

# Suicide bombing

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government soldiers were killed in a suicide car bombing and gun attack in the country's east yesterday, state news agency SABA reported.

The attacks occurred just hours after a political showdown between the Houthis and President Abd-Rabbu Mansour led to the resignation of Prime Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, whose appointment on Tuesday had angered Houthi leaders.

A policeman guarding a local bank near Tahrir Square in central Sanaa, said a man apparently wearing a suicide belt approached the Houthi checkpoint.

"He then exploded amidst the [Houthi] security and ordinary people nearby," the policemen told Reuters.

In Buruum, a coastal region of the eastern Hadramout province, a suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives towards an army camp, while gunmen tried to storm the facility, a local official and witnesses said. The soldiers beat back the attackers, but SABA said 20 of the troops were killed.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but the incidents appear to mirror previous bombings carried out by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which has targeted state institutions, including the armed forces, and which sees members of the minority Zaydi sect of Shia Islam as heretics.

Western and Gulf Arab countries are worried that instability in Yemen could strengthen al Qaeda and have supported a UN-backed political transition since 2012 led by Hadi meant to shepherd the country to stability after decades of autocracy.

**PROTEST**

A new Yemeni government is due to be appointed under a power-sharing accord signed last month aimed at bringing the Houthis into government. Once a new administration is nominated the Houthis are meant to withdraw their forces from the city,

allowing the army and police to resume their duties.

The Houthis on Wednesday rejected Hadi's nomination of bin Mubarak as prime minister, and bin Mubarak announced early on Thursday he had agreed not to take up the position.

Houthi followers had been preparing to demonstrate in Tahrir Square yesterday to voice opposition to the nomination of bin Mubarak, previously the head of Hadi's office, on the grounds that his selection had been imposed by Washington. The United States has denied the allegation.

The Houthis said the protest would proceed despite the attack, and thousands of supporters, some armed, converged on the square chanting slogans against the government and corruption.

"This terrorist attack would not deter us from holding this demonstration," a local organiser told Reuters.

**'UNACCEPTABLE MISTAKE'**

The Houthis said they had foiled another attack by two cars on the square earlier in the morning, destroying one vehicle, while attackers in a second car managed to escape.

The Houthi capture of Sanaa has alarmed Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter which shares a long border with Yemen, and other conservative Gulf Arab states.

On Wednesday evening, Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi called for mass protests against "foreign interference" he said was behind the appointment of bin Mubarak.

"I assert that together with these marches tomorrow, God willing there will be important steps that will contribute to correcting this mistake, which is an unacceptable mistake," Houthi said.

SABA said that Hadi accepted bin Mubarak's decision to turn down the appointment and resumed consultations to agree on a new prime minister.



Seven persons arrested in connection with a Joypurhat bank heist are paraded before the media at the Rab headquarters in the capital yesterday. They were caught in possession of Tk 56 lakh. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# Mastermind, 6 others held, Tk 56 lakh seized

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MK Quddusur Rahman Bulu, ex-ansar member Swapan Debnath, and his nephews Anup Chandra Pandit and Plaban Chandra Pandit.

Anup and Plaban didn't take part in the heist. They were arrested for possessing Tk 10 lakh of the robbed money they got from their uncle Swapan, according to Rab.

Of the nine who committed the robbery, Taj Mahmud, Nawsher, Iqbal and Islam are on the run, said Rab.

Meanwhile, Abdur Rashid, officer-

in-charge of Joypurhat Sadar Police Station, told this correspondent that police arrested Iqbal Huda Iku with Tk 9 lakh of the robbed money from Kushtia on Wednesday.

Rab, however, couldn't confirm whether he was the same Iqbal, who had been involved in the robbery.

Raja is an accused in several cases filed for burglaries, including the one at Brac Bank's Kalabagan branch in 2002, according to Rab.

As Raja and his 20 accomplices failed to unlock the bank's vault, they looted gold ornaments weighing 250

tolas from a drawer at the bank.

Raja, who was arrested several times in different cases, got acquainted with Shamim at Dhaka Central Jail in 2008, said Rab.

Though the bank officials claimed the criminals took away Tk 1.96 crore, the arrestees told Rab officials that they robbed Tk 1.63 crore from the bank's vault.

During primary interrogation, the arrestees said Raja took Tk 31 lakh, Shamim 33 lakh, Islam 12.5 lakh, Taj 8 lakh, Bulu and Iqbal 33 lakh, Swapan 18 lakh, Nawsher 14 lakh and Badal Tk

9 lakh.

