

# 'THREATS BY ISLAMISTS' Taslima goes to US

AFP, Delhi  
Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen yesterday said she had left her home in India for the United States after receiving death threats from Islamists behind the recent murders of atheist bloggers in her home country.  
Taslima, who fled to Europe in 1994 after protests against her work by Muslim extremists and who now lives in New Delhi, tweeted that she did not feel safe in the Indian capital.  
"Was threatened by Islamists who killed atheist bloggers in B'desh. Worried," she tweeted. "Will be back when feel safe."  
Taslima, 52, said she had asked for a meeting with India's Home Minister Rajnath Singh after receiving death threats but had received no response.  
The move came weeks after masked attackers hacked secular blogger Ananta Bijoy Das to death in Bangladesh, the third such deadly attack by suspected Islamists since February.

# US reforms

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A federal appeals court on May 7 ruled the collection of "metadata" illegal.  
The new law would require companies such as Verizon Communications Inc and AT&T Inc, to collect and store telephone records the same way that they do now for billing purposes.  
But instead of routinely feeding US intelligence agencies such data, the companies would be required to turn it over only in response to a government request approved by the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.  
The Freedom Act is the first major legislative reform of US surveillance since Snowden's revelations two years ago this month led to debate over how to balance Americans' distrust of intrusive government with fears of terrorist attacks.  
Along with the phone records program, two other domestic surveillance programs authorized under the 2001 USA Patriot Act have been shut down since Sunday.  
The fugitive Snowden, alternatively seen as a villain by intelligence backers and a hero by supporters of stronger civil liberties, hailed the congressional action as "historic".

# Salahuddin

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court rejected his bail prayer. He sought bail for better treatment of his ailment in a third country.  
The arrestee was first admitted to a mental hospital in Shilling as police found him "mentally unstable". Later, he was shifted to Shillong Civil Hospital. On May 20, he was taken to Neigrihms for better treatment.  
Salahuddin's family members and the BNP complained that law enforcers had picked him up from a house in the capital's Uttara on March 10.

# Home boss

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around noon on Tuesday.  
"Second list of dead. Must you will prepare for dead," read the letter written in red ink bellow the names of the seven personalities. The militant outfit, using the name "Alkaidah-A. Bangla Team: 13", reportedly sent the letter.  
Officer-in-Charge of Dhanmondi Police Station Noor A Azam Mia said only Prof Azad had informed them of receiving the letter. He said police were investigating the matter and ensuring security for those who are on the list.  
In the letter, Prof Azad, former chairman of the University Grants Commission, was described as "Islam's enemy", the state minister as "traitor of Bangladesh", DU Jahurul Haque Hall Provost Abu Md Delowar Hossain as "anti-Islam writer", actress Shomi Kaiser as "Nastic", Abu Musa M Masuduzaman as "anti-Islam worker", DU acting Proctor AM Amjad as "defamer" and DU Arts Faculty Dean Akhtaruzzaman as "Islamic enemy".  
The DU acting proctor filed a general diary with Dhanmondi Police Station on Tuesday. Dhanmondi police had forwarded the copy of the general diary and the letter to different wings of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.  
On May 20, the same militant group in a letter threatened 10 other people, including DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, DU Prof Kaberi Gayen and Asim Sarker, prime minister's adviser HT Imam, Awami League lawmaker Tarana Halim and spokesperson of a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha Imran H Sarker.  
Shahbagh police investigated the matter initially, but failed to identify the culprits.  
Later, the investigation was transferred to the Detective Branch of police, but they also could not make any headway as yet.

# 'Slow' trouble

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not happened. Then we have to ask if public investment is yielding the kind of return that it is supposed to have and if these investments are having any impact? And if so, at what cost?  
These are some crucial questions that the finance minister will have to address if he really wants to see a buoyant economy matching our neighbours'.  
We have seen how the key big projects have bogged down, leading to cost escalation. Take, for example, the Padma Bridge. Its cost has spiralled by 40 percent or Tk 8,000 crore because of delay. Or consider the Dhaka-Chittagong highway widening project. Its cost has just doubled. We can list projects one after another that are dragging for months and years, giving benefits to no one except to the contractors. Any cost escalation is a waste of public money that dampens the economic return of a project. Just imagine how many more important new projects could be taken up only if we succeeded in ending these big projects on time.  
The government needs to be careful while picking a project; its relevance and importance must be checked. This is because the global investible funds are looking for lucrative opportunities. They are looking for countries with good foreign exchange reserves, something that Bangladesh has right now, and so we are their target. Such behavior of global funds often leads to thrusting of low priority projects upon recipient countries. Wasteful projects thus get the government's nod.  
Only strong political commitment and sound economic management policy can check prevalence of wasteful projects. Dependence on domestic resource to roll out new projects has also emerged as a financial danger as supervision becomes weak in absence of foreign monitoring.

