

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

**04** KILLING **189** INJURED

**RELIGIOUS MINORITIES FACED**

**03** CASES OF VIOLENCE

**CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

**09** CUSTODIAL DEATHS

**MOB VIOLENCE**

**06** KILLING **05** INJURED

**JOURNALISTS FACED**

**22** CASES OF VIOLENCE

The human rights situation in Bangladesh during May 2026 continued to face serious challenges, with political violence, attacks on journalists, and restrictions on freedom of expression remaining major concerns. Political clashes across the country resulted in 4 deaths and 189 injuries, reflecting ongoing tensions and instability among political groups. Freedom of expression and press freedom also remained under pressure. During the month, 28 journalists were physically assaulted and 5 cases of legal harassment were reported. Journalists faced attacks while performing their professional duties, along with arrests and legal actions that created further obstacles to independent reporting.

In addition, custodial deaths, mob violence, and incidents affecting religious minorities highlighted broader concerns regarding accountability and protection of fundamental rights. The reported incidents demonstrate the urgent need for stronger safeguards, transparent investigations, and institutional accountability to ensure civic freedoms and human rights for all citizens.



On 21 May, police attacked garment workers protesting at a factory in Sreepur, Gazipur, demanding Eid holidays and their due wages and benefits. Several workers were injured in the incident.

**ATTACK ON JOURNALISTS**

Freedom of the press remained under sustained pressure during May 2026, as journalists continued to face both physical attacks and legal harassment while performing their professional duties.

A total of 28 journalists were physically assaulted and 5 cases of legal harassment were reported during the month. These incidents reflect a troubling environment in which media workers are exposed to violence in the field as well as institutional pressures that may restrict journalistic independence.

The situation underscores the urgent need for stronger safeguards, accountability for attacks on journalists, and protection of media independence to ensure a safe and enabling environment for journalism.

**MOB CONTINUES**

Mob violence remained a serious human rights concern in Bangladesh during May 2026. A total of 6 deaths, 5 incidents of physical assault, and at least one case of vandalism linked to mob action were reported during the month. The incidents reflected the continued use of collective violence as a means of punishment, resolving disputes, or expressing public anger outside legal frameworks.

On 9 May, three alleged cattle thieves were killed by a mob in Kaliakair, Gazipur. Other incidents included attacks on teachers and a doctor by angry groups. These cases highlight ongoing concerns regarding rule of law, accountability, and the prevention of mob justice.

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

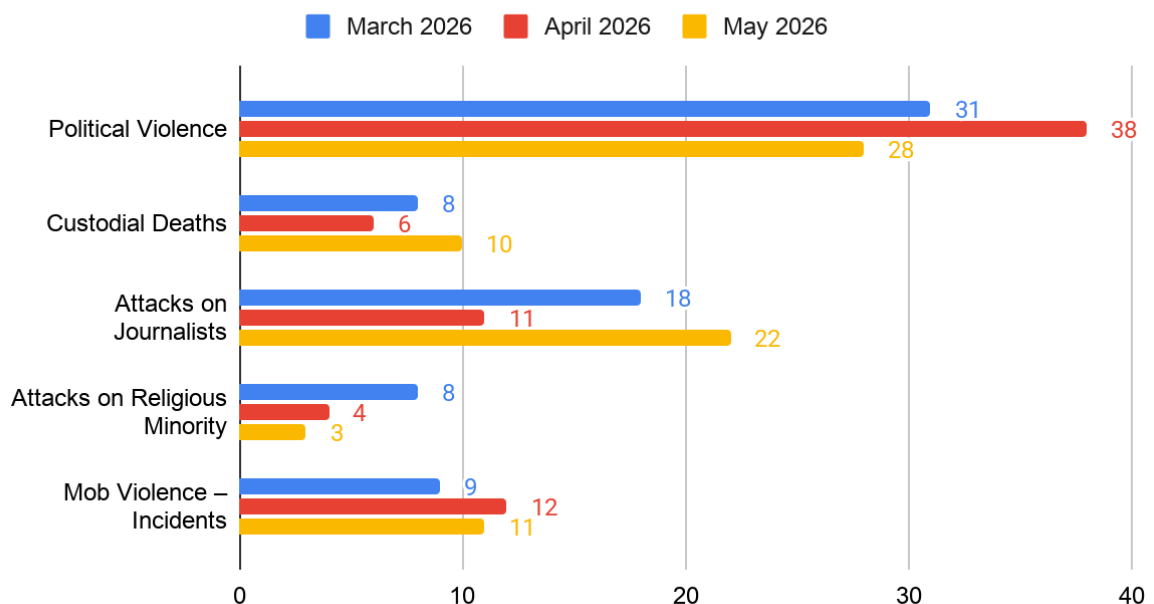
Political violence remained a major human rights concern in May 2026, resulting in 4 deaths and 189 injuries across the country. Although the number of fatalities showed a slight decline compared to the previous month, incidents of confrontation between political groups continued in multiple regions, reflecting ongoing tensions among rival factions and entrenched political competition at the local level.

