



## Egypt mosque attack kills 235

Militants launch bomb, gun attack after Friday prayers; many injured; govt declares 3-day mourning

AFP, Cairo

Armed attackers yesterday killed at least 235 worshippers in a bomb and gun assault on a packed mosque in Egypt's restive North Sinai province, state media reported, the country's deadliest attack in recent memory.

A bomb explosion ripped through the Rawda mosque frequented by Sufis roughly 40 kilometres west of the North Sinai capital of El-Arish before gunmen opened fire on those gathered for weekly Friday prayers, officials said.

Witnesses said the assailants had surrounded the mosque with all-terrain vehicles then planted a bomb outside.

The gunmen then mowed down the panicked worshippers as they attempted to flee and used the congregants' vehicles they had set alight to block routes to the mosque.

State television reported at least 235 people were killed and 109 wounded in the attack, the scale of which is unprecedented in a four-year insurgency by Islamist extremist groups.

Egypt's presidency declared three days of mourning, state television reported, as President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi met his security ministers to follow developments.

He pledged to respond with "brutal force" against militants who are behind the massacre. No group claimed immediate responsibility of the carnage.

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Egyptians walk past bodies following a gun and bomb attack at the Rawda mosque, roughly 40km west of the North Sinai capital of El-Arish yesterday. At least 235 people were killed in the attack.

PHOTO: AFP

## 11 CID men took Tk 45 lakh bribe from businessman

Finds police probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven members of the Criminal Investigation Department took Tk 45 lakh in bribes from the owner of a recruiting agency in the city's Fakirapool last month, a police probe has found.

Based on the findings of their investigation, the police headquarters (PHQ) have recommended taking strict departmental actions against the cops, who hold ranks between inspector and constable.

The probe report, signed by Additional Superintendent Of Police Samrat Mohammad Abu Suffiun and ASP Mamunur Rashid at the PHQ discipline and professional standard unit, was submitted to the CID high-ups on Thursday, sources said.

The 11 policemen are SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## ROHINGYA CRISIS

## Ensure quick, safe return

UN bodies, EU ask Myanmar to create safe environment in Rakhine, call for access to monitor Rohingya repatriation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN agencies, the European Union and human rights bodies have urged Myanmar to implement the new deal on repatriation of the Rohingyas who have taken shelter in Bangladesh to escape persecution in Rakhine State.

Voicing concern over the security of the refugees, they also asked the Myanmar government to ensure a safe environment and give protection to its forcibly displaced nationals for their voluntary and safe return to their

homeland.

The call came yesterday, a day after Dhaka and Naypyitaw signed the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State, which aims to start the process of repatriation of the Rohingyas in two months.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini yesterday termed the signing of the repatriation deal an important and welcome step towards addressing "one of the worst humanitarian and human rights crisis of our times".

"We now expect the agreement

signed Thursday to be implemented without delay, and Myanmar to create the conditions on the ground that will allow for a voluntary, safe and dignified return of the refugees to their places of origin."

The European Union will monitor its implementation in full compliance with the international law, she said in a statement.

The EU also reiterated its call for full and unconditional humanitarian access to the affected areas without any delay.

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With pitchers holding spots in the queue, Rohingya refugee men wait to collect water in Hakimpura refugee camp in Ukhaia of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Rise in violence against women

1,378 women fell victims of rape, sexual harassment and other forms of violence in first nine months of this year

JAMIL MAHMUD

School teacher Nurun Nahar Tanjila saw her life turn upside down barely a week into her marriage with college teacher Anwar Hossain.

Immediately after the wedding in May of this year, her husband and in-laws began torturing her for dowry. Last month, it all came to a head when they beat Tanjila, 28, mercilessly and at one stage struck her head with a sharp weapon, leaving her seriously injured. The incident in Panchagarh infuriated the locals who formed a human chain and demanded arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits.

This, however, is one of hundreds of reported cases of violence against women that took place in the country this year.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) has documented a grim reality. As many as 1,378 women in the country became victims of such crimes in the first nine months of the year alone. During the same period of 2016, the number stood at 1,204 women. The incidents chronicled here include sexual harassment, rape, murder after rape, domestic violence, dowry-related torture, torture of domestic help, acid attack and fatwas, according to data available on ASK website.

Against this backdrop, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is being observed today. Different government and non-government organisa-

tions are set to mark the day with various programmes.

In 1999, the UN General Assembly designated November 25, and invited governments, international organisations and NGOs to organise activities designed to raise public awareness on the issue, according to the UN's website.

Rights activists said more women are



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TODAY

now coming forward about the repression they face at home and outside. Many such incidents have also captured national attention owing to social media.

Yet, many remain unreported because a lot of women are still reluctant to disclose their sufferings, fearing the social stigma

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## Power tariff hike won't hurt people

Says PM's energy adviser

STAR REPORT

Terming the power tariff hike negligible, Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury yesterday said the new tariff would not hurt people.

He made the remark while talking to journalists after attending a programme at Bidyut Bhaban in the capital, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) raised the retail power tariff on its own consideration, he said.

Replying to a question, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said consumers using 200 units of power would have to pay Tk 20-25 more per month and its effect on customers is tolerable.

The BERC on an average raised the retail power tariff by 5.3 percent or Tk 0.35 per unit.

At present, average per unit cost of electricity at the retail level is Tk 6.49. After the hike, it will go up to Tk 6.84 per unit.

This is the eighth retail power tariff hike in the last eight years with the previous one in September 2015.

The new tariff will come into effect from December

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## MARCH 7 SPEECH Nationwide celebration today

BSS, Dhaka

The recognition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 speech by the Unesco is going to be celebrated across the country today.

Cabinet Secretary Shafiul Alam announced this while addressing a press briefing at the Cabinet Division yesterday.

As part of the celebration, jubilant processions, essay and quiz competitions and screening of films on the Liberation War will be held in 64 districts,

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