

## **US issues travel alert to its citizens for Bangladesh**

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**Washington:** The US has issued a travel alert for Bangladesh and asked its citizens to exercise appropriate caution and maintain a high level of vigilance during their travel to the country, citing "recent violent attacks".

"There is reliable information to suggest that terrorist attacks could occur against foreigners in Bangladesh, including against large gatherings of foreigners," the State Department said in a travel advisory issued on Monday.

"The Department of State alerts US citizens to concerns about the ongoing potential for extremist violence in Bangladesh. US citizens who travel to Bangladesh are urged to exercise appropriate caution and maintain a high level of vigilance in light of recent violent attacks," it said. Although thousands of US citizens visit each year without incident, US citizens residing in or travelling to Bangladesh are urged to exercise caution while in the country, it added.

State Department said since September, Bangladesh has experienced violent attacks directed at individual foreigners and minority communities, including the September 28 murder of an Italian national, the October 3 murder of a Japanese national, and the October 24 bombings of a religious procession of Shia Muslims.

The Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) publicly claimed all three attacks.

Additionally, during 2015 there has been a series of threats and terrorist attacks targeting writers, publishers, and others in the media, including the murder of a US citizen blogger.

"The US government assesses that the terrorist threat remains real and credible, and further attacks are possible," the State Department said.

Six writers and bloggers have been hacked to death in Bangladesh in the past two and half years, five of them since January this year with families and friends of the deceased alleging failure on the part of police in bringing perpetrators to justice.

Bangladesh-born US writer Avijit Roy was hacked to death by unidentified assailants on February 26. Blogger Washiqur Rahman was murdered in central Dhaka on March 30. Writer and blogger Ananta Bijoy Das was killed in a similar attack in northeastern city of Sylhet on May 12.

Two foreigners - Cesare Tavella and a 66-year-old Japanese farmer have also been killed in the last two months. Their murders were claimed by IS.

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