A significant share of the violence was also marked by inter-party confrontations, indicating that both internal and external political rivalries contributed to the overall instability. The relatively lower death toll, however, contrasts with the high number of injuries, showing that violent clashes and group confrontations remained widespread and frequent.

# 1. Overview

The human rights situation in Bangladesh during May 2026 continued to face serious challenges, with political violence, attacks on journalists, and restrictions on freedom of expression remaining major concerns. Political clashes across the country resulted in 4 deaths and 189 injuries, reflecting ongoing tensions and instability among political groups. Freedom of expression and press freedom also remained under pressure. During the month, 28 journalists were physically assaulted and 5 cases of legal harassment were reported. Journalists faced attacks while performing their professional duties, along with arrests and legal actions that created further obstacles to independent reporting. In addition, custodial deaths, mob violence, and incidents affecting religious minorities highlighted broader concerns regarding accountability and protection of fundamental rights. The reported incidents demonstrate the urgent need for stronger safeguards, transparent investigations, and institutional accountability to ensure civic freedoms and human rights for all citizens.

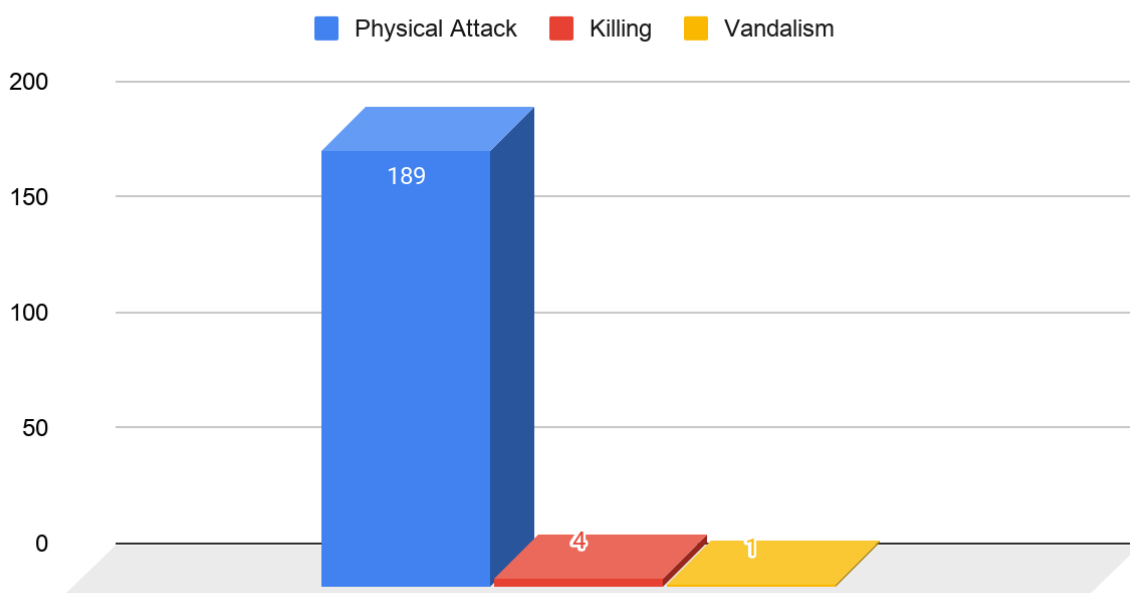
## Comparison of March, April and May 2026