# Bhutan breaks

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Thimphu, for their feat, which Guinness World Records confirmed.  
The government of the mountainous Himalayan kingdom lays great emphasis on protecting the environment. Bhutan has more than 75% forest cover.  
"The whole country is happy. Our world record shows that Bhutan's young generation wants a clean and green future. We will never compromise on that," tree planting event organiser Karma Tshering said.  
The Buddhist nation of just over 7,00,000 people is sandwiched between India and China. It has tried hard to protect itself from the influ-

# Blatter resignation

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and the right decision."  
A special congress to choose his replacement cannot be held until between December 2015 and March 2016, according to Domenico Scala, chairman of FIFA's independent audit and compliance committee.  
Romario, the Brazilian football great turned politician, called Blatter's announcement the "best news for ages!"  
The EU said Blatter's resignation was just "one step in a long process" to reform FIFA and restore trust in football's governing body.  
German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday hailed the shock resignation of Blatter as a step to help restore transparency in its corruption-tainted governing body.  
"I think that for billions of football fans it is an important message for all of us who like football -- and I, too, am a fan -- that the world football organisation can be run according to the standards we wish for," she said.  
Credit card giant Visa, which warned last week it might withdraw its sponsorship, said Blatter's resignation was "a significant first step towards rebuilding public trust" but added: "More work lies ahead."  
Blatter took over an international federation facing financial difficulties and turned it into a money-spinning operation that, between the 2010 and 2014 World Cups, made \$5.7 billion. FIFA now has a cash mountain of \$1.5 billion.  
Blatter's shock resignation has sparked speculation that the 79-year-old was also under investigation over allegations of more than \$150 million in bribes.  
America's top law enforcer Loretta Lynch, who led the corruption indictments of nine football officials last week, refused to be drawn Wednesday as to whether or not Blatter was under investigation.  
"We are not able to comment further at this point," Lynch said at talks in Riga with her EU counterparts when asked if Blatter was under investigation.  
"We will now be speaking through the courts," Lynch said ominously. "The investigation is ongoing."  
Interpol on Wednesday put disgraced FIFA former executive members Jack Warner and Nicolas Leoz on their

The finance minister will also have to think about how to prop up the flagging exports. Taka has remained strong against dollar on the back of huge reserve for quite some time, putting obvious pressure on exports. He has to find out how to deal with the situation, especially with the option of floating sovereign fund.  
And while tackling the present situation with infrastructure the finance head will also have to think of the future. Whatever modernisation we have embarked on, these have already become dated. For example, a four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong road is no longer adequate. There are roads, for example, the Dhaka-Sylhet or Jessore-Dhaka that need immediate expansion attention. We have to keep in mind the future regional connectivity. Or, flyovers in Dhaka city will not meet the future demand.  
Talking about Dhaka city which now has two pro-active mayors, the finance minister can make a priority of allocating more and priority-based funds for the city corporations. He must know, despite being escorted by whistle-blowing police cars, how Dhaka city is beset by problems and how ugly and dirty it has become to be the worst city in the world. He should allocate more from the central budget to start improving the city.  
But whatever the finance minister may innovate in his upcoming budget, everything will depend on the most important non-economic factor -- political stability. It is difficult to see how investors will find confidence in making medium to long-term commitments to manufacturing, infrastructure, and services in a volatile political environment such as the kind currently prevailing in Bangladesh.  
Who can say for sure that the kind of violence Bangladesh witnessed early this year will not repeat itself next year? Or the year after?

