





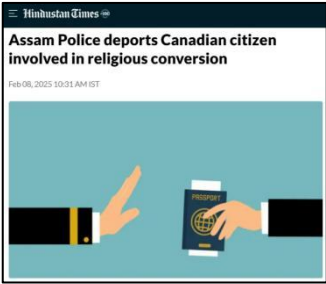


17 Incidents: involvement of foreign nationals in evangelical conversions in Bharat (2017-2025)



This report has compiled **17 major incidents** involving foreign nationals engaged in **evangelical and religious conversion activities** across Bharat between 2017 and 2025.

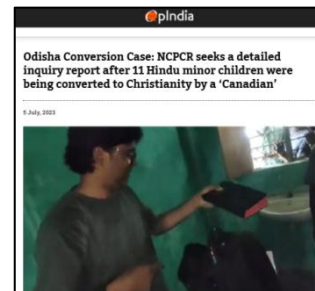

October 4, 2025, The Thane Rural Police in Bhiwandi, Maharashtra, booked **three individuals**, including an American **national James Watson**, for attempting to convert local **Hindus to Christianity**. The other accused have been identified as Sainath Ganpati Sarpe from Palghar, and Manoj Govind Kolha from Bhiwandi.




S.No	Incidents	Visuals/Source
1.	<p>American National Arrested in Maharashtra for Attempted Forced Religious Conversion</p> <p>Date: 4 October 2025 Location: Bhiwandi, Thane, Maharashtra Name and Country where the accused belongs: James Watson, USA Victims: Local Hindu villagers</p> <p>Incident: James Watson, a 58-year-old American national, along with two Maharashtra residents, organized a religious gathering where derogatory remarks were made about Hinduism, promoting conversion to Christianity and claiming illnesses could be cured through prayers to Jesus Christ. Books related to Christianity were recovered.</p> <p>Action: James Watson and his associates, Ganpati Sarpe (42) and Manoj Govind Kolha (35), were arrested by Bhiwandi police under sections 299 and 302 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita.</p>	 <p>Financial Express Live Hindustan</p>
2.	<p>US National and Local Resident Arrested for Attempted Religious Conversion in Pimpri</p> <p>Date: 28 July 2025 Location: Pimpri, Maharashtra Name and Country where the accused belongs: Schaefer Javin Jacob (USA) Victims: Locals of Pimpri</p> <p>Incident: Schaefer Javin Jacob, a 41-year-old US national, and Steven Kadam, a 46-year-old Pimpri resident, attempted to convert a local man to Christianity by promising "happiness, peace, wealth, and good mental health" and offering future financial assistance.</p> <p>A 16-year-old boy accompanied them but was handed over to his mother. Investigations revealed Jacob had been visiting Bharat on business and tourist visas since 2016, but was not engaged in any business activities.</p> <p>Action: The accused were arrested by Pimpri Chinchwad police and booked under Section 299 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Jacob was</p>	 <p>VSRS News Times of India</p>