## 2. Political Violence

Political violence remained a major human rights concern in May 2026, resulting in 4 deaths and 189 injuries across the country. Although the number of fatalities showed a slight decline compared to the previous month, incidents of confrontation between political groups continued in multiple regions, reflecting ongoing tensions among rival factions and entrenched political competition at the local level.

Political Violence - May 2026



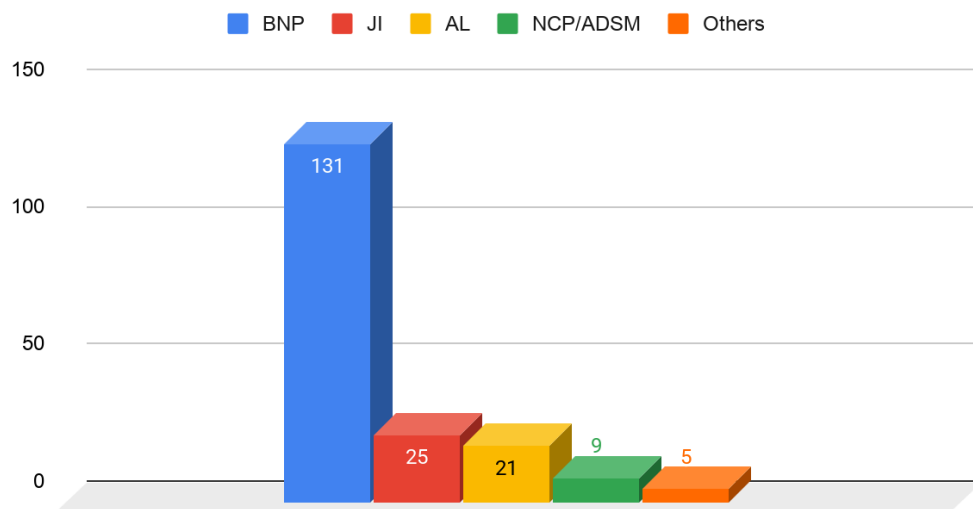
A significant share of the violence was also marked by inter-party confrontations, indicating that both internal and external political rivalries contributed to the overall instability. The relatively lower death toll, however, contrasts with the high number of injuries, showing that violent clashes and group confrontations remained widespread and frequent.

[On May 12, a clash between BNP and Awami League supporters over local dominance in a village in Dirai, Sunamganj, left one person dead and at least 40 others injured.](#) The deceased, Ratan Mia (40), was the son of Sonai Mia of Alinagar village and a supporter of

Shahdeeb Mia, the General Secretary of the Union BNP and a Union Parishad member.

According to the police, legal action will be taken upon receiving a formal complaint.

Political Violence by Group - May 2026



[On May 30, a clash broke out between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami supporters in Palashbari.](#)

[Gaibandha, over control and dominance in the Panhati area. Samiul Islam Abhi \(35\), a](#)

Jamaat-e-Islami leader who was injured during the confrontation, later died while undergoing treatment. Abhi served as the Office Secretary of Palashbari Municipal Jamaat-e-Islami and had previously held the position of President of Islami Chhatra Shibir in Hosenpur Union.

