

Bangladesh Development Initiative

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Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI)

Press Release

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The Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI), a non-partisan and non-profit research and advocacy group based in the United States, strongly condemns the murder of Jogeswar Dasadhikari, the priest at the temple in Shonapota, Debiganj, in Panchagarh, and attacks on devotees at the temple. Our hearts go out to the family of the priest and the other victims, the Hindu community, and people in the area, as we stand in solidarity with them.

There are no words sufficient to condemn this atrocity. No murder is acceptable in a civilized society and this one appears particularly heinous since, according to news reports, the priest was arranging his offerings for the morning puja when the killers lured him out and struck. We urge the authorities to conduct a thorough and speedy investigation to bring the criminals to justice.

We also note that there have been several other attacks on members of other faith traditions within the country. This includes attacks on the places of worship of Shias, Ahmaddiyas, and the Buddhists.

We urge all segments of the Bangladeshi society, leaders and members of all faiths and creeds, to raise their voices strongly against these atrocities. Bangladesh's majority community has a special responsibility to condemn such actions and help preserve the rights of the country's minority segments. Bangladesh was founded on the idea of secularism and religious tolerance, which holds that everyone should be allowed to practice their religion in peace and harmony.

These incidents involving violence and intolerance bring shame and disrepute to our nation. While some quarters are in denial regarding the rise of extremism in the country, recent attacks on religious minorities, bloggers/publishers, and foreigners, have already tarnished the country's good name. These incidents undermine the national compact that we Bangladeshis have with one another, in addition to violating the constitution, law, and human decency.

However, the principle at stake is greater than merely a country's image, and the national compact. Such incidents violate a basic premise of human civilization, namely, the right of all people to life and liberty.

BDI is a non-profit corporation promoting socio-economic development in Bangladesh.