

## **Islamic State kills Italian man in Dhaka's diplomatic zone, claims presence in Bangladesh**

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**Dhaka:** An Italian aid worker has been shot dead in a high security diplomatic area here, the first attack in Bangladesh claimed by the dreaded Islamic State terror group that has prompted many western embassies to restrict the movements of their diplomats.

Cesare Tavella, 50, was shot three times from a close proximity last evening in Dhaka's Gulshan diplomatic zone while he was jogging, a police spokesman said. The attackers fled the scene after Tavella fell to the ground. He was rushed to a nearby private hospital where doctors declared him dead, police added.

According to spokesman, Tavella was working for the Netherlands-based ICCO Cooperation as manager of its Profitable Opportunities for Food Security (PROOFS) project.

"One bullet hit his left hand. He was also shot twice on his back. One of those bullets pierced through his chest," forensic expert Qazi Md Abu Shama was quoted as saying.

One of the witnesses of the murder, a rickshaw mechanic, said he saw three assailants fleeing on a motorcycle. One of them was wielding a gun.

"We are not clear who killed him but we think it was a preplanned murder," Dhaka's police commissioner Ohiduzzaman Mian told reporters.

Another official confirmed that the killers did not take away the moneybag or his cell phone, indicating that the murder was not carried out by ordinary muggers.

In a statement issued in Arabic, the Islamic State (ISIS) claimed that it killed Cesare, SITE Intelligence Group said.

Security officials here said this could be the militant group's first attack in Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh home minister Asaduzzaman Khan said authorities had found no evidence that the ISIS was involved in the killing.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the murder, the US, the UK and Canada have warned their diplomats and citizens of militant attacks in Bangladesh, asking them to remain alert.

The directives came on Tuesday, a day after the UK issued a travel alert where it claimed militants may be targeting western interests in Bangladesh.

"Militants may be targeting western interests in Bangladesh in late September; UK officials have been advised to limit attendance at events where westerners may gather," the UK high commission said.

The US authorities prohibited all official government personnel from attending large gatherings, including events at international hotels in Bangladesh until further notice, unless they have obtained regional security office permission.

Citing the alerts issued by Australia and the UK, Canadian high commission in Dhaka this morning issued travel alert for its citizens, according to a statement issued by the Canadian government.

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