

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

05 KILLING **371** INJURED

JOURNALISTS SUFFERED

21 PHYSICAL ATTACK **42** LEGAL HARASSMENT

CUSTODIAL DEATHS

10 CUSTODIAL DEATHS

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES FACED

19 CASES OF VIOLENCE

NOBOBORSHO CELEBRATION

13 INCIDENTS

The Human Rights situation in Bangladesh remains fragile in April 2025. The statistics we have collected unfolded the backdrop of intensifying political tensions, cultural polarization, and the continued shrinking of civic space in Bangladesh. This report provides a critical overview of key human rights concerns observed during the month, focusing on violations against religious minorities, journalists, political activists, and marginalized communities.

Model Meghna Alam has been arrested under the Special Powers Act, a law enacted 50 years ago, once again highlighting the misuse of state power against citizens. We have also observed the events before and after the Noboborsho 1432 (Bengali New Year), significant legal and institutional harassment of the press. Organized mob attacks are being institutionalized over time. This signals a deepening contest over national identity and freedom of expression.



PRESS FREEDOM

The month of April saw a significant rise in repression against the media and journalists in Bangladesh. While the international watchdog Reporters Without Borders showed a slight improvement in Bangladesh's position in its annual Press Freedom Index, the ground reality tells a different story. There were 62 reported incidents of legal harassment, 12 cases of physical assault, 6 arrests, and at least one instance of vandalism targeting journalists or media outlets. These actions stand in stark contrast to the state's professed commitment to establishing a free and independent press.

SPECIAL POWERS ACT

On 9 April, Members of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's detective branch (DB) detained model Meghna Alam from her Bashundhara residence in the capital on Wednesday night and took her into custody.

Questions have been raised as to why she was put under preventive detention under the controversial Special Powers Act without filing any case if she had committed any crime. Demands have also been made to release her soon and abolish the Special Powers Act of 1974.

CULTURAL SUPPRESSION

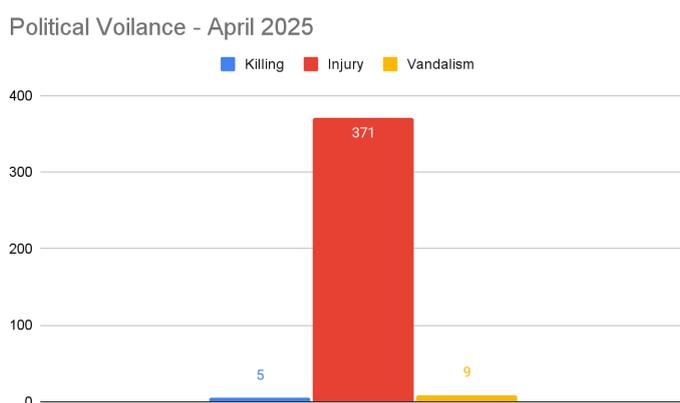
In April, several events and fairs were canceled across the country to mark the New Year (Bangla New Year). In addition, the Cultural Advisor of the Fine Arts Institute in Dhaka has been accused of changing the name and character of the Mangal Shobhajatra organized for the New Year. There have been reports of cancellations of New Year events and fairs in at least 12 locations across the country. Over 500 books were looted by the local leaders of Khelapat Mazlish from the 'Avayaranya' Public Library in Tangail following a Facebook post accusing it of promoting atheism.

1. Overview

The Human Rights situation in Bangladesh remains fragile in April 2025. The statistics we have collected unfolded the backdrop of intensifying political tensions, cultural polarization, and the continued shrinking of civic space in Bangladesh. This report provides a critical overview of key human rights concerns observed during the month, focusing on violations against religious minorities, journalists, political activists, and marginalized communities. Model Meghna Alam has been arrested under the Special Powers Act, a law enacted 50 years ago, once again highlighting the misuse of state power against citizens. We have also observed the events before and after the Noboborsho 1432 (Bengali New Year), significant legal and institutional harassment of the press. Organized mob attacks are being institutionalized over time. This signals a deepening contest over national identity and freedom of expression. In April, a total of 46 unidentified dead bodies were recovered across the country, further highlighting the deteriorating law and order situation in Bangladesh.