Leaving aside the notes of smaller denominations, the gang took only Tk 500 and Tk 1,000 notes from the bank's vault and divided the money among themselves at their rented office room, said Rab.

Md Hasanuzzaman, an official of the bank's SME section, discovered the heist as he entered the branch office around 10:00am on September 27.

He saw the vault open and the money gone, Joypurhat police had said earlier quoting him.

# ISIS seizes large part of Syrian town

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Kobani overnight and a stray projectile landed 3 km (2 miles) inside Turkey. The US-led coalition carried out several airstrikes yesterday and sporadic gunfire from the besieged town was audible.

The United Nations says only a few hundred inhabitants remain in Kobani but the town's defenders say the battle will end in a massacre if Islamic State prevails, giving it a strategic garrison on the Turkish border.

They complain that the United States is giving only token support through the air strikes, while Turkish tanks sent to the frontier are looking on but doing nothing to defend the town.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu played down the likelihood of those forces going to the aid of

Kobani.

"It is not realistic to expect Turkey to conduct a ground operation on its own," he told a joint news conference with visiting Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg. However, he added: "We are holding talks.... Once there is a common decision, Turkey will not hold back from playing its part."

Ankara resents any suggestion from Washington that it is not pulling its weight, but wants broader joint action that also targets the forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. "We strongly reject allegations of Turkish responsibility for the ISIS advance," said a senior Ankara government source.

"Our allies, especially the US administration, dragged their feet for a very long time before deciding to take action against the catastrophic events

happening in Syria," he added.

Turkey has long advocated action against Assad during the civil war, which grew out of a popular uprising in 2011. However, the United States called off air strikes on Damascus government forces at the last minute last year when Assad agreed to give up his chemical weapons.

President Tayyip Erdogan says he wants the US-led alliance to enforce a "no-fly zone" to prevent Assad's air force flying over Syrian territory near the Turkish border and create a safe area for an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey to return.

But Stoltenberg said that establishing a no-fly zone or a safe zone inside Syria has not been discussed by Nato.

**TURKISH CLASHES**

At least 21 people died in the mainly Kurdish southeast of Turkey on

Wednesday during clashes between security forces and Kurds demanding that the government do more to help Kobani. There were also clashes in Istanbul and Ankara.

In Washington, the Pentagon cautioned on Wednesday that there are limits to what the air strikes can do in Syria before Western-backed, moderate Syrian opposition forces are strong enough to repel Islamic State.

Islamic State has also seized large areas of territory in neighbouring Iraq, where the United States has focused its air attacks on the militants.

President Barack Obama has ruled out sending US ground forces on a combat mission, and Secretary of State John Kerry offered little hope to Kobani's defenders on Wednesday. "As horrific as it is to watch in real time what is happening in Kobani ... you

have to step back and understand the strategic objective," he said.

In Turkey, the fallout from the war in Syria and Iraq has threatened to unravel the NATO member's delicate peace process with its Kurdish community. Ankara has long been suspicious of any Kurdish assertiveness which puts itself in a tough position as it tries to end its own 30-year war with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Following Wednesday's violence in Turkey, streets have been calmer since curfews were imposed in five south-eastern provinces, restrictions unseen since the 1990s when PKK forces were fighting the Turkish military in the southeast.

Erdogan said that protesters had exploited the events in Kobani as an excuse to sabotage the Kurdish peace process. "Carrying out violent acts in

Turkey by hiding behind the terror attacks on Kobani shows that the real intention and target is entirely different," he said in a statement.

Kurdish leaders in Syria have asked Ankara to help establish a corridor which will allow aid and possibly arms and fighters to cross the border and reach Kobani, but Ankara has so far been reluctant to respond positively.

Saleh Muslim, co-chairman of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria, met Turkish officials last week, Kurdish sources said, but the meeting was not fruitful.

The PYD annoyed Turkey last year by setting up an interim administration in northeast Syria after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad lost control of the region. Ankara wants Kurdish leaders to abandon their self-declared autonomy.

# Cyclone

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forecasting officer, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

However, it would cause torrential rain in Bangladesh, especially in the coastal areas, he said.

