



**BANGLADESH HINDU PERSECUTION  
MONTHLY REPORT  
JANUARY 2023**

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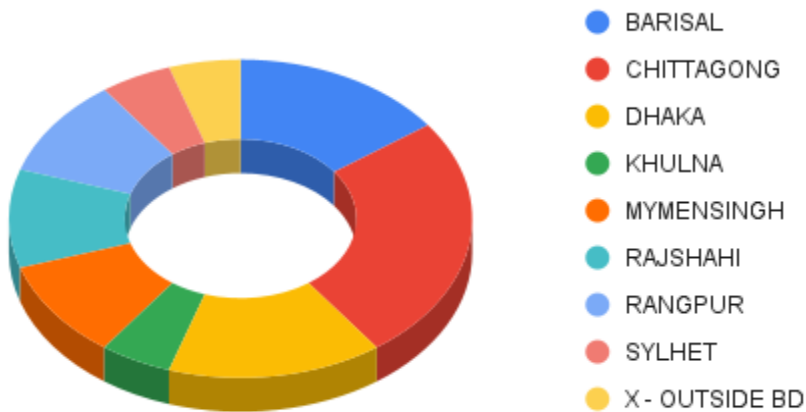
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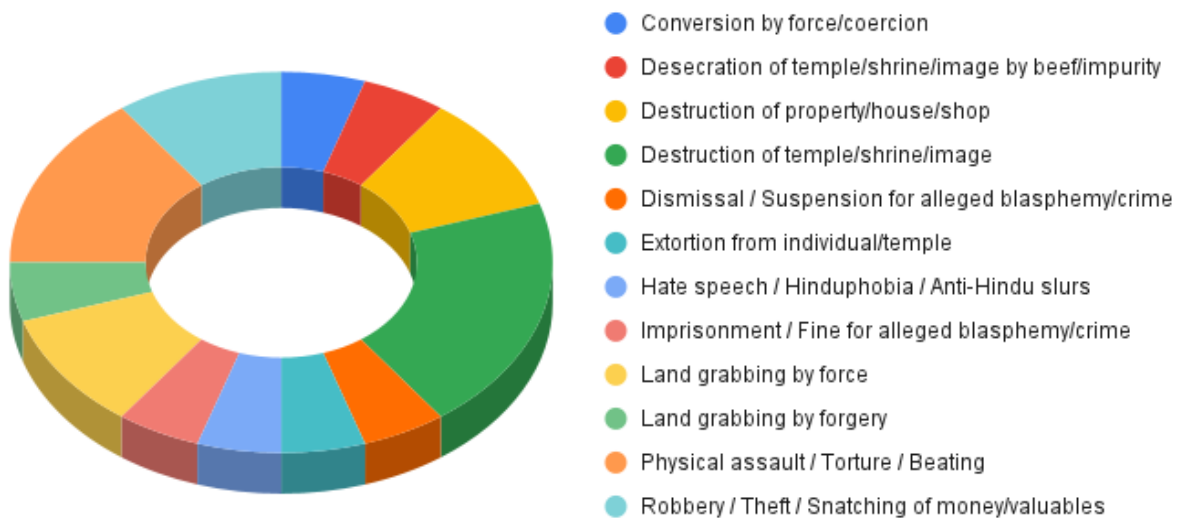
In January 2023, the plight of minorities in Bangladesh continued to worsen, with Hindus and indigenous populations facing acts of aggression such as looting, destruction, kidnapping, murder, and even forced conversion to Islam. This report provides an overview of the atrocities committed against these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

## Overview

### Persecution by Division



### Persecution by Category



## 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 published at Sriti O Chetona in January, 2023.

### **Bangladesh: Hindu activist sentenced to seven years imprisonment for blasphemy**

A court in Sylhet has sentenced Hindu activist Rakesh Roy, former Sylhet divisional organizing secretary of the Hindu Mahazot, to seven years rigorous imprisonment and fined him one lakh takas for insulting Prophet Muhammad, prophet of Islam, on social media Facebook.

The announcement was made on Tuesday (January 3) at noon by the judge Abul Kashem of Cyber Tribunal Sylhet Court. Mustafa Dilwar Al Azhar, the Cyber Tribunal Sylhet PP (Acting), confirmed the news to Sylhetview. Rakesh, who was on bail, was present in the court when the verdict was announced and was immediately sent to jail.

### **Bharatiya Hindu Girl Seeks Help After Conversion to Islam in Bangladesh**

A Bharatiya Hindu girl, Amrita Datta, who was studying in Bangladesh, has sought help from Bangladeshi Hindus after converting to Islam and marrying a Muslim boy named Abdul. Amrita, who now goes by the name Mehazabien Chowdhury, stated that she was facing physical abuse in her marriage.

According to the affidavit, Amrita is the daughter of Goutam Datta Chaudhuri from Kolkata and is currently living in the Dhaka National Medical College Hostel. Her date of birth is 05.03.1999.

The case has highlighted and raised the issue of “love jihad,” where a non-Muslim girl is targeted and forced to convert to Islam. Amrita has urged people to be aware of such cases and to ensure that women are protected from religious conversion and abuse.