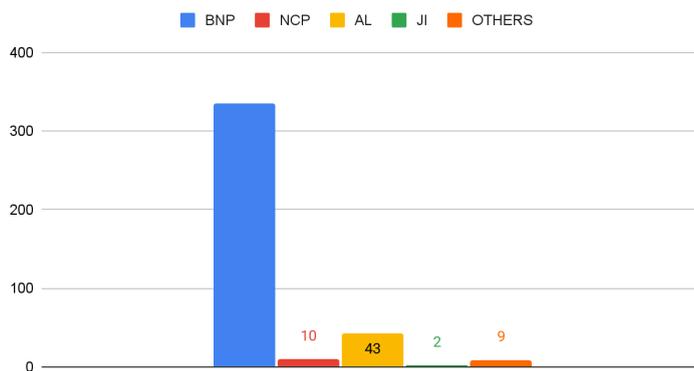
This report does not merely document discrete events; rather, it reveals interconnected trends that point to a systematic erosion of democratic norms, accountability, and human dignity.

2. Political Violence



April was particularly violent on the political front, with 5 reported killings, 371 injuries, and 9 incidents of vandalism related to political clashes. Political violence is increasing due to dominance, extortion, and party conflicts.

Political Violence - April 2025



As in previous months, members of the BNP and its affiliated organizations were most involved in political violence during this month as well. Most of these violent incidents occurred at the local level and were driven by extortion, land disputes, internal party conflicts, and

dominance at the local level.

In April 2025, political violence resulted in 335 casualties, including 5 deaths. The majority of these incidents were due to intra-party clashes within the BNP. [On April 5, in Badarganj, Rangpur](#), a violent clash between two BNP factions led to the death of Lablu Mia (50), who succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. At least 40 people, including a journalist, were injured in the incident.

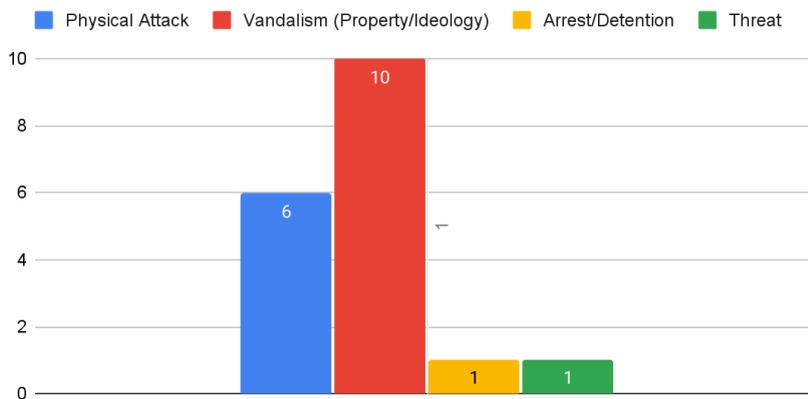
Other political parties were also involved in political violence to varying degrees. For example, [on April 25, in Azmiriganj upazila of Habiganj](#), a clash broke out between supporters of BNP and Awami League leaders over establishing local dominance, leaving around 50 people injured.

Amid escalating political unrest, the apparent inaction of law enforcement agencies has become a growing concern. There is an increasing tendency to shield the actual perpetrators while filing cases against opposition political party members.

Observations indicate that the number of cases filed in connection with these incidents is relatively low, and in many cases, the actual perpetrators remain behind the scenes. The political unrest remains the same in April. Although the government and the leaders of the political parties have stated their intent to take strict action, such measures appear to have little to no impact at the grassroots level.

3. Violence Against Religious Minorities

Attak on Religius Minorty



With 6 reported physical attacks and 10 incidents of vandalism, religious minorities continue to be at the frontline of communal hostility. These attacks are not random—they reflect both targeted

physical aggression and symbolic attempts to erase the cultural or religious presence of these communities.