	additionally charged under the Foreigners Act for violating visa norms.	
3.	<p>Foreign National Booked in Indore for Attempted Religious Conversion</p> <p>Date: 6 June 2025 Location: Indore, Madhya Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Stephen Biju Paul Victims: Rajesh Patel and Shyam</p> <p>Incident: Rajesh Patel reported to the Vijay Nagar police station that while he and his friend Shyam were visiting Malhar Mega Mall, they encountered a foreign national, Stephen Biju Paul, along with 7-8 other foreigners. Stephen made derogatory remarks about Hinduism and attempted to lure them into converting to Christianity by offering money and other benefits. He asked them to drink "holy water" from a church, claiming it would lead to their conversion.</p> <p>Action: Based on the complaint, Vijay Nagar Police registered a case against Stephen Biju Paul under relevant sections of the law. Police have recorded statements from several foreign nationals and are investigating their backgrounds and visa status.</p>	 <p>ETV Bharat Dainik Bhaskar</p>
4.	<p>Christian Missionary Booked for Attempting Forced Conversions of Bhil Tribals in Rajasthan</p> <p>Date: 23 April 2025 Location: Motipura Village, Kaithoon Police Station, Kota, Rajasthan Name and Country where the accused belongs: Colin (USA) Victims: Bhil tribal community members</p> <p>Incident: Joy Mathew, a Christian missionary, was accused of attempting to convert members of the Bhil tribal community to Christianity in Motipura village by offering financial aid, food supplies, and housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Joy Mathew encouraged villagers to discard Hindu idols and participate in Christian rituals, promising rewards and opportunities to travel abroad. ✧ Main accused son-in-law, Colin, an American citizen, participated in these activities, violating the terms of his tourist visa. <p>Action: Kaithoon police registered an FIR (158/2025) against Joy Mathew under sections 299 and 351(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and SC/ST Act violations. A separate case under the Foreigners Act was filed against Colin.</p>	 <p>Live Hindustan Organiser</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>Canadian Citizen Deported from Bharat for Involvement in Religious Conversion in Assam</p> <p>Date: 7 February 2025 Location: Jorhat, Assam Name and Country where the accused belongs: Brandon Joel Dewalt, Canada Victims: Locals</p> <p>Incident: Brandon Joel Dewalt, a Canadian national, was found conducting evangelical activities in Jorhat, Assam, on an expired tourist visa.</p> <p>Accused was operating the Grace Church at Mission Campus and addressing religious gatherings, promoting Christianity as part of his proselytization efforts.</p> <p>Action: Jorhat Police submitted an adverse report to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) in Kolkata.</p> <p>✧ The FRRO issued a 'Leave India Notice,' and Dewalt was handed over to FRRO personnel. He was subsequently deported from New Delhi to Canada.</p>	 <p>Hindustan Times NDTV</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Taiwanese National Detained in Indrapuri Over Religious Conversion</p> <p>Date: 22 September 2024 Location: Mathura, Uttar Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Taiwanese National Victims: NA</p> <p>Incident: A Taiwanese national and around a dozen others were detained for questioning after they were holding a meeting for religious conversion in Indrapuri Colony. Pamphlets and gatherings were found.</p> <p>Action: The police questioned all individuals involved and stated that further action would be taken only if evidence of religious conversion was found.</p>	 <p>Deccan Herald</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Two US Nationals Penalized in Assam for Violating Tourist Visa by Preaching Christianity</p> <p>Date: 4 February 2024 Location: Tezpur, Assam Name and Country where the accused belongs: John Matthew Boone (USA), Michael James Flinchum (USA) Victims: NA</p> <p>Incident: John Matthew Boone (64) and Michael James Flinchum (77), both US citizens, were found attending public events</p>	 <p>The Indian Express Assam Tribune</p>