# Horrors still

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have been claiming that they rented out the place to Ohid for storing plastic goods, not chemicals.  
But locals refuse to accept this claim.  
"How could he [Gulzar] not know that chemicals were stored there while he lived on the fourth floor of the same building," said shopkeeper Mohammad Mamun Mia whose seven-year-old son Boishakh was killed on that fateful night.  
"Five years have passed but we are yet to get justice. Even the godown owner has not been arrested," he said.  
Ohid went into hiding immediately after the incident.  
Abdul Kuddus Fakir, officer-in-charge of Bangshal Police Station, said, "A general diary [GD] was filed but no case was lodged in connection with the incident. Investigation was carried out based on the GD, but the suspect could not be arrested."  
The government probe report suggested taking legal action against the godown owner and the landlord for storing chemicals illegally and causing the fire.  
On Monday, a day before the fifth anniversary of the incident, some 500 Nimtoli residents held a human chain in the area, demanding removal of all chemical godowns from adjacent neighbourhoods.  
Efforts from the Nimtoli residents made the area free from chemical shops and godowns, but the same didn't happen in the neighbouring areas.  
Awal Hossain, commissioner of ward-33 that includes Nimtoli, said if any chemical warehouse was found in his ward, he would evict those with the help of locals.

# Myanmar brings

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kept them at a camp there after recording their names.  
"I saw people crammed at a temporary camp at Hassurata School near Maungdaw Police Station with armed Myanmar Border Guard Police guarding the site," Myanmar business- man Abdus Sukkur told our Cox's Bazar correspondent over the phone.  
The camp is around 5.5 kilometres from the Bangladesh border.  
Quoting another witness, Reuters reported that scores of migrant men were seen sitting on the ground at the landing spot near the town of Maungdaw.  
Others assembled inside a warehouse, and all were being watched over by dozens of police but no aid personnel were seen at the site, the witness said.  
Myanmar, according to AFP, claimed that all the rescued boatpeople to be "Bengalis" -- the term it uses to describe Rohingyas -- and initially threatened to send them across the border before the navy escorted them towards Rakhine.  
Even yesterday, Rakhine State Secretary U Mong said that 75-80 percent of these people were Bangladeshis, though Bangladesh claims it be not more than 30 percent.  
"It is impossible that only 30 percent of them were Bangladeshis. Rather, they would comprise 75 to 80 percent and most of them fled Bangladesh," he told the BBC.  
Myanmar's Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin yesterday called Bangladesh Ambassador in Yangon, Sufiur Rahman, and asked him to repatriate the Bangladeshi nationals rescued there.  
At home, the BGB high-command said the Myanmar border force on Tuesday informed them of taking the rescued migrants to Maungdaw.  
"Our forces were kept alert on the border following the message to ensure that they are taking the vessel with migrants using their own territory," BGB Director General Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed told this paper yesterday.  
Asked whether he was suspecting any push-in attempt by Myanmar, he replied in the negative, saying Myanmar wouldn't have informed the BGB before moving the boatpeople ashore if they really had wanted to do so.  
However, the border guards are keeping vigil on the frontier and closely monitoring the situation, he added.  
Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand has seen 3,500 hungry people arrive in recent weeks in a migrant crisis that erupted after a crackdown on people-smuggling.

# Reliance seeks

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dropped in the last moment. These deals were: Adani group committing to import power from a coal power plant in India to Bangladesh and Reliance group committing to import hydro-power from eastern India.  
Bangladesh last year had asked Reliance to sell a good part of power from its upcoming 1,200MW hydro power plant in Arunachal Pradesh.  
To mount pressure on the government, Reliance notes in a letter to the power ministry in April, "Our proposal regarding sale of power from Kalai Hydro Project at Arunachal Pradesh is interlinked with the proposal for 3,000MW gas-fired combined cycle power project in two phases, and may please be considered for combined approval by the government of Bangladesh."  
RELINCE PLANT RELOCATION  
Since last October, Reliance has been pursuing a proposal to build a two part power plant totalling 3,000MW. The first part would be built by relocating its existing 2,400MW gas-fired plant from Samalkot in South India to Meghnaghat (which would have an installed capacity of 2,250MW); and the second part in Maheshkhali.  
Reliance zeroed in on Meghnaghat because it is already a developed site connected to the national grid and has all facilities to quickly install a power plant, whereas building a plant in Maheshkhali would take extra few years time as it has no readymade infrastructure.  
The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is overseeing progress regarding Reliance's proposal, which has already been evaluated.  
According to Reliance, the first large power plant was built in Samalkot in 2012 but was never used due to unavailability of gas supplied by the Indian government. It provided a certificate from the equipment builder General Electric in this regard.  
Reliance has also proposed to build a floating terminal in Maheshkhali to facilitate the import of 500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of LNG from the Middle East. This would be parallel to another similar project under the Petrobangla.  
Reliance would unload the LNG and convert it into natural gas at Maheshkhali but would require a pipeline from Maheshkhali to its power plant location in Meghnaghat.  
As per Reliance's estimate, the first phase of the plant would need 330 to 390 mmcf/d gas.  
In its correspondences with the government, the Reliance further said,