This month also saw incidents of violence targeting religious sites and properties belonging to Hindus, Ahmadis, and shrines. On April 4, [miscreants vandalized six idols of the Dol Bhita Milan Sangha temple in Shahjadpur municipality of Sirajganj](#). Six idols of Ganesh, Lakshmi, and Saraswati, including those in the temple, were vandalized by miscreants at night. The police have not yet been able to arrest anyone in the incident. Despite legal action being taken in some cases, victims and witnesses often face harassment. For example, following the attack on a shrine in Noakhali on 20 February, the [father of the complainant and two witnesses, among four individuals, were assaulted](#). The attack took place on the night of April 1 at Dubair Bazar in Sadar upazila. Although police from Sudharam Police Station arrived at the scene upon receiving the report, no arrests were made. The injured individuals received treatment locally.

In such cases, the inaction of the police is particularly noticeable. When the media seeks clarification about the role of law enforcement in these incidents, the common response is that no complaint has been filed, and action will be taken only if a complaint is made. This indicates that police typically do not take any preventive measures or initiate investigations on their own unless the incident gains nationwide attention.

Freedom of Expression

Use of CSA & Special Powers Act

In April 2025, a total of 10 people were charged under the Digital Security Act in four separate cases. Of these, 5 were arrested. The use of this oppressive law to interfere with freedom of expression and the press has not stopped.

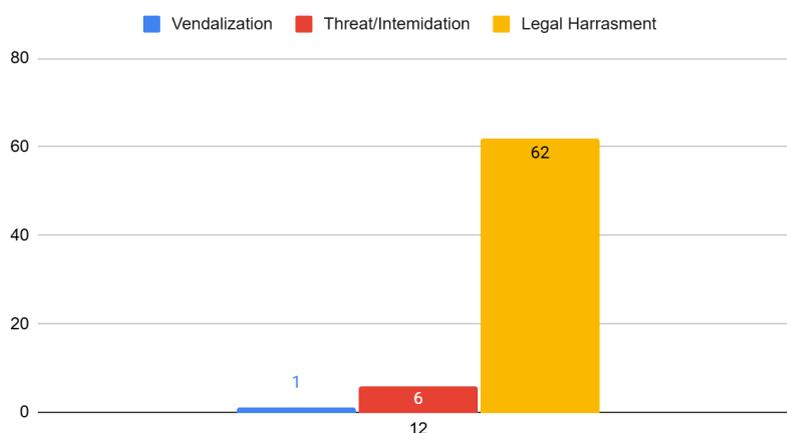
On 9 April, Members of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's detective branch (DB) [detained model Meghna Alam](#) from her Bashundhara residence in the capital on Wednesday night and took her into custody.

Following an order of the home ministry, she was produced before the court, where she was ordered to be kept in jail for 30 days under the Special Powers Act. On 13 April, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said that the way model Meghna Alam was arrested under the Special Powers Act was improper. Questions have been raised as to why she was put under preventive detention under the controversial Special Powers Act without filing any case if she had committed any crime. Demands have also been made to release her soon and abolish the Special Powers Act of 1974.

On April 6, a court ordered the [imprisonment of 61 lawyers affiliated with the ruling Awami League](#) in connection with a case concerning the assault and attempted murder of fellow lawyers during an anti-government movement.

Freedom of the Press

Attack On Journalists



The month of April saw a significant rise in repression against the media and journalists in Bangladesh. There were 62 reported incidents of legal harassment, 12 cases of physical assault, 6 arrests, and at least

one instance of vandalism targeting journalists or media outlets. These actions stand

in stark contrast to the state's professed commitment to establishing a free and independent press.

While the international watchdog Reporters Without Borders showed a slight improvement in Bangladesh's position in its annual Press Freedom Index, the ground reality tells a different story. Previously, journalists and media outlets were primarily targeted by state authorities; now, they face attacks from multiple directions.

Recently, [three journalists were dismissed](#) for merely asking the Minister of Cultural Affairs a question. In another alarming incident, a TV channel was forcibly taken off air during a news broadcast. Political activists, particularly from student wings of major parties, have openly threatened to shut down media outlets and have been involved in cases of journalist dismissals and intimidation.

[A journalist named Sohel Parvez was reportedly attacked](#) in Keshabpur, Jashore, allegedly in retaliation for a news report he published. The injured journalist's father filed a written complaint at the Keshabpur Police Station on April 20 regarding the incident.

