwide unrest, the BBC reported on Saturday.

Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Sunday scrapped most quotas on government jobs, but some organisers said the protests would continue, Reuters reported.

Ms Fatihah Fadli, a Malaysian medical student at Mymensingh Medical College, about four hours away from the capital Dhaka, said the situation in her school started to turn worrisome when some local students began protesting against the quota a few days ago.

ADVERTISEMENT



"A curfew was imposed and we were instructed to stay home. The internet was cut off and we did not have WiFi for six days," the 25-year-old said, at the arrival hall on Tuesday.

"During that time, we heard sounds of clashes. We felt scared as we heard that people were getting beaten up, and we couldn't even go out to the market."



Malaysian students from Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) embrace each other and their families upon arrival at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2) on Jul 23, 2024. Malaysian nationals were evacuated by the Malaysia Government...[see more](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



Ms Cassandra Devi, 26, a Malaysian student at Dhaka Medical College and one of those who were evacuated, said she saw unsavoury scenes on her way from her hostel to the Malaysian High Commission on Tuesday.

"We did see a lot of things that we do not want to see, like army officers deployed everywhere, tanks and police with guns and all," she said.

Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail told reporters on Tuesday that the government had prepared psychologists to speak with students who might have experienced trauma

Also worth reading



Malaysian king orders immediate, thorough...



'Sex slave to my husband': A...



Action star Jackie Chan faints after getting...



Singaporean actress Ann Kok reveals she was not...

Recommended by Outbrain



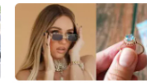
Fresh & Flavourful Seafood Dishes At Kopitiam



Co-Founder of Google Brain, Andrew Ng, Recommends: "These 5...
Blinkist: Andrew Ng's Re...



Driver reveals trick to avoid speeding fines
McFlash



A woman sold her ex's ring; the jeweler said, "Don't keep it."
<https://factsandfun.com/>

ADVERTISEMENT

experienced trauma.

"I had the chance to speak to some of the students, some of them are from Johor, Nilai, Seremban and Kedah. A few of them, based on their physical appearance, looked shocked," he said.

"So in these cases, the psychologists play an important role."

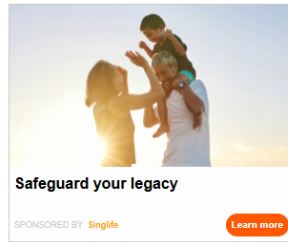


Students clash with police during a protest over a controversial quota system for government job applicants in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Thursday July 18, 2024. (AP Photo/Anik Rahman)

SOME STUDENTS STAYING PUT

Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday that 123 Malaysians boarded a chartered AirAsia flight at 11.23am Dhaka time to return home.

ADVERTISEMENT



They landed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport's Terminal 2 at around 5pm local time.

The violence in Bangladesh sparked concern in Malaysia, which has 139 students studying in the South Asian nation. India has also evacuated 4,500 students from Bangladesh, Malaysian news agency Bernama reported.

Mr Saifuddin said 80 of the 139 Malaysian students were flown home, with the rest opting to stay put in Bangladesh. He did not give the total number of Malaysians remaining in Bangladesh.

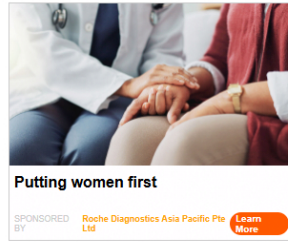
"Students who chose to stay said they were in their final year and they did not want their studies to be disrupted. They were also confident that the situation in Bangladesh would improve," he said.



Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs Saifuddin Nasution Ismail during a media conference at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 on Jul 23, 2024. Malaysian nationals were evacuated by the Malaysia Government due the on going violence...see more

The minister encouraged Malaysians who chose to remain in Bangladesh to remain vigilant of the ongoing situation.

ADVERTISEMENT



Putting women first

SPONSORED BY **Roche Diagnostics Asia Pacific Pte Ltd** [Learn More](#)

“Those who choose to stay are strongly urged to maintain regular communication with the High Commission to receive timely updates and support,” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, adding that the High Commission is committed to ensuring their safety as the situation evolves.

The ministry first said on Saturday it was closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh, and had directed that “all necessary measures” be taken to ensure Malaysian students’ safety, such as relocating students to Malaysia’s High Commission in Dhaka and providing them with accommodation.

High Commission officials had also planned to travel to Mymensingh to provide food supplies to students who were unable to purchase them due to the curfew.

But on Sunday, the ministry said it was considering “all available options”, including evacuation if necessary.

Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, who on Monday confirmed the evacuation operation, refuted suggestions of government inaction.

ADVERTISEMENT



**BUILDING FOR TOMORROW:
CUTTING EMBODIED CARBON ACROSS
THE PROPERTY VALUE CHAIN**

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

CREATED BY **brandSTUDIO**

“I hope this will put all assumptions to rest, especially those who thought the government and ministry were not doing anything,” he was quoted by the New Straits Times as saying.

The foreign ministry said its High Commission in Dhaka had coordinated the evacuation exercise with close cooperation from the Bangladeshi government.

“In this regard, the Government of Malaysia would like to extend its sincere appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh for the arrangement and facilitation in ensuring the success of this exercise,” it added.

PROTESTS SUSPENDED

On Monday, the Bangladeshi student group leading demonstrations suspended protests for 48 hours, with its leader saying they had not wanted reform “at the expense of so much blood”, AFP reported.

Protest coordinators say police and the student wing of the governing Awami League have been using brutal force against peaceful demonstrators, triggering widespread anger, the BBC report said.