[On May 22, Nasiruddin Patwary, Chief Coordinator of the National Citizen Party \(NCP\),](#)

[came under attack in Jhenaidah.](#) The incident occurred in front of the Jhenaidah Municipal Collectorate Jame Mosque shortly after 2:00 pm. According to a statement he posted on Facebook, attackers first threw eggs, bricks, and stones before launching a sudden assault with hockey sticks. He reported that three people sustained head injuries and several others were wounded. Patwary and NCP Joint Member Tarek Reza were also physically assaulted during the attack.



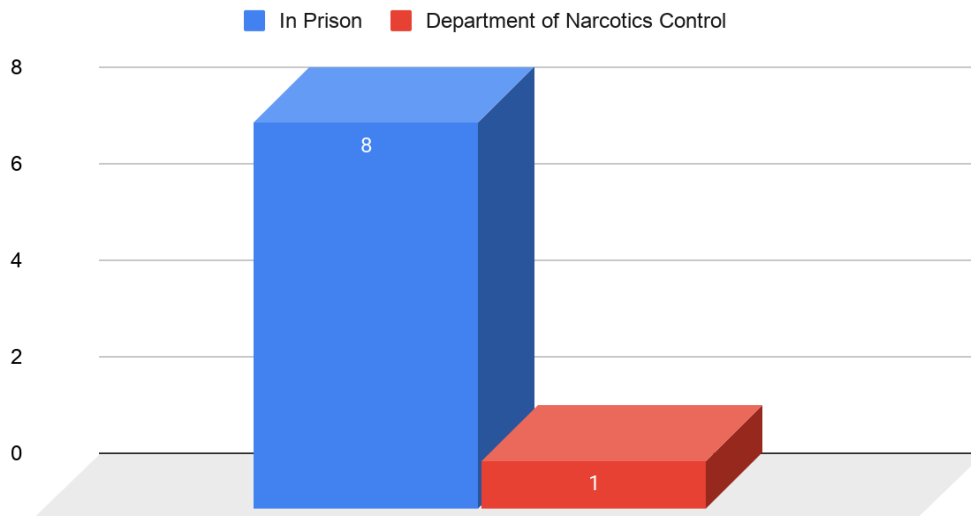
*The attackers first threw eggs, bricks, and stones before launching a sudden assault with hockey sticks to Nasir Uddin Patwary and his colleagues.*

The pattern of political violence in May 2026 highlights the continued fragility of political relations at both national and local levels. While fatalities decreased, the high number of injuries and repeated clashes demonstrate that political disputes remain a key driver of insecurity. Notably, a large proportion of the incidents were intra-BNP conflicts, alongside clashes involving other political parties, suggesting that internal factional struggles are now a major source of political violence.

### **3. Custodial Deaths**

Custodial deaths continued to raise serious human rights concerns in May 2026, with a total of 10 reported fatalities across different forms of state custody. Of these, 8 occurred in prison facilities, while one was reported under the Forest Department. The involvement of multiple state institutions suggests that issues related to detainee safety and the use of force extend beyond conventional prison settings, highlighting broader systemic concerns regarding accountability and protection of individuals in state custody.

## Death in Custody - May 2026



On May 18, Aminur Rahman (45), a fisherman, was shot dead while fishing and catching crabs in the western Sundarbans near Koyra upazila of Khulna. The victim's family alleged that [he was killed by gunfire from a Forest Department patrol team](#). However, the Forest Department claimed that the firearm discharged accidentally during a scuffle between forest guards and fishermen.

On 18 May, [a person named Debashish Chowdhury, who was detained in Chattogram Central Jail in a case related to an attempted murder during the July–August period, died inside the prison](#). He was the son of Sudhangshu Bikash Chowdhury from the Sadarghat area of the city. The prison authorities stated that he died after suffering a heart attack inside the jail. However, his family has raised doubts over this explanation, alleging that he may have died due to torture in custody. His cousin, Anurup Chowdhury, said, "If he really died of a heart attack, then why were there marks of injury on his back?"