# Reliance seeks

"In addition to gas turbines and steam turbine supplied by GE, all the other equipment required by the project, including Heat Recovery Steam Generator and the balance of plant equipment, are also readily available and new and unused."  
The Indian company pointed out that since the equipment was already available, it could be relocated to Bangladesh in the shortest possible time.  
Reliance proposed a tariff of US 3.793 cents per kilowatt hour of power (excluding the energy cost) and it asked for LNG price at 6.7 cents per kilowatt hour. The total per kilowatt power cost would be 10.55 cents.  
For such a large plant, this tariff seems high but not unreasonable. Chairman of PDB Shahinul Islam Khan, however, adds that this was just a reference price. "The actual price of power would be decided through negotiations and upon completion of various formalities," he said.  
On April 9, Reliance wrote to the PDB requesting for allocation of land at Meghnaghat for setting up the phase one of the proposed LNG based power plant. In its proposal Reliance noted that at present there were a number of power plants in Meghnaghat and there was 78.5 acres of land under possession of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) available for future projects.  
"Our proposed project of 1,500MW can be set up in the 78.5 acres of land available," it added. "We firmly believe that to avail benefits of common infrastructure, which could result into considerable capital cost advantages, the adjoining land at Meghnaghat can be appended to set up an additional 750MW very quickly taking total capacity at Meghnaghat to 2,250MW. We are confident that first 1,500MW capacity can be set up in 30 months from the zero date and the balance 750MW can be set up in 36 months. Another unit of 750MW can be set up at Maheshkhali in the future."  
According to power ministry sources, the government has decided to provide Reliance with 78 acres of land in Meghnaghat; build a pipeline from Maheshkhali to Meghnaghat to facilitate transport of gas converted from LNG and also build necessary infrastructure to transmit power from Meghnaghat.  
Industry insiders say that they could not understand why Reliance seeks to relocate its plant from South India when it could have built an LNG terminal there to feed gas to the same plant.

# Petrol bomb on bus

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There was no political programme yesterday and it remains unclear who carried out the attack and why.  
Police detained two local Jamaat leaders for questioning, said Shah Abid Hossain, superintendent of Comilla police. He, however, would not give their names.  
Those critically burned are Anjan Kumar Dey, 50, and Ranjit Sharma, 57. Doctors said their injuries were severe and their respiratory tracts were damaged.  
They are taking treatment at the intensive care unit of the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.  
Four other injured, with four to 16 percent burns, were also admitted to the DMCH.  
Zahirul Islam and Lovely Akhter, a couple from Narayanganj, took primary treatment at Comilla Medical College Hospital. Comilla police said quoting doctors there.  
The Unique Paribahan bus, with around 40 people on board, was heading from Dhaka to Rangamati, said Abid.  
"Miscreants attacked the bus from left side," he told The Daily Star by phone.  
Two firebombs were hurled inside, with one of them burning the middle portion of the bus and the other the back, he added.  
Imran Hossain, a victim, said he was in the middle row of the bus and was asleep.  
"I woke up to see flames around me. I escaped through the door as the front part was not on fire," he told this correspondent at the DMCH, adding that the bus left had Dhaka around 9:45pm.  
Law enforcers are working to identify

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)


PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh, seeks proposals from interested and well qualified organizations in response to the following RFP in the CHT.

**Floral and Faunal Diversity Baseline Assessment in the Village Common Forests (VCFs) of Chittagong Hill Tracts**

1. Bid submission date is extended for above mentioned RFP on 15 June 2015, Monday which was previously 10 June 2015, Wednesday
2. Bid may be submitted to below places :  
a) CHTDF-UNDP Office, IDB Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka  
b) CHTDF-UNDP Office, Rajbari Road, Rangamati

Pls download solicitation document and pre-bid meeting minutes  
[http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_notice.cfm?notice\\_id=22532](http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=22532)



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