	<p>promoting Christianity in Tezpur while on tourist visas, which prohibit participation in religious activities.</p> <p>They were specifically present at the inauguration of the North Bank Baptist Christian Association office at the Baptist Mission Complex on 31 January 2024.</p> <p>Action: The duo was fined US\$500 (Rs. 41,486) each by Sonitpur Police and allowed to leave Assam after paying the penalty. A General Diary case (No. 03/2024) was recorded against them at the Kacharigaon police outpost.</p>	
8.	<p>US National Involved in Christian Proselytization and Anti-Hindu Hate Speech in Manipur</p> <p>Date: 17 August 2023 Location: Manipur Name and Country where the accused belongs: Daniel Stephen Courney, USA Victims: Local Community</p> <p>Incident: Daniel Stephen Courney, a US national previously deported and blacklisted in 2017, entered Bharat on a tourist visa and engaged in proselytization in Manipur under the pretext of social service, distributing blankets, mattresses, and cooking vessels. He preached Christianity, distributed Bibles, and delivered hate speech against Hindus and the Indian government, while influencing locals in refugee camps. Courney had previously stayed in Bharat for over a decade, participating in religious conversion activities in Andhra Pradesh.</p> <p>Action: Courney was previously found guilty on two charges of violating public order with racial and religious motivations in 2018. In 2021, the accused was apprehended for using a drone to spy on an abortion clinic in Colorado and was prohibited from approaching it. The accused was also charged under the state's anti-bias intimidation law for shouting homophobic rhetoric outside a salon.</p>	 <p>OpIndia</p>
9.	<p>Nepali Nationals Among 11 Arrested in Himachal Pradesh for Promoting Christianity</p> <p>Date: 11 July 2023 Location: Rampur Bushahar, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Several participants from Nepal Victims: Local Hindu passengers and community members</p> <p>Incident: Passengers travelling from Shimla to Delhi on an HRTC bus were found promoting Christianity and distributing Bibles at the Rampur old bus stand. The group had travelled from Nepal to</p>	 <p>Organiser OpIndia</p>

	<p>attend a 26-day religious camp in the Bahali gram panchayat area.</p> <p>Action: Upon receiving complaints from local Hindu activists, police detained the individuals and discovered a large number of Bibles and religious materials.</p>	
10.	<p>Canadian National Booked for Attempted Conversion of Tribal Children in Odisha</p> <p>Date: 24 June 2023 Location: Tirtol, Odisha Name and Country where the accused belongs: Eapen Mohan Kidangalil, Canada Victims: Poor tribal children, including 11 minors</p> <p>Incident: Eapen Mohan Kidangalil was caught by Vishwa Hindu Parishad members while luring tribal children under the pretext of a "Prarthana Sabha" and attempting to convert them to Christianity. Two other Christian missionaries were present and assisting him.</p> <p>Authorities seized a Bible, a tourist visa, cash, medicines (potentially for drugging minors), and a non-registered white Bolero car used to transport around 40 tribal people, including 11 minors, to the event.</p> <p>Action: Police registered an FIR against him under Section 4 of the Odisha Freedom of Religion Act, 1967.</p>	 <p>OpIndia</p>
11.	<p>Australian-American Evangelist Booked for Proselytizing in Telangana University</p> <p>Date: 30 January 2023 Location: Malla Reddy University, Maisammaguda, Hyderabad, Telangana Name and Country where the accused belongs: Nicholas James Vujicic, Australia/USA Victims: NA</p> <p>Incident: Nicholas James Vujicic, an Australian-American Christian evangelist and motivational speaker, was scheduled to hold a "motivational meeting" on the campus of Malla Reddy University. While advertised as motivational, the session included religious preaching.</p> <p>Action: A complaint was lodged by the Hindu group Shiva Shakthi, prompting the Petbasheerabad Police to reach the venue. The Legal Right Protection Forum (LRPF) also filed a complaint with the regional FRRO, claiming that Vujicic violated Indian visa norms by conducting religious activities. The speaker is known for his strong Christian beliefs and missionary agenda, often embedded within his public motivational engagements.</p>	 <p>Hindu Post The Communemag</p>

