

ASIA PACIFIC

Ananta Bijoy Dash Hacked to Death: Fearing Bangladeshi Blogger Might Claim Asylum, Sweden Blocked Visit That Could Have Saved His Life

Friday 15 May 2015, by [MACKEY Robert](#) (Date first published: 14 May 2015).

A Bangladeshi blogger and secular activist who was hacked to death on Tuesday would still be alive if Sweden had not blocked his planned visit to Stockholm this month to celebrate World Press Freedom Day, according to the Swedish chapter of PEN, an international writers group.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that its diplomats were “horrified by the murder” of Ananta Bijoy Dash, who wrote about secularism and science for Free Mind, a website that the Bangladeshi-American blogger Avijit Roy ran before being killed in February by machete-wielding assailants in Dhaka, the capital. Islamist extremists took responsibility for Mr. Dash’s death, near his home in the northeastern city of Sylhet.

In a blistering statement released the same day, however, Swedish PEN revealed that Mr. Dash would have been in Stockholm this week as the group’s guest but that the Swedish Embassy in Dhaka denied him a visa.

According to the writers’ group, the embassy, in an email rejecting Mr. Dash’s request, cited concerns that he might try to stay in Sweden, or another of the European Union countries known as the Schengen area. “You belong to a category of applicants where there is always a risk involved when granting a visa that you will not leave Schengen area after the visit,” the embassy wrote. “Furthermore, the purpose of your trip is not urgent enough to grant you visa.”

The Swedish Migration Agency confirmed to BBC News that it had rejected Mr. Dash’s request for a visa [1].

The writers’ group, which promotes literature and freedom of expression, said that with Mr. Dash’s killing it would demand further explanation from the embassy.

Mr. Dash, the third secularist blogger to have been killed in recent months, had also written a book about Charles Darwin, the activist Taslima Nasreen noted [2]. In February, Mr. Dash posted a playful tribute to Darwin on his [Facebook page](#).

As [Global Voices](#) reported, Mr. Dash’s killing was mourned online by free speech activists, and celebrated by Islamist extremists.

Secular activists rallied on the streets on Wednesday to demand that Mr. Dash's killers be brought to justice [3].

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P.S.

* "Fearing Bangladeshi Blogger Might Claim Asylum, Sweden Blocked Visit That Could Have Saved His Life". From The [New York Times](#). Open Source. MAY 13, 2015.

Footnotes

[1] <https://twitter.com/johnmcm1/status/598070402397667328>

[2] See on ESSF (article 34953), [Another science writer-blogger, Ananta Bijoy Das, was hacked to death in Bangladesh today](#).

[3] See on ESSF (article 34954), [Activists in Bangladesh Protest over Blogger's Murder](#).