[Abdul Latif, a former Public Prosecutor \(PP\) of the District and Sessions Judge Court in Satkhira, died while in custody](#). He passed away while undergoing treatment at Satkhira Sadar Hospital around 4 a.m. on Monday, 25 May. He was an advisor to the Satkhira district committee of the Awami League and served as the acting president of the Bangabandhu

Awami Lawyers' Council. According to police and family sources, Abdul Latif was arrested along with his son Russell from the Boyra area of Khulna on 13 December 2025. Later, they were implicated in three murder cases. He had remained in prison custody since his arrest.

The incidents recorded in May 2026 reflect persistent and multi-layered concerns over deaths in custody across different state agencies, including prisons and field-level enforcement bodies. These cases underscore the urgent need for transparent investigations, stronger oversight mechanisms, and effective safeguards to ensure the protection of individuals under state custody.

## **4. Violence Against Religious Minorities**

Violence and discrimination affecting religious minorities continued to be reported during May 2026. Odhikar documented three incidents involving religious minorities, including one case of vandalism targeting a Hindu place of worship and two arrests following allegations of hurting religious sentiments.

On April 21, [police arrested a young man named Shyamal Gain \(20\) in Dighlia Upazila of Khulna on charges of insulting the Prophet Muhammad \(PBUH\)](#). He was arrested from the quarters of the Mandal Jute Mill area of the upazila. When the allegations of insulting spread, an angry mob thrashed him. Later, Shyamal Gain was rescued at the spot. He has been sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital for treatment in his injured condition. Police said that preparations are underway to file a case against Shyamal Gain at the police station in this incident.

On May 19, [police arrested teacher Gaurang Sarkar in Satkhira on charges of hurting religious sentiments](#). The school's acting headmaster Azharuzzaman Mukul, local Jamaat Ameer Mizanur Rahman and several students of the school claimed that teacher Gaurang Sarkar made objectionable comments about the Azan and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

during a ninth-grade math class last Sunday. When the matter came to light, the police detained him and took him to the police station.

On the night of May 31, [theft and vandalism of temple idols and arson occurred at the Pirojpur Municipal Crematorium. In the morning, locals saw the incident and informed the police.](#) Municipal Crematorium Committee President Sunil Chakraborty said that after receiving the information, he went to the spot and found that the idol of Lord Shiva in the Kali temple in the crematorium premises had been vandalized. In addition, the miscreants brought the broken idol outside and set it on fire. The main gate of the crematorium was also vandalized. Police have started an investigation into the incident and are working to identify those involved.

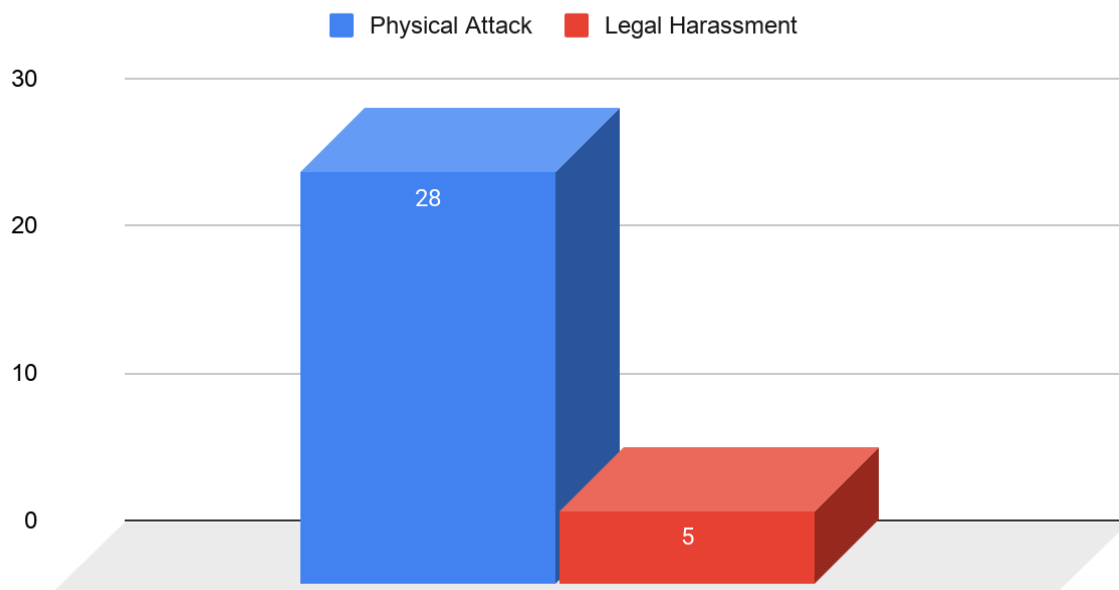
These incidents underscore the importance of ensuring equal protection under the law, preventing acts of religiously motivated violence and vandalism, and safeguarding the rights of all citizens to practice their faith free from fear, intimidation, or discrimination.

