



**BANGLADESH HINDU PERSECUTION
MONTHLY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2023**

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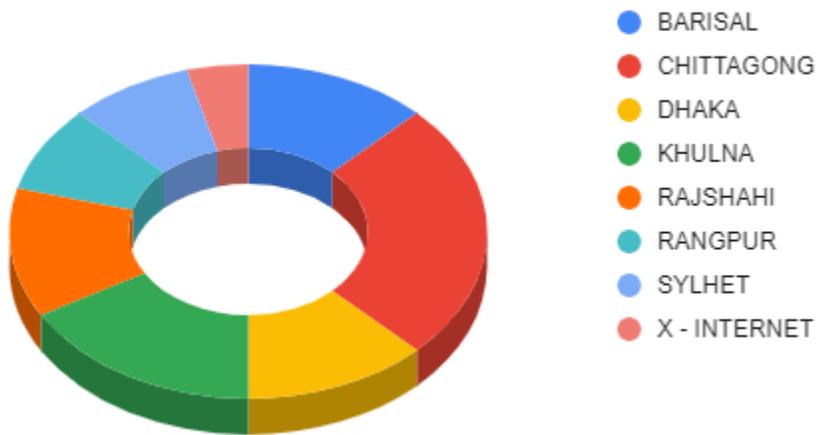
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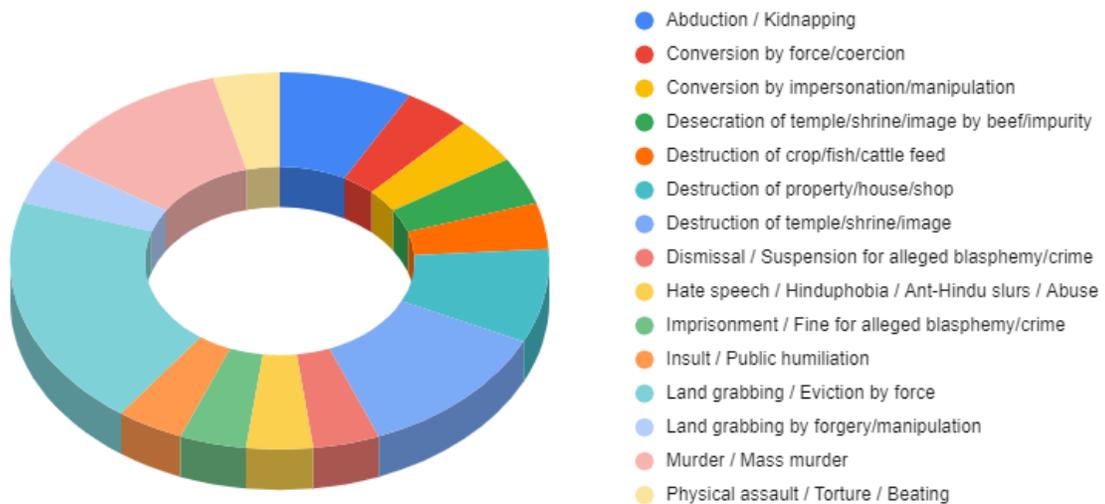
In 2023, the plight of minorities in Bangladesh continued to worsen, with Hindus and indigenous populations facing acts of aggression such as looting, destruction, kidnapping, murder, eviction, and even forced conversion to Islam. This report provides an overview of the atrocities committed against these communities in Bangladesh throughout the month of February.

