



Committee to Protect Journalists

April 27, 2026

*Sent via email*

**H.E. Md Asaduzzaman**

Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dear Minister Asaduzzaman,

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an independent, nonprofit press freedom organization, writes regarding the ongoing detention of four senior Bangladeshi journalists: Farzana Rupa, Shakil Ahmed, Mozammel Haq Babu, and Shyamal Dutta. We write in a spirit of constructive engagement, and with real hope for the direction your Government has set out.

The first months of the new administration have offered encouraging signals on press freedom, and the Prime Minister's public distancing of the new Government from the conduct of the interim period has been widely welcomed. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party's manifesto commitments — to withdraw politically motivated cases against journalists, review restrictive media laws, and strengthen protections for media workers — gave many observers, CPJ included, reason for optimism. It is in that context that we respectfully bring this matter to your attention.

All four journalists have been held for more than 18 months accused of murder which, based on our documentation, testimony from their families, and review by international counsel, no credible evidence has been presented and no charge sheet has been served. The pattern of these cases appears closely tied to the journalists' reporting and perceived political affiliations — the very kind of practice your Government has publicly signalled an intention to move beyond.

We are also deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation of those detained. Ms. Rupa was held for two weeks in November 2024 in a “condemnation cell” reserved for death-row inmates. Mr. Dutta suffered a stroke within days of his detention on September 16, 2024, about which his family was not immediately informed. He has a medical history of cardiac problems and severe sleep apnea that has not been assessed in custody. Mr. Babu, who was arrested on the same day in September, was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent major invasive surgery in late 2023. However, he has not received the required follow-up care, placing him at serious risk of undetected cancer recurrence.

Freedom of expression is protected under Article 39 of Bangladesh's constitution and under the International Covenant on Civil and Political

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Rights, to which Bangladesh is a party — commitments your Government has itself reaffirmed in its early engagements with international partners.

In light of the above, we respectfully ask the Government of Bangladesh to consider dropping the charges against Ms. Rupa, Mr. Ahmed, Mr. Babu, and Mr. Dutta and allowing them to return to their families. Pending that outcome, we hope the Ministry, in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs, can ensure that they receive the medical care their conditions require without further delay.

A resolution of these four cases would, we believe, be received internationally as a clear demonstration of the reforms your Government has pledged to pursue, and would strengthen the goodwill already building around Bangladesh's democratic transition. We would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this and wider press freedom questions with you directly, and would welcome the chance to travel to Dhaka to meet you later this year.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

**Kunāl Majumder**

Asia-Pacific Program Coordinator

Committee to Protect Journalists

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**CC:**

The Honourable Attorney General for Bangladesh

**Barrister Md. Ruhul Quddus Kazal**

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

**H.E. Salahuddin Ahmed**

The Honourable Minister of Information

**H.E. Zahir Uddin Swapon**