## **5. Freedom of Expression**

### **5.1 Attacks on Journalists**

Freedom of the press remained under sustained pressure during May 2026, as journalists continued to face both physical attacks and legal harassment while performing their professional duties. A total of 28 journalists were physically assaulted and 5 cases of legal harassment were reported during the month. These incidents reflect a troubling environment in which media workers are exposed to violence in the field as well as institutional pressures that may restrict journalistic independence.

## Violence Against Journalists - May 2026



On 7 May, [police arrested Jiten Kumar Barua, Khagrachhari district correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha \(BSS\) and Somoy Television](#). He is a former president of the Khagrachhari Press Club. According to police, journalist Jiten Barua has five cases filed against him in four police stations of the district. One of the cases is related to an attack on students and the public during the July mass uprising on 4 August, while the other four cases are related to clashes between BNP and Awami League activists. All five cases were filed after 5 August 2024.

On 22 May, [four journalists were seriously injured while covering a report on a drug den in Rajashan, Savar municipality](#). It is reported that they were attacked by top drug dealer Shamim and his associates while collecting news. The injured journalists include Saddam Hossain, Savar correspondent of SA TV, Taifur Rahman Tuhin, senior reporter of Desh TV, and two cameramen from two different television channels. Police said multiple teams are conducting operations to arrest Shamim and his associates. A case is also being prepared in connection with the incident.



*Four journalists were seriously injured while covering a report on a drug den in Rajashan, Savar municipality.*

[A defamation case has been filed in Habiganj against three journalists, including Prothom Alo editor Motiur Rahman, over the publication of a news report.](#) The case was filed in court on 7 May by Syed Humayun Kabir, executive director of the local private organization People's Assistant for Social Advancement (PASA).

The incidents recorded in May 2026 highlight the continued risks faced by journalists, including violent attacks during news coverage, arrests, and defamation cases. Together, these cases point to a persistent pattern of threats to press freedom, where both physical safety and legal protection remain weak. The situation underscores the urgent need for stronger safeguards, accountability for attacks on journalists, and protection of media independence to ensure a safe and enabling environment for journalism.

## **5.2 Freedom of Expression**

On May 18, a [scuffle broke out between a group of youths and police in Chittagong over the removal of graffiti commemorating the July Uprising.](#) The incident took place in the Tiger

Pass area of the city while they were trying to paint new graffiti. Three people were detained at the time but were later released, police said.