Overview

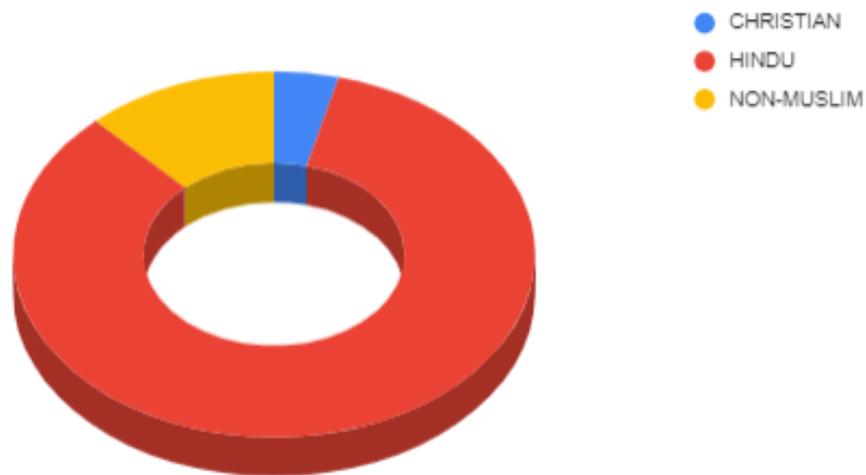
Persecution by Divison



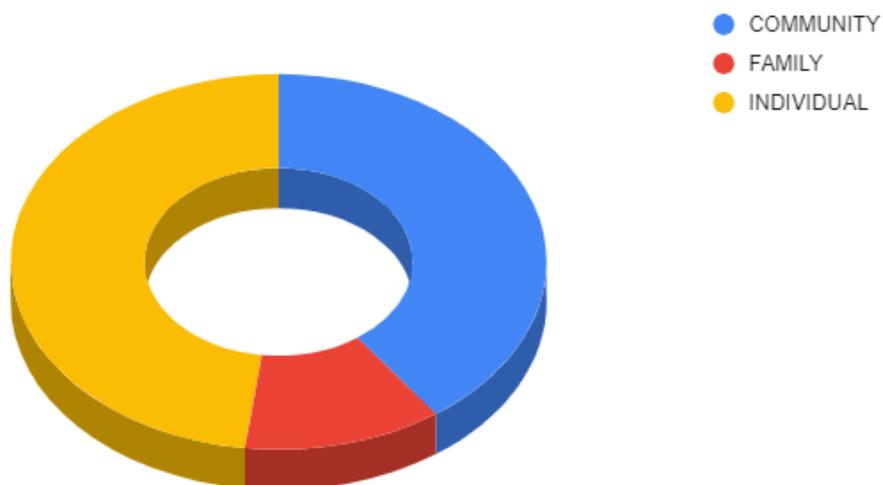
Persecution by Category



Persecution by Victim's Faith



Persecution by Victim Group



Featured stories

At Sriti O Chetona we strive to cover as many stories as possible. However, due to lack of resources we are not able to cover each and every story. Only a handful of the stories get published. The section contains a selection of the news reports on the persecution of minorities included in Sriti O Chetona Monthly report for February, 2023.

Magura: Hindu businessman beaten to death

A Hindu businessman, Ratan Bose was lynched in front of his family by Mohammed Alamgir and his gang. The deceased's family members said the victim had pleaded for his life and promised to repay the money he owed (“ও ভাই আমরা মাইরেন না, আমি টাকা দিয়ে দিবো”) but Mr Alamgir showed no mercy and killed him.



Distraught family members of Ratan Bose

Thakurgaon: Fourteen temples vandalized in a single night

Fourteen temples were vandalized on the night of 4th February in different villages of Baliadangi Upazila of Thakurgaon District. According to Baliadangi Upazila Puja Udjapan Parishad's General Secretary Bidyanath Barman, nine (9) temples in Dhantala, four (4) temples in Paria and one (1) temple in Charol were vandalized. He said the temples vandalized included five Manasa temples, two Lakshmi temples, one each of Krishna, Haribasar, and Kali temple. The *pratima* (statue) of the deities were broken and in some cases immersed in water (“প্রতিমাগুলোর হাত-পা, মাথা ভেঙে চূর্ণ-বিচূর্ণ করে ফেলেছে। আবার কিছু প্রতিমা ভেঙে পুকুরের পানিতে ফেলে রেখেছে।”)

Mahboor Rahaman, the District Magistrate and Police Superintendent Mohammed Jahangir Hossain visited the affected areas. Mr Hossain said the incidents seemed to be intentional and done with malicious intent of disrupting peace. He also assured that the perpetrators will be identified and punished according to the law. Police have been stationed at every temple that was vandalized.



Broken deity in Thakurgaon, Rangpur

Comilla: Science teacher dismissed for alleged blasphemy, fundamentalists demand death sentence

A Hindu teacher named Pritam Sarkar has been dismissed on accusation of blasphemy on 13th February. Sarkar was a teacher of Mosharof Hossain High School at Daudakhandi in Comilla District. It is alleged that Sarkar abused Prophet Mohammed and Islam while he was teaching.