## Barisal: Islamists allege blasphemy, attack and loot Hindu shop

Islamists are finding new ways to torture Hindus in Bangladesh. In continuation of this, this time on January 10, in the area adjacent to the Barisal river port (the old launch ghat), local Islamists attacked and looted the Ghosh Sweets store on the false accusation of insulting Islam.

Onlookers and locals said Saurabh Dhali, a Muslim employee of a shop in Haji Mohammad Mohsin Market, had his breakfast at the Ghosh Sweets store. After eating, he tries to leave the shop without paying for the food. At that time, an employee of that shop asked the accused Muslim youth, Saurabh Dhali, to pay the money due for the food. But the accused, Sourav, started beating the shop clerk without paying the money.

At one point, the accused Muslim youth came out of the shop and started complaining that the Hindu employee of Ghosh Sweets had deliberately pulled his beard. After that, the local Islamist crowd gathered at the place and attacked and looted the Hindu shop.

## Chandpur: AL leader occupy Hindu property

In the Chandpur district of Bangladesh, a student leader of the government party has once again been accused of forcibly occupying the land of the Hindu community. The accused, Ibrahim Mia, is convener of the Chhatra League of the Kachua Bangabandhu Government Degree College Branch in Chandpur district. Ibrahim Mia has been accused of encroaching on the land of the Hindu community of Basabaria village in the upazila.

The victim, Hindu Uttam Sarkar, mentioned in the complaint that about two months ago, a police complaint was filed against his brother, Sushil Sarkar, due to a land dispute. Later, with the help of local individuals, the dispute was settled by registering 3484.8 square feet of land to Sushil Sarkar, Priyalal Sarkar, and Uttam Sarkar.

After that, the accused, Mohammad Ibrahim Mia, took the signature of Uttam Sarkar on 3 blank stamps, saying that he had to withdraw the complaint from the police station. At some point on Saturday night, Ibrahim built a bamboo fence in the middle of the property in order to fill and occupy the land, hidden from public view.

## Bangladesh: Islamic fundamentalists vandalize Saraswati *vigraha*

Attacks by Islamic fundamentalists on the Hindu community in Bangladesh are increasing. In the first month of the year, the *vighra* of Devi Saraswati was vandalized in the Netrakona district of Bangladesh. During this time, the attackers vandalized several *vighras* of Saraswati.

It is known that the attack took place in the Sarbajaneen temple of Purbadhala Bazar in Netrokona, Bangladesh. The attacker took advantage of the temple being empty yesterday evening. The footage of the temple's CCTV camera was checked to detect the vandalism of the Vighras. During this time, the suspected Islamist attacker was seen in the video footage.

The temple's CCTV footage shows the suspected Islamist attacker, dressed in a lungi, sneaking into the temple in the evening. At one point, he stood in front of the Saraswati Vighras kept in the temple and then started vandalizing the Saraswati Vighras one by one. After vandalizing several *vighras*, the suspected Islamist attacker fled the temple premises at one point.

## Noakhali: Muslim man demands *pranami* money as extortion

Police have arrested a man in Noakhali's Begumganj Upazila of Bangladesh for allegedly harassing a Brahmin belonging to the minority Hindu community, including demanding extortion money from him. The arrested Kazi Nayan (52) is the son of deceased Kazi Tofail Ahmad of Kadirpur village, Ward No. 5 of Kadirpur Union No. 16 of Upazila.

Begumganj Police Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mir Jahedul Haque Rony confirmed the matter on Saturday, January 21, at around 7 p.m. He said that the arrested accused was handed over to the Noakhali Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court on Friday afternoon.

Earlier, the main accused in the case was arrested by the police from Kadirpur village, Ward number 5 of Kadirpur Union of the upazila, on the basis of a verbal complaint at around 2 p.m. on Thursday. According to the police, last Friday, January 20, the victim, Gopal Chakraborty (67), filed a case accusing four people of attempted murder, extortion, arson, theft, and intimidation.

## **Jessore: Hindu teacher suspended over alleged blasphemy**

A Hindu school teacher has been temporarily suspended by the authorities for allegedly insulting Islam in Abhaynagar, Jessore district, Bangladesh. Upazila secondary education officer Shahidul Islam said this on Sunday afternoon.

The dismissed Newton Sarkar is a biology teacher at the Deyapara Model Secondary School in Abhaynagar Upazila. His house is in Bahadurpur village, Manirampur upazila, Jessore.

Some of the students of the school said that on Sunday afternoon, when they went to Deyapara Model Secondary School, they saw students, parents, local residents, and hundreds of leaders and workers of various Islamic religious organizations protesting against the teacher in the school grounds. Eighth grade students allege that last Wednesday (January 25), while taking science class, Hindu teacher Newton Sarkar made offensive comments about Islam and the Prophet. Later he was dismissed by the authority.



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.

<https://www.sritiochetona.org>

[sritiochetona@gmail.com](mailto:sritiochetona@gmail.com)