In such an environment, fear of mob attacks and retaliation has drastically limited the media's ability to operate freely. Self-censorship is becoming institutionalized. These patterns of control and repression are steadily shrinking the space in which journalists in Bangladesh can work, posing a serious threat to press freedom and democracy itself.

Freedom of Assembly

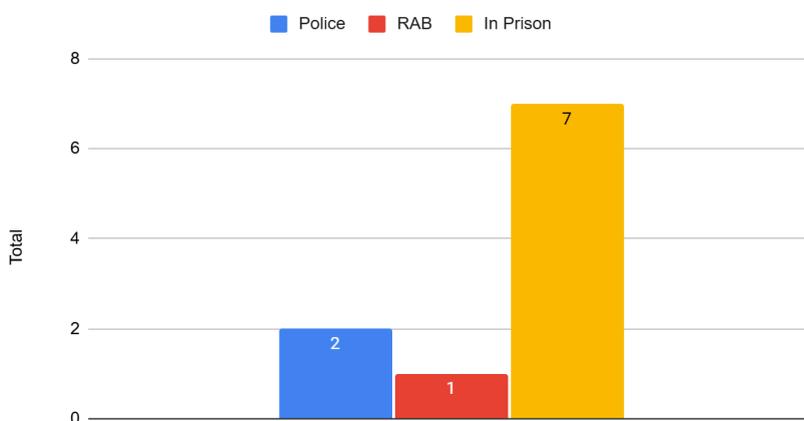
In April, the right to peaceful assembly continued to face obstructions. On April 29, an assembly in Chattogram, organized to protest the ban on battery-powered rickshaws and easy bikes as well as the reported harassment of their drivers, was [forcibly disrupted by police](#). According to reports, law enforcement personnel dismantled sound equipment, confiscated banners, and prevented the event from proceeding. Furthermore, three individuals,

including leaders of the Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSD) and the Student Front, were detained at the assembly site.

On April 19, [police obstructed a protest rally](#) and demonstration in Khagrachari, organized in response to the reported rape of a Marma girl in Kaukhali, Rangamati. The protest was held under the banner of Khagrachari Conscious Student Society in the afternoon.

4. State Violence and Custodial Deaths

Death in Custody - April 2025



At least 10 custodial deaths have been reported, including 2 under police custody, 1 under the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and 7 in prison — a number higher than the previous month.

The rise in prison deaths, in particular, highlights serious concerns regarding access to proper medical care, protection, and legal assistance for detainees. Moreover, deaths in police and RAB custody raise fears of a continuing pattern of extrajudicial killings.

Extrajudicial killings by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) are continuing. On April 21, a student named Siyam Molla was shot dead by RAB in Barishal. Another student was also injured by gunfire. Both were candidates for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination.

According to police statements, on the evening of that day, Siyam Molla (22) was shot and killed during an anti-drug operation conducted by RAB-8 in Mollapara of Ratnapur Union, Agoiljhara Upazila. Siyam was the son of Md. Ripon Molla from Baheghat area of Uzirpur Upazila in Barishal.

5. Cultural Suppression During Bengali New Year (Pohela Boishakh)

In April, several events and fairs were canceled across the country to mark the New Year (Bangla New Year). In addition, the Cultural Advisor of the Fine Arts Institute in Dhaka has been accused of changing the name and character of the Mangal Shobhajatra organized for the New Year. There have been reports of cancellations of New Year events and fairs in at least 12 locations across the country.

[Over 500 books were looted](#) by the local leaders of Khelapat Mazlish from the 'Avayaranya' Public Library in Tangail following a Facebook post accusing it of promoting atheism. A mob stormed the library on April 24, intimidating readers and taking books by prominent writers. The local administration return 400 books to the library on 28th April after a negotiation with Khelapat Mazlish leaders.

These incidents also indicate the continued pressure on cultural activities in Bangladesh by state and religious groups

6. Conclusion

The patterns revealed throughout April 2025 indicate a concerted increase in the use of both overt violence and bureaucratic control mechanisms to silence dissent, marginalize vulnerable communities, and consolidate ideological hegemony. Legal harassment of journalists, deaths in state custody, and the normalization of religiously motivated attacks reflect not only state complicity but also a dangerous cultural shift toward authoritarian subservience.