

Regarding protection of religious freedom in Odisha

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA): Thank you, hon. Chairperson. I wish to draw the attention of this House to a disturbing incident reported from Dhenkanal district of Odisha relating to the assault and public humiliation of a pastor, Shri Bipin Bihari Naik, in the first week of January 2026.

It has been officially stated that nine persons have been detained following the incident, after the victims wife approached the Dhenkanal SP, citing inaction by the local police for nearly a week. ... *(Interruptions)* Such a delay in initiating action raises serious concerns regarding law enforcement at the grassroots level. ... *(Interruptions)*

Family members and local sources have alleged that the pastor was publicly paraded and humiliated, including being garlanded with slippers and forced to eat cow dung before being handed over to the police. ... *(Interruptions)*

Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of religion and Article 21 guarantees the right to life with dignity. Allegations of religious conversion cannot justify mob action, public humiliation or a delayed police response.

I seek a statement from the Government on measures taken to ensure accountability for lapses, timely registration of FIRs and protection of religious freedom. ... *(Interruptions)*

माननीय सभापति: डॉ. निशिकान्त दुबे ।