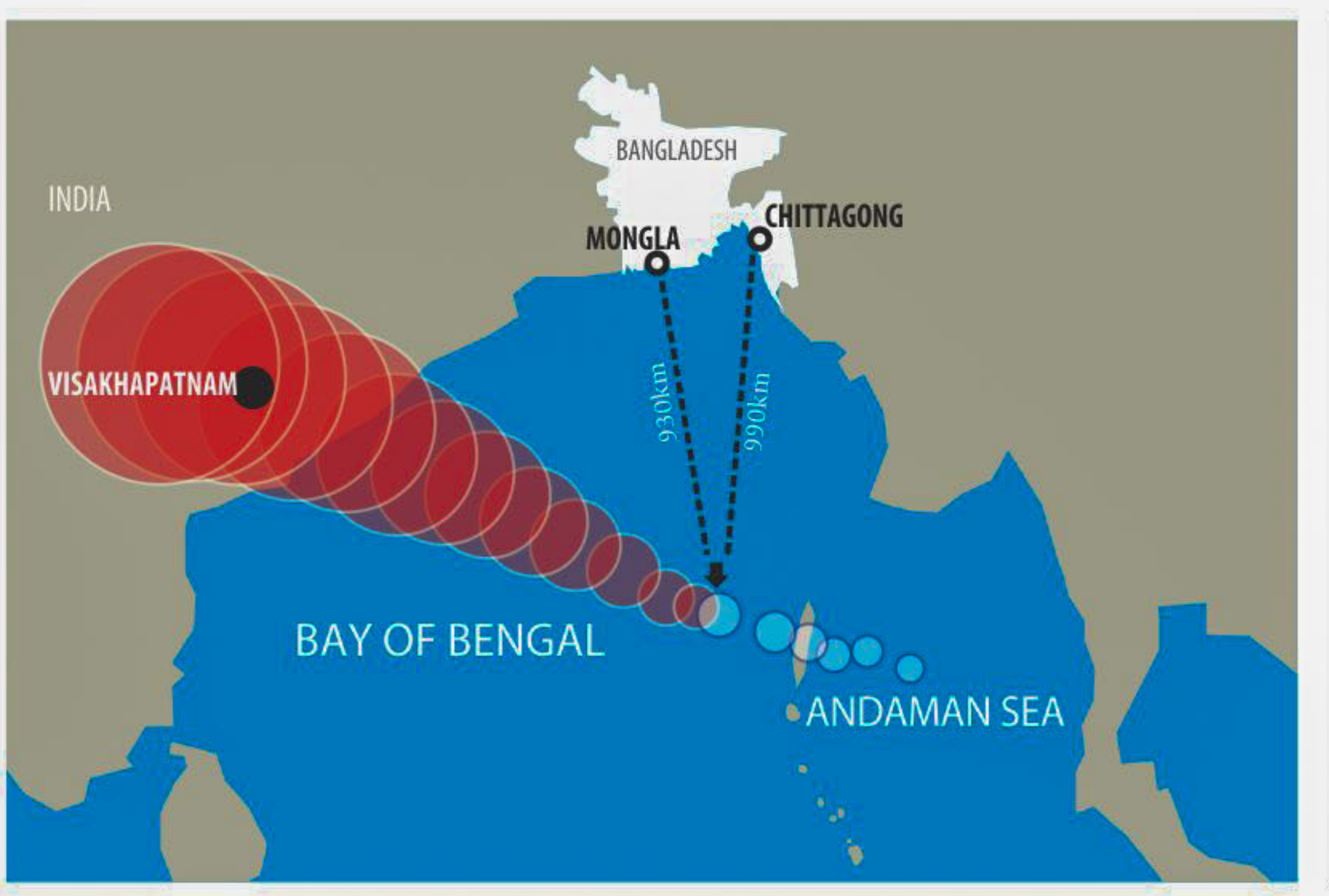
A special cyclone bulletin issued around noon yesterday said the Bay of Bengal would remain very rough. Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist distant warning signal-2.

Distant warning signal-2 means there is a distant storm with wind speeds of 62-88 kph.

All fishing boats and trawlers in the northern Bay and deep sea have been advised to remain close to the shore and proceed with caution until further notice.

Hudhud, as named by Oman, is an Arabic word for a colourful bird called Hoopoe.

The next cyclone in the northern Indian Ocean region will be named Nilofar by Pakistan followed by Priya (Sri Lanka) and Komen (Thailand).



# Restore GSP status

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indispensable to ensuring workers' benefits and upholding their rights. He also stressed the need for fair labour practices in Bangladesh, the release says.

After the Tazreen Fashions fire and Rana Plaza building collapse, the Obama Administration suspended the GSP status for Bangladesh in June last year citing serious shortcomings in workplace safety and labour rights.

In July last year, the USTR added 16 conditions to the Action Plan for Bangladesh to regain the GSP status.

According to the release, Mohammad Ziauddin said majority of the conditions set in the Action Plan have already been fulfilled by the Bangladesh government, the garment factory owners and other stakeholders. The few remaining ones, too, are in various stages of implementation.

