

# Bangladesh shuts down mobile internet to tackle teen protests

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Bangladeshi students are protesting poor road safety after two teens were killed by a speeding bus

Bangladesh authorities have shut down mobile internet across swathes of the country, officials and local media said Sunday, as the authorities try

to quell massive student protests that have spiralled into violence.

For the last week students have brought parts of the capital Dhaka to a standstill with a [protest](#) against poor road safety after two teenagers were killed by a speeding bus.

On Saturday the protests took a violent turn in Dhaka's Jigatala neighborhood with more than 100 people injured.

Witnesses said police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at demonstrators and that alleged pro-government activists attacked youngsters, including some of those rushing to nearby hospitals for treatment.

The country's highest circulated newspaper Prothom Alo said 3G and 4G internet services have been shut down for 24 hours since late Saturday, shortly after the violence broke out.

Social media has been filled with comments from Bangladeshis unable to access the internet via their phones, although wireless and wired networks appear to be unhindered.

Jahirul Haq, chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC), told AFP they received a "decision" from the government. But he did not clarify what was the government order was. He said he would comment further on the situation later Sunday.

A senior telecoms official who asked for anonymity said: "The BTRC has slowed down the internet at the order of the government."

The move may be an attempt to try and limit the ability of students to mobilise or spread growing online outrage over how the government has handled the protests, hours after police and unidentified men wielding

sticks and stones clashed with students.

Images and photos of the attacks on students allegedly by the ruling party activists have flooded the social media, prompting renewed outrage.

Police denied they fired rubber bullets or tear gas at the protesters. However hospital staff said dozens of people had been injured, some seriously, sporting injuries consistent with rubber bullets.

The ruling Awami League party has also denied allegations its cadres beat students up.

Bangladesh's transport sector is widely seen as corrupt, unregulated and dangerous, and as news of the teenagers' deaths spread rapidly on [social media](#) they became a catalyst for an outpouring of anger against the government.

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ruled Bangladesh since 2009, but in recent months it has been shaken by mass protests demanding an end to a decades-old system of discriminatory civil service recruitment.

Several powerful ministers have pleaded with students to return to their classes, amid worries the unprecedented teen outrage could turn into widespread anti-[government](#) protests ahead of general elections due later this year.

But their pleas have had little effect.

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