12.	<p>Brazilian Couple Booked in Sitapur for Attempting Forced Conversions with Foreign Tourists</p> <p>Date: 19 December 2022 Location: Sehbajpur Village, Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Rivaldo Jose DaSilva, Magnolia Maro Laronzera, Gulheram Nasimento Edalgo, Alexander DaSilva (Brazil) Victims: Local villagers of Sehbajpur</p> <p>Incident: David and Rohini Asthana, along with Brazilian tourists, visited Sehbajpur village and attempted to force villagers to convert to Christianity.</p> <p>Action: An FIR was lodged by a resident. David Asthana was arrested, and a case was registered against the couple under the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act.</p> <p>✧ Police also questioned the foreign tourists and recorded statements from villagers. Investigation is Underway.</p>	 <p>Opindia Times of India</p>
13.	<p>Seven German Nationals Detained in Assam for Violating Tourist Visa by Preaching Christianity</p> <p>Date: 28 October 2022 Location: Kaziranga, Golaghat District, Assam Name and Country where the accused belongs: Christian Reiser, Michael Erich Schaper, Merten Asmus, Cornelia Von Oneimb, Hinrich Luppen-Von Oneimb, Christa Olearius, Lisa Aimee Bloem (Germany) Victims: NA</p> <p>Incident: Seven German nationals visiting Assam on tourist visas were found delivering religious speeches at church-organized events across multiple districts.</p> <p>An Indian, Mukut Bodra from Jharkhand, was also detained with them. The preachers violated visa norms, as tourist visas do not allow participation in religious activities.</p> <p>Action: The group was detained under Section 14 of the Foreigners Act and fined \$500 each.</p>	 <p>Opindia</p>
14.	<p>Three Swedish Nationals Detained in Assam for Attempting Religious Conversion</p> <p>Date: 27 October 2022 Location: Naharkatia, Dibrugarh District, Assam Name and Country where the accused belongs: Hannah Mikaela Bloom, Marcus Arne Henrik Bloom, Susanna Elisabeth Hakanason (Sweden) Victims: Local residents of Naharkatia, Assam</p>	 <p>India Today</p>

	<p>Incident: Three Swedish nationals entered Assam on tourist visas to attend a "Peace and Healing Prayer Festival" organized by United Churches Fellowship and Bless Assam Mission Network.</p> <p>✧ During the event, they delivered religious sermons to convert locals to Christianity, which violated the terms of their tourist visas.</p> <p>Action: The trio was booked under Section 14 of the Foreigners Act. After questioning, they were sent to Delhi and deported to Sweden following coordination between Indian and Swedish authorities.</p>	
15.	<p>US National Accused of Religious Conversion Activities in Andhra Pradesh</p> <p>Date: 15 July 2022 Location: Guntur, Andhra Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Scott Alan Norling, USA Victims: Local Indian residents and communities targeted for religious conversion</p> <p>Incident: Scott Alan Norling, a US citizen and one of the founders of Bethel Bible College in Guntur, was accused of violating Indian visa regulations and engaging in religious conversion activities. Norling conducted missionary work through the Gospel Mission of India, an FCRA-registered NGO in Guntur, which receives major foreign funding from the Gospel Mission of Minnesota, USA.</p> <p>Action: Scott Alan Norling was accused by the LRPf of violating visa rules by engaging in religious activities on a business visa, prompting a petition to the Home Ministry for action under the Foreigners Act, 1946.</p>	 <p>The Communemag</p>
16.	<p>South Korean National Arrested in Greater Noida for Pressuring Families to Convert</p> <p>Date: 19 December 2020 Location: Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Mu Cu Lee (South Korea)</p> <p>Incident: Mu Cu Lee, a South Korean national, along with three Indian associates, were involved in pressuring two families in Greater Noida to convert to Christianity.</p> <p>Over six months, the accused financially supported the families and then began urging them to attend church and abandon their religious idols.</p> <p>Action: The four suspects were arrested following police intervention and booked under Section 295-A of the IPC and Sections 3/5(1) of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020.</p>	 <p>Hindustan Times Aajtak</p>

17.	<p>Seven Foreign Nationals Detained in Saharanpur for Promoting Christianity</p> <p>Date: 7 September 2017 Location: Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh Name and Country where the accused belongs: Seven foreign nationals from South Korea and Malaysia Victims: Local non-Christian families</p> <p>Incident: Seven foreign citizens found operating under the cover of night and targeting local non-Christian families.</p> <p>Action: The accused were on tourist visas, detained, and interrogated. Police confirmed that promoting religion is not allowed under tourist visa norms.</p>	 <p>OneIndia</p>
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