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Asia - Bangladesh

Illegal detention

Concern for journalist illegally arrested and beaten

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Reporters Without Borders is alarmed by the illegal detention and serious mistreatment of **Mutafizur Rahman Sumon** of the news site justnewsbd.com, who remains behind bars.

Sumon, 28, was arrested on 13 July in Dhaka. He must be freed immediately and be given medical attention for injuries suffered at the hands of authorities, the press freedom organization said.

"We demand that the government investigate the arrest and mistreatment by security forces," Reporters Without Borders added. "These actions cannot go unpunished."

The arrest was prompted by Sumon's campaign against impunity for crimes against media workers, the organization said, in declaring its support for the campaign.

Sumon was leaving a computer store when officers in civilian clothes from the Detective Branch of the Bangladesh Police forced him into their vehicle.

According to the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh and members of Sumon's family, the police, commanded by Inspector Motlab Hossain and Assistant Commissioner Tauhidul Islam took Sumon to a secret location. He was held there for three days, during which time he was beaten, threatened, and deprived of food and sleep.

Sumon was prevented from contacting his family and a lawyer. After he refused to pay 50,000 taka (5,000 euros) that police demanded for his freedom, he was transferred on 15 July to the Darus Salam police station, on the capital city's west side, on a false charge of computer theft. The following day, he was transferred to the Dhaka main prison by a judge who rejected an official request for continued police custody.

Colleagues and relatives who have visited Sumon in prison are gravely concerned for his health.

Sumon, according to his uncle, linked his arrest to his participation in several demonstrations by media workers protesting the absence of progress in the investigation of the double murder of **Sagar Sarowar** and **Meherun Runi**, husband-and-wife journalists who were killed on 11 February.

In another disturbing development, correspondent **Ayaz Azad** of the daily *Dainik Jaijaidin* was attacked on 14 July by machete-wielding students of the Chhatra League (student branch of the ruling Bangladesh Awami League) on the campus of Islamic University in the Kushtia district of southwest Bangladesh. The journalist was hospitalized for injuries to his shoulders.

Bangladesh ranked 129th out of 179 countries on the 2011-2012 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