The Bangladesh Ambassador also emphasised that the USTR should mull over restoring GSP status for Bangladesh in its next review of the GSP scheme considering the progresses the country

has made within such a short time.

Currently, the US GSP scheme remains suspended for all beneficiary countries including Bangladesh.

In the meeting Ziauddin also pressed for duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to the US market.

Both Ambassador Ziauddin and Ambassador Froman agreed that all the stakeholders should continue to work together in the coming days to resolve the trade related issues between the two countries, including that of the restoration of the GSP. They also discussed issues related to trade and investment between the two countries, says the release.

Michael Froman was assisted by Michael J Delaney (Assistant USTR for South & Central Asia), William Jackson (Deputy Assistant USTR for GSP Affairs), Michael O'donovan (Deputy Assistant USTR for Labour) and Behnaz Kibria (Deputy Chief of Staff, USTR Office) while the Bangladesh Ambassador was accompanied by Md Shafiqul Islam, commercial counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC.

# French novelist wins Nobel in literature

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human destinies" in his work.

The Nobel, one of the most prestigious and financially generous awards in the world, comes with a \$1.1 million prize. The literature prize is given out for a lifetime of writing rather than for a single work.

Mr Modiano was born in 1945 to a Belgian mother who worked as an actress and a Jewish-Italian father who was often absent during his childhood.

Mr Modiano, who has published around 30 works, including novels, children's books and screenplays, first rose to prominence in 1968 with his novel "La Place de l'Étoile." He won the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1978 for his novel "Missing Person."

Many of his fictional works are set

in Paris and delve into the moral dilemmas that citizens faced under the Nazi occupation. Some play with the detective genre.

About a dozen of his works have been translated into English, as well as into other European languages, but he is not widely known outside France.

In a 2011 interview with France Today, a culture and travel journal, Mr Modiano said he always aimed to be a writer. "I never thought of doing anything else," he said. "I had no diploma, no definitive goal to achieve. But it is tough for a young writer to begin so early. Really, I prefer not to read my early books. Not that I don't like them, but I don't recognise myself anymore, like an old actor watching himself as a young leading man."

His most famous works include "Missing Person," a story of an amnesiac who travels the world trying to piece together his identity; "Dora Bruder," which investigates the disappearance of a young Jewish girl in 1941; and "Out of the Dark," a moody, hallucinatory novel whose narrator pines after a former lover who has changed her name and denies that their affair took place. A 1999 New York Times review of "Out of the Dark" described it as "both suspenseful and contemplative."

Mr Modiano, 69, is the 11th writer born in France to win the prize. Recent winners for the literature prize have included the Canadian short-story writer Alice Munro in 2013; the Chinese novelist Mo Yan in 2012; the Swedish poet Tomas Transtromer, in 2011; and the Peruvian writer Mario

Vargas Llosa in 2010. The last American writer to win the Nobel in literature was Toni Morrison, in 1993.

Anne Ghisoli, the director of Librairie Gallimard, a leading bookstore in Paris, said that at a time of economic and social doldrums in France, Mr Modiano's award was a "happy surprise" and would help raise awareness of a writer who is better known in his home country than he is abroad.

"It's a surprise," she said. "He has readers in France, and there is always interest in his books, which sell very well. But this prize will help raise the global profile of one of our consummate writers. He is a master of writing on memory and occupation, which haunts and informs his work. He is a chronicler of Paris, its streets, its past and its present."

In a country often obsessed by past glories, she said, the Nobel award underlined that French contemporary culture was thriving. "This is good news from France and shows that, despite the depressing climate here, people are creating things and French contemporary fiction is alive and well," she said.

In choosing Mr Modiano, the academy seems to be shrugging off criticism that the literature prize has often been too Eurocentric and concentrated on lesser-known writers who focus on political themes.

The Nobel committee has drawn criticism in the past for shunning authors whose works are widely read in favour of more obscure writers. The selection of Ms Munro last year was celebrated by many in the literary community as a sign that the academy

was embracing more mainstream and popular authors.

The Swedish Academy, which has 18 members, including poets, novelists and literary scholars, has been more transparent about the selection process recently.

The academy's permanent secretary, Peter Englund, said in February that they had received 271 nominations for the literature prize this year and had whittled the list down to 210, which included 36 first-time nominees. Academy members chose a short list of five candidates whose work they studied over the summer.

In the past, the literature prize has been heavily weighted toward novelists: The prize has gone to 76 prose writers, 33 poets, 14 playwrights, three philosophers and essayists, and two historians.