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EGYPT MOSQUE MASSACRE

Sinai gunmen carried IS flag

Say prosecutors as toll rises to 305 including 27 children; military targets terrorists

REUTERS, Cairo

Gunmen who attacked a mosque on Friday in Egypt's North Sinai brandished an Islamic State flag as they opened fire through doorways and windows, killing more than 300 worshippers, including two dozen children, officials said yesterday.

No group has claimed responsibility, but Egyptian forces are battling a stubborn Islamic State affiliate in the region, one of the surviving branches of the militant group after it suffered defeats by US-backed forces in Iraq and Syria.

The assault on a mosque has stunned Egyptians, prompting President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government to tighten security at places of worship and key buildings, and call three days of mourning for the bloodiest attack in Egypt's modern history.

State news agency MENA said the death toll had risen to 305, including 27 children, and 128 people were injured.

Egypt's public prosecutor's office, citing interviews with wounded survivors as part of its investigation, linked Islamic State militants, also known as Daesh, to the attack on the Al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed, west of El-Arish city.

"The worshippers were taken by surprise by these elements," the prosecutor said in a statement. "They numbered between 25 and 30, carrying the Daesh flag and took up positions in front of the mosque door and its 12 windows with automatic rifles."

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Illegally harvested bamboo clustered into hundreds of rafts float down the Mathamuri river in Ali Kadam of Bandarban. The bamboo is logged from the reserved forest under Mathamuri range. Bamboo traders spoke of involvement of forest department officials, an accusation they deny.

PHOTO: SANJAY KUMAR BARUA

'Another killer' of Avijit held

Say officials of DMP counter-terror unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counterterrorism officials yesterday claimed that they arrested an Ansar al Islam militant who along with three others hacked to death writer-blogger Avijit Roy nearly three years ago.

Arafat Rahman alias Siam alias Sazzad, 24, was arrested when he was about to meet some of his accomplices in Savar on Friday night, said Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Siam, an alleged operative of the banned militant outfit's operational wing, is among the six suspected militants, who have been carrying police bounty since May 19 last year.

"He [Siam] was among the four operational operatives who carried out the machete attack on Avijit," said a counterterrorism official preferring anonymity.

Avijit, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, was hacked to death on Dhaka University campus when he along with

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Tulip 'Labour Newcomer MP of the Year'

BSS, Dhaka

Labour Party lawmaker Tulip Rizwana Siddiq has received an award for "Labour Newcomer MP of the Year" at the annual Patchwork Foundation Awards in Westminster.

Tulip, granddaughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, recently received the award from Speaker of the House of Commons John Simon Bercow, according to a message received in

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MARCH 25 AS INT'L GENOCIDE DAY

Take formal steps to get recognition

Speakers at a seminar urge the govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academics and researchers campaigning for the United Nations recognition of March 25 as International Genocide Day yesterday urged the government to launch a formal initiative to that end.

The said denial and impunity over the atrocity would make room for more such crimes.

They campaigners were addressing an international seminar titled "1971: Genocide-Torture and Liberation War" organised by the Centre for Genocide-Torture and Liberation War Studies and Bangladesh Itihas Sammilani in the capital's Bangla Academy.

Inaugurated yesterday, the two-day event would feature five scholarly sessions on relevance and meaning of genocide conducted by experts from the USA, UK, India, Egypt, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at the UN General Assembly this year, reiterated her call on the international community to recognise atrocities committed by the occupying Pakistani army in 1971 as genocide and March 25 as "International Genocide Day".

The parliament on March 11 this year unanimously adopted a resolution to observe March 25 as Genocide Day.

In his keynote speech at yesterday's seminar, war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir said the people of the country had paid a lot for freedom. But the perpetrators never even admitted to their crimes.

"We have to fight for it and the government should take an official initiative

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Rail links with Khulna cut off for nine hours

Collision between two freight trains caused it

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Rail communication between Khulna and the rest of the country resumed yesterday afternoon, about nine hours after two freight trains collided near Darshana International Railway Station in Chuadanga in the morning.

The railway authorities have suspended three employees -- two drivers and a stationmaster -- and formed a probe body to investigate the matter.

Three people including the train drivers -- Raihan Hasan and Jewel Hossain -- were injured in the accident.

Chuadanga Railway Station Master Abdul Khaleque said the accident occurred when a Parbatipur-bound train carrying oil collided head-on with another freight train coming from Ishwardi around 5:50am.

Four carriages of the Parbatipur-bound train derailed following the collision.

As a result, rail communications on

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Cat hair catches would-be Obama assassin: report



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A tiny cat hair helped to identify the woman behind a plot to kill Barack Obama, according to legal documents filed in a Texas court.

Julia Poff stands accused of posting explosives to the then president, Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Maryland's Social Security Administrator Carolyn Colvin last October.

While the packaged intended for Obama was intercepted, Abbott did open the one that was sent to him but it failed to explode.

Had it detonated, it could have caused "severe

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Friend kills schoolboy over Tk 20

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A schoolboy was stabbed to death allegedly by one of his friends for only Tk 20 at Kandapara village in Muktagachha upazila on Friday night.

The victim was identified as Fazlul Haque, 15, son of Golam Rabbani of Gandrappur village and a class nine student of Ramkishore High School of the upazila.

Quoting family and local sources, Ali Ahmed Mollah, officer-in-charge of Muktagachha Police Station, said there was an altercation between Fazlul and some of his friends of adjacent Malatipur village over realising Tk-20 contribution from him in hiring a sound box on November 18.

The friends also locked in a scuffle with him over the

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Gopalpur Awami League General Secretary Saiful Islam Talukder Suruj, who was sentenced in absentia to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment in an arms case 10 days ago by a Tangail court, is seen addressing a rally in the upazila yesterday. Gopalpur upazila administration organised the programme to mark the Unesco recognition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 Speech as a world documentary heritage. Gopalpur Municipality Mayor Rokibul Haque Chhana, Upazila Parishad Chairman Younus Talukdar Thandau and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Dilruba Sharmin are seen sitting on stage. Several other top officials of the upazila administration and local police (not in frame) were also on stage.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



6 killed as Pak cops clash with Islamists

190 injured in Islamabad; army deployed

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's government called on the powerful military to deploy in the capital Islamabad yesterday after deadly unrest broke out when police moved to dislodge an Islamist protest that has paralysed the city for weeks.

At least six people were killed and some 190 injured -- around 137 of whom were security personnel -- in fierce clashes as police tried to disperse the demonstration earlier yesterday.

Security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets and demonstrators blocked roads and burned police vehicles around the site of the sit-in. As the violence intensified,

protests sprouted in the major cities of Lahore and Karachi, as well as smaller towns across the country.

"According to figures we have, at least six people were killed in violence today," Deebea Shahnaz, a spokeswoman for the Provincial Rescue department, told AFP. A security official also confirmed the death toll.

Authorities had been attempting to clear a relatively small protest by the little-known hardline group Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah Pakistan (TLRAP) that has blocked a main highway into Islamabad since November 6, causing hours-long traffic snarls and enraging citizens.

It was not clear how many protesters

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-10 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00

JAMAAT 5-45 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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