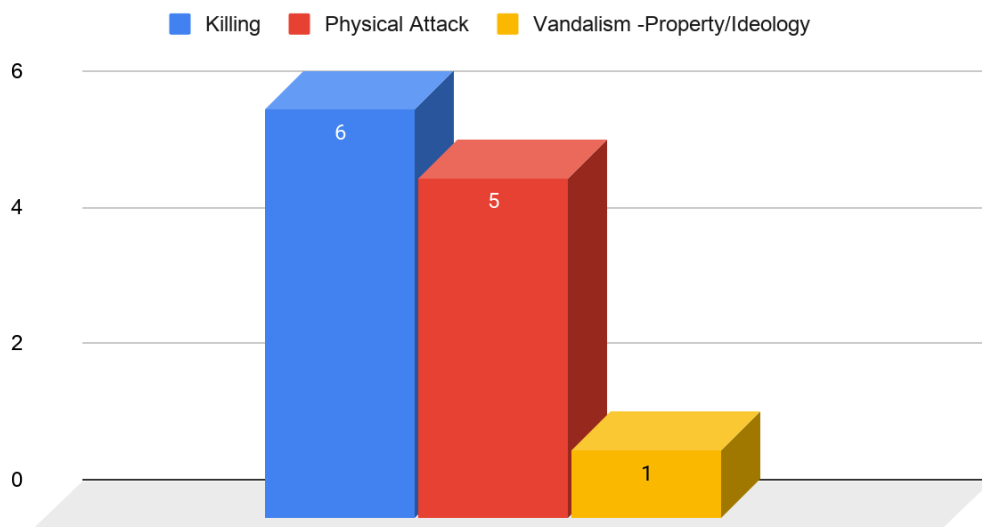
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## **6. Mob Violence**

Mob violence remained a serious human rights concern in May 2026, resulting in at least 6 deaths and 5 incidents of physical assault across the country. At least one case of vandalism was also linked to mob action. Although the number of fatalities declined compared to the previous month, incidents involving collective violence, vigilantism, and unlawful punishment

continued to occur.

### Mob Violence - April 2026



On May 9, in the Bagchala area of Fulbaria Union in Kaliakair Upazila of Gazipur district, locals killed three members of a gang of thieves while stealing cows at midnight. [During this, three of them died in a mob beating.](#) Upon receiving the information, the police sent their bodies to the morgue. In addition, locals set fire to the pickup van used for the cow theft.

On May 19, a [BNP leader created a mob and assaulted two teachers of the Government Abul Kalam College in Babuganj, Barisal.](#) The accused, Sarwar Hossain, is the joint convener of the BNP's Dehergati Union and Sohag Hawlader is the convener of the Bastuhara Dal of the same union. The BNP leader attacked them and robbed them of Tk 45,000 over the issue of selling scrap from the college.

On May 16, [a doctor named Dr. Nasir Islam was attacked in Shariatpur over the death of a patient due to a heart attack.](#) The doctor was beaten up several times by a mob. He was urgently sent to Dhaka by air ambulance in a seriously injured condition.

On May 19, [police arrested teacher Gaurang Sarkar in Satkhira on charges of hurting religious sentiments](#). The school's acting headmaster Azharuzzaman Mukul, local Jamaat Ameer Mizanur Rahman and several students of the school claimed that teacher Gaurang Sarkar made objectionable comments about the Azan and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during a ninth-grade math class last Sunday. When the matter came to light, the police detained him and took him to the police station.

The incidents recorded during May demonstrate that mob violence continues to be used as a means of resolving disputes, responding to allegations of wrongdoing, or expressing public anger outside the framework of the law. Effective law enforcement, prompt accountability for perpetrators, and public awareness initiatives remain essential to preventing further incidents of mob justice and safeguarding the rule of law.

## **7. Conclusion**

The incidents documented in May 2026 reveal a complex human rights situation where political conflict, violence, and restrictions on fundamental freedoms continued to affect public life. While political violence showed a decline in fatalities compared to previous months, the high number of injuries and repeated clashes indicate that political disputes remain a significant source of insecurity. The continued targeting of journalists through physical attacks, arrests, and legal harassment raises serious concerns about the safety of media professionals and the state of freedom of expression. Similarly, custodial deaths and mob violence reflect broader challenges related to accountability, law enforcement practices, and public trust in institutions.

Addressing these concerns requires transparent investigations, accountability for violations, and stronger protections for journalists, vulnerable communities, and individuals under state custody. Ensuring respect for human rights and democratic freedoms remains essential for building a secure and inclusive society.