

**BANGLADESH:**

**ATTACKS AND  
AUTHORITARIAN  
LAWS STIFLE  
PRESS FREEDOM**

Journalists face assault,  
draconian laws

**PRESS FREEDOM  
VIOLATIONS  
IN BANGLADESH**

(APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2022)



Journalists in Bangladesh operate in a hostile and dangerous environment, often facing physical attacks, threats, legal harassment, and arrests, as well as censorship and surveillance. Draconian laws restricting independent journalism continue to choke press freedom and democracy.

# 30

IPI identified at least **30 press freedom violations** in a six-month period between April and September of 2022, which included cases of physical attacks on journalists, as well as arrests and the introduction of restrictive cyber regulations.

There was an alarming number of **physical attacks** on journalists during this period (24) — many of which involved journalists who were victims of mob violence. In April, at least five journalists were attacked and violently beaten by mobs at a market. In July two journalists were assaulted by seven individuals while reporting on corruption in the purchase of medical equipment. In September, two journalists were assaulted by more than a dozen government employees.



**Two journalists were killed in Bangladesh in the six-month period between April and September.**

On April 13, journalist Mohiuddin Sarkar Nayeem was shot and killed near the Bangladesh-India border by alleged drug traffickers. He had previously reported on drug trafficking in the area.

On July 7 journalist Hasibur Rahman Rubel, working for the daily newspaper Dainik Kushtiar Khobor, was found dead in western Bangladesh after going missing. The journalist's family said Rubel was deliberately killed for his work as a reporter.



3

**At least three journalists were charged under the Digital Services Act (DSA),** which has been used to target hundreds of journalists since it was introduced in 2018.



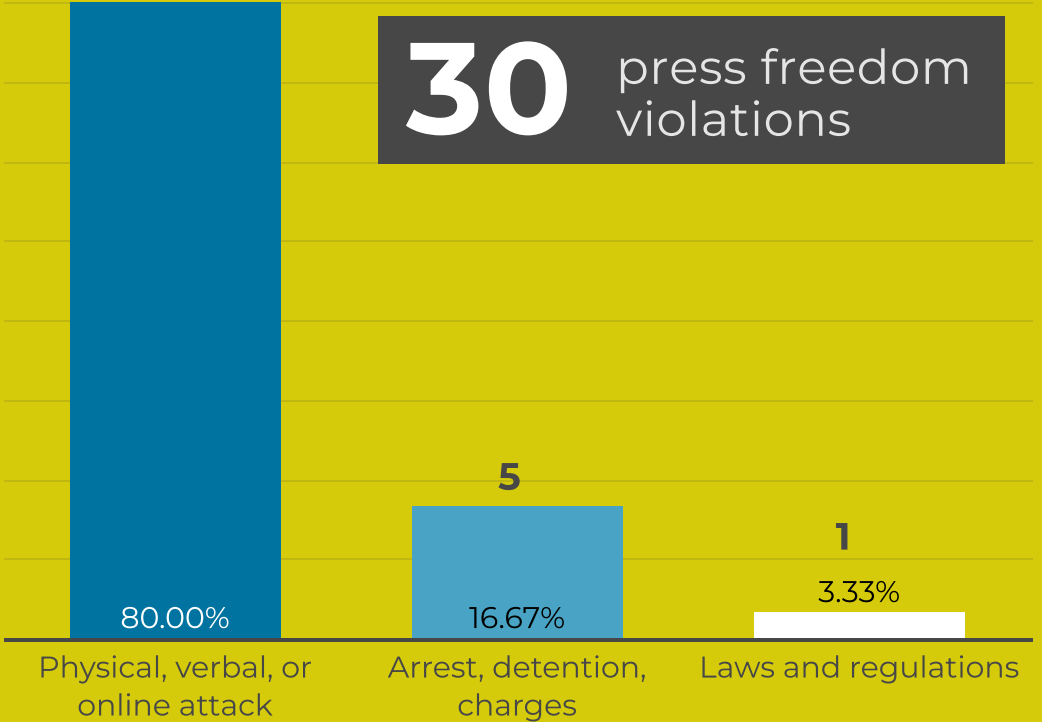
The 2018 Digital Services Act (DSA) gives the Bangladesh government broad powers to silence critics and journalists, especially online. Under the DSA, authorities may arrest and search anyone and seize any equipment on suspicion that a crime has been committed using social media. Numerous provisions limit the ability to be granted bail, allowing authorities to hold those arrested under the DSA indefinitely.

**Restrictive legislation:** During this monitoring period, the government proposed restrictive new measures for digital and OTT platforms that would further stifle press freedom. The draft regulations would prohibit digital and social media platforms from displaying content threatening the "unity, integrity, defense, security, or sovereignty of Bangladesh" and content that could be deemed critical of the national anthem or flag. It would also require intermediaries, such as WhatsApp and Signal, to enable traceability and the identification of any suspects deemed to be violating the guidelines outlined in the draft regulations.



24

**30** press freedom violations



Incidents involved

27

**MALE**

0

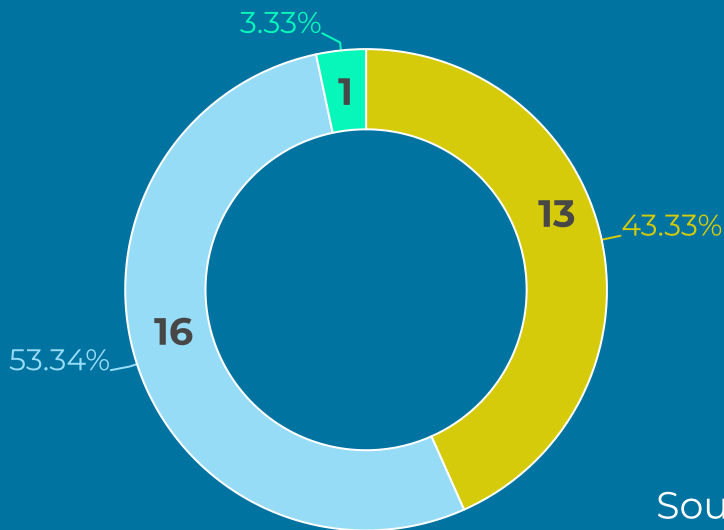
**FEMALE**

**JOURNALISTS**



IPI did not identify any reported violations affecting female journalists during this monitoring period. This likely reflects the extent to which **attacks against female journalists go unreported.**





- State actor
- Non-state actor
- Unknown

Source of incidents



## JOURNALISTS KILLED

### Mohiuddin Sarkar Nayeem

On April 13, journalist Mohiuddin Sarkar Nayeem was shot and killed near the Bangladesh-India border by alleged drug traffickers. He had previously reported on drug trafficking in the area.

### Hasibur Rahman Rubel

On July 7 journalist Hasibur Rahman Rubel, who worked for the daily newspaper Dainik Kushtiar Khobor, was found dead in western Bangladesh after going missing. The journalist's family said Rubel was deliberately killed for his work as a reporter

IPI monitors and collects data on press freedom violations in Bangladesh as part of an ongoing cross-border project that brings together partner media outlets in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal to create public awareness about attacks on journalists and highlight the erosion of press freedom across South Asia.



To report a violation:  
[info@ipi.media](mailto:info@ipi.media)