An agitated mob surrounded his home and demanded he be hanged to death. The mob chanted Islamic religious slogans along with threats to physically harm the accused. Police later intervened and got the situation under control.

It is to be noted that since 2022 Hindu teachers have become an easy target of alleged blasphemy accusations by Islamic fundamentalists. Last month, on 29th January, Islamic fundamentalist mob had demanded a Hindu science teacher named Newton Sarkar from Abhoynagar, Jessore be hanged to death for blasphemy. That incident was posted in the January 2023 SoC monthly report.

ধর্ম অবমাননার ভূয়া অভিযোগ স্কুলশিক্ষক বরখাস্ত

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বরখাস্ত স্কুলশিক্ষক প্রীতম সরকার

কুমিল্লার দাউদকান্দিতে ধর্ম অবমাননার ভূয়া অভিযোগ তুলে প্রীতম সরকার নামক এক সংখ্যালঘু স্কুল শিক্ষককে সাময়িক বরখাস্ত করেছে স্কুলটির কর্তৃপক্ষ। উপজেলার নৈয়ার ড. খন্দকার মোশাররফ

Pritam Sarkar, Dismissed from position of school teacher for alleged blasphemy

Bhola: Excreta and waste thrown in two temples

On the night of 7th February, miscreants threw excreta and waste at the Ramnewaz Kalikanta Gutia Mandir and the Sitakunda Radha Gobinda Mandir at Manpura in Bhola District. Manpura Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ashish Kumar and Manpura Police Station Office-In-Charge Saidur Rahman visited the area. Subhash Das from the local temple committee demanded the perpetrators be identified and punished according to the law of the land. Local Union Chairman Amanutullah Alamgir assured that the area has religious tolerance and peace among communities and the guilty people would be identified and punished.



Rangpur: Paritosh Sarkar sentenced to eleven years of imprisonment on charges of blasphemy

Judge Dr. Mohammed Abdul Majid of Rangpur Cyber Tribunal handed out an eleven year imprisonment to Paritosh Sarkar for an allegedly blasphemous Facebook post on 17th October, 2021. In October 2021, there was an attack on houses and properties belonging to Hindu minority community in Pirganj, Ramnathpur Union. Paritosh had posted on Facebook condemning and criticizing the attack on Hindus. He was arrested the next day by Rangpur District Police. Later he was charged under the Digital Security Act. He admitted to posting provocative content on 19th October 2021.

Religious minority leaders opined that even though the majority population was responsible for the attack on the minority, people from the minority are eventually punished. That is the reason why they do not protest when religious minorities are tortured. Many political leaders are blurring the demarcation of minority and majority saying there is no term called minority. This is a ploy to either convert religious minorities or drive them out of the country. This attitude is actually encouraging Islamist fundamentalists to act against the people of religious minorities.



Paritosh Sarkar in court room flanked by police

Rajshahi: Awami League is building its party office on Hindu-owned land, acquired under Enemy Property Act

Ruling Awami League claims to be secular and a minority friendly party. However, when it comes to land grabbing of Hindu owned land under the guise of Enemy Property Act, they do not fall behind other political parties.

The elected official from Rajshahi-4 (Bagmara) constituency Enamul Haque of Awami League Party had purchased the 10 kathas of land in 2017 and is also spending BDT 2.5 crores to construct the 4,000 sq ft building on the plot, intended for the district Awami League party office.

However, in the meantime, Awami League had approached the district administration for land for their district office. They were given a piece of land measuring 14 decimals acquired via Enemy Property Act.

Currently both Enamul Haque's building and property in Rani Bazar acquired through the Enemy Property Act has banners declaring it to be the district party office. The party officials were not reachable for any comment.



Bangladesh: Attacked by Islamist militants tribal Christians from CHT seek refuge in Mizoram

Around 500 Bangladeshi Christians have taken refuge in Mizoram, India, after an attack by the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamist militant group Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya (JAFHS) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area. JAFHS is a new militant organization whose members have undergone training with the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF).



Bangladeshi Christians in Mizoram refugee camp in February 2023



Sriti O Chetona stands for 'memories and consciousness' - memories of the once vibrant Hindu life and culture in East Bengal and the consciousness about the present plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. Sriti O Chetona is a not for profit project that regularly monitors and reports the ongoing incidents of persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

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