

# Bangladesh: Model Meghna Alam's arrest sparks outcry

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*Court sends her to jail under Special Powers Act*

Model and Miss Bangladesh Foundation Chairperson [Meghna Alam was detained](#) and sent to jail for 30 days under the Special Powers Act of 1974 following a late-night court hearing on Thursday, drawing [widespread criticism](#) over the use of what many say is a draconian law.

Police said they took her in protective custody as she was spreading lies about an important individual.

A Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka sent her to jail around 10:30pm, over 24 hours after she was picked up from her home in the capital's Bashundhara on Wednesday.

Amid criticism on social media, Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued a statement yesterday, refuting allegations that officers had abducted the woman.

The statement said Meghna was held in accordance with the law, but made no mention of the time of her detention.

The statement added that she was out to deteriorate the relations between countries.

Meghna's father Badrul Alam told The Daily Star that his daughter was in a relationship with a foreign diplomat, with whom she got engaged several months ago.

But she recently learned that the man already had a wife, he said, adding that Meghna contacted his wife and ended the engagement.

"I have heard that the diplomat contacted the home ministry. On Thursday night, the Detective Branch told me that the home ministry instructed law enforcers to take action under the Special Powers Act."

He added it was unfortunate that the government formed through a mass uprising used a draconian law, and it was reminiscent of the way people used to be detained and imprisoned under the previous regime.

Lawyers and rights activists raised concerns over the way she was picked up from home, the late-night hearing, and the state of civil liberties.

Firoz Ahmed, member of a constitution reform commission formed by the interim government, wrote on Facebook, "The police statement regarding Meghna is depressing. I have repeatedly called for police reform, and I am doing so again. The use of the police to serve the interests of the powerful must stop."

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua wrote on Facebook that Meghna's detention and imprisonment involved legal violations at every step.

Amnesty International South Asia wrote on X that it was deeply concerned about the use of the Special Powers Act for the arrest.

"The draconian legislation, with vague, overbroad provisions, has historically been used to arbitrarily detain people for long periods of time, without charge, and without judicial oversight. These all constitute gross violations of due process safeguards and international human rights standards and best practices," Amnesty said.

"As per media reports, Meghna's detention was shrouded in secrecy, and was allegedly carried out without a warrant, which are considered to be an alarming violation of procedural safeguards.

"We call on the authorities to either charge Meghna with an internationally recognizable crime or release her. They must also end the use of and repeal the Special Powers Act."

Former economics teacher Prof Anu Muhammad wrote on Facebook that the individual who detained her from her apartment should be punished for criminal conduct.

Muhammad Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner of the DMP's media and public relations division, said, "Meghna retains her right to seek legal assistance."

Additional Commissioner Rezaul Karim Mallik said law enforcers also detained a man named Sameer "in this connection".

On Wednesday around 5:00pm, Meghna went live on her verified Facebook page, saying that individuals identifying themselves as law enforcers from the Bhatara Police Station were trying to break into her flat without a warrant.

A visibly distressed Meghna is heard in the video requesting the men "carrying firearms" to leave and telling them that she would go to the police station.

The 12-minute footage shows the individuals breaking into her flat and forcibly taking her phone. The video and some of her previous posts were removed from her profile soon afterwards.

However, the footage was downloaded by social media users who posted it again.

An officer from Bhatara Police Station, requesting anonymity, said officers took her to the Detective Branch (DB) office on Minto Road after detaining her.

Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi told The Daily Star that Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sefatullah sent her to jail for 30 days, following a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Later, Meghna, also winner of Miss Earth Bangladesh 2020, was taken to Kashimpur jail in Gazipur.

The section 3(1) of the Special Powers Act, 1974, allows authorities to detain individuals to prevent them from committing a prejudicial act.

Under Section 3(2), a district magistrate or additional district magistrate can issue a detention order to prevent actions that threaten national security, public safety, or public order; incite hatred between communities or groups; interfere with law enforcement; disrupt essential supplies or services; spread fear or alarm; or harm the country's economic or financial interests.

Lawyer Jyotirmoy said, "By detaining her under the draconian Special Powers Act of 1974, a dangerous new precedent has been set. Under what law was a magistrate made to sit in court at night? The Code of Criminal Procedure clearly outlines when, where, and how a magistrate can hold court."

### **Correspondent**

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- The Daily Star. Sat Apr 12, 2025 12:01 AM. Last update on: Sat Apr 12, 2025 09:19 AM  
<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/model-meghna-alams-arrest-sparks-outcry-3868881>