



Israeli borderguards patrol the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City yesterday following an attack.

PHOTO: AFP

## Shooting near Al-Aqsa kills 5

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Police identified them as Muhammad Ahmad Muhammad Jabareen, 29; Muhammad Hamed Abdel Latif Jabareen, 19; and Muhammad Ahmad Mafadal Jabareen, 29.

Arab Israelis are descendants of Palestinians who remained on their land following the creation of Israel in 1948. They largely identify with the Palestinian cause.

The police who were killed were Ha'il Satawi, 30, and Kamil Shanan, 22, both from the Druze minority.

The assailants were killed at the site known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif and to Jews as the Temple Mount, which is the holiest site in Judaism and the third-holiest in Islam.

It is the scene of regular clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police, but gunfire there is rare.

The site includes the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

In the phone call with Netanyahu, Abbas expressed his "strong rejection and condemnation of the incident" and rejected "any act of violence from any side, especially in places of worship", official Palestinian news agency WAFA said.

The statement appeared stronger than previous such responses from Abbas, who has repeatedly called for non-violent resistance to Israel's occupation without specifically condemning Palestinian attacks.

Netanyahu said in a statement the security situation surrounding the holy site would be reassessed on Sunday.

Gradually reopening the site to worshippers and visitors "will be based on an estimate that will be made Sunday," he said.

### MOSQUE CLOSED

With Al-Aqsa closed, crowds gathered at Old City gates and held prayers there.

The grand mufti of Jerusalem Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, the city's highest Islamic authority, condemned the closure of the mosque compound for prayers.

"I have very little information about it, but it doesn't mean you should close the mosque for prayers," he told journalists at the nearby Lions Gate entrance to the Old City.

According to his son Jihad Hussein, he was later detained by Israeli police, who declined to comment.

He was released without charge after being questioned over his call for Muslims to come to Jerusalem after the holy site's closure, another of his sons told AFP.

Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip, called the attack "a natural response to Zionist terrorism and the desecration of the Al Aqsa mosque", referring to previous Israeli raids at the site.

UN Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres warned the attack could spark more violence and urged all sides to avoid escalation.

Jordan, the custodian of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, urged Israel to "immediately reopen" it.

### FLASHPOINT SITE

The Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount is central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Palestinians fear Israel may one day seek to assert further control over it.

It lies in east Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed in a move never recognised by the international community.

Jews are allowed to visit, but are banned from praying there to avoid provoking tensions.

The site is administered by the Islamic Waqf organisation. Waqf officials said Israeli police detained its guards there after the attack.

A wave of unrest that broke out in October 2015 has claimed the lives of at least 281 Palestinians or Arab Israelis, 44 Israelis, two Americans, two Jordanians, an Eritrean, a Sudanese and a Briton, according to an AFP toll.

Israeli authorities say most of the Palestinians killed were carrying out knife, gun or car-ramming attacks.

Others were shot dead in protests and clashes, while some were killed in Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip.

The violence had greatly subsided in recent months.

## Earth's

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animal, which grows to a maximum length of half a millimetre, can live for up to 30 years without food or water, endure temperatures of up to 150 degrees and is so at home in the frozen vacuum of space that it has been known to mate.

One of the researchers, Dr David Sloan, of Oxford University, said: "A lot of previous work has focused on 'doomsday' scenarios on Earth – astrophysical events like supernovae that could wipe out the human race.

"Our study instead considered the hardest species – the tardigrade. As we are now entering a stage of astronomy where we have seen exoplanets and are hoping to soon perform spectroscopy, looking for signatures of life, we should try to see just how fragile this hardest life is.

"To our surprise we found that although nearby supernovae or large asteroid impacts would be catastrophic for people, tardigrades could be unaffected.

"Therefore it seems that life, once it gets going, is hard to wipe out entirely. Huge numbers of species, or even entire genera may become extinct, but life as a whole will go on."

His Oxford colleague, Dr Rafael Alves Batista, contrasted the tardigrade's hardness with human's relative fragility.

"Without our technology protecting us, humans are a very sensitive species," he said.

"Subtle changes in our environment impact us dramatically. There are many more resilient species on Earth. Life on this planet can continue long after humans are gone."

The existence of the tardigrade also gives hope for the search for extraterrestrial life, Dr Alves Batista said.

The study, described in the journal Scientific Reports, considered three possible cataclysmic events: an asteroid impact, a supernova and a gamma ray burst.

## Indian police file case over Modi meme

AFP, Mumbai

Indian police have filed a defamation case against a group of comedians accused of insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the latest incident to raise fears over creative freedoms in the country.

A spokeswoman for the Mumbai police said on Friday that the force had registered a first information report against All India Bakchod (AIB) over a tweet poking fun at India's leader.

"An FIR has been registered against AIB at Mumbai's cyber police station after due legal consultation," Rashmi Karandikar told AFP.

The case has been registered under laws against defamation and spreading obscene material online.

Police received a complaint after AIB earlier this week tweeted a photograph of a Modi look-alike who had been spotted at a train station carrying a holdall and looking at his mobile phone.

Alongside it they posted a photo of the real Modi's face but superimposed a dog's features using a Snapchat filter. They included the hashtag "Wanderlust" in an apparent reference to Modi's regular trips abroad.

The tweet went viral on social media but sparked a backlash from Modi supporters and AIB ended up deleting it.

## EU presses

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in-depth discussion on migration at the joint commission meeting. The Bangladeshi delegation was led by Senior Secretary to Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mohammad Shahidul Haque and the EU delegation was led by Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific Paola Pampaloni.

The EU side stuck to their position that Bangladesh must complete the negotiations by July. On the other side, Bangladesh delegates categorically said it would not be possible for them in such a short time.

On trade and investment, both sides reiterated their joint commitment to the Sustainability Compact, including the respect of labour rights in particular with regard to freedom of association.

Bangladesh has made efforts to effectively implement the International Labour Organisation's recent recommendations in this respect, the EU press release said.

However, the EU strongly underlined high importance on further addressing the ILO's recent recommendations swiftly through concrete actions and timelines. The EU also emphasised the need to make progress under the EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue, which aims at improving conditions for EU businesses.

Both the sides also agreed to raise awareness on opportunities related to the EU Research and Innovation programme HORIZON 2020, to continue to work on climate change and jointly explore new areas to work together, namely connectivity, maritime security, ocean governance and space.

The EU and Bangladesh also agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the

field of aviation security and work on common agenda with a view to reaching concrete progress and deliverables, which will be reviewed in the course of the next Joint Commission to be held in Dhaka in 2018.

The agenda of the joint commission includes political developments on both sides, the role of the rule of law in democracy and governance, human rights, migration, trade and investment, labour rights, development cooperation, and humanitarian issues.

The EU and Bangladesh exchanged views on key directions for the development cooperation agenda for 2018-2020, notably in the areas of education and skills development, public financial management, and support to social safety nets.

In this respect, both sides agreed on the importance of regular sector policy dialogue to accompany long-term reforms and reinforce the EU-Bangladesh partnership for development cooperation in these areas.

The EU and Bangladesh agreed to work jointly towards the implementation of the SDGs and reconfirmed their shared understanding of the importance of translating the commitments of the 2030 Agenda into comprehensive sector implementation plans.

Building on previous high-level dialogues and in the light of the recent G20 Leaders' Declaration, both the sides committed to stepping up cooperation on migration, upholding human rights, including international labour standards, ensuring women's empowerment, implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions, implementing the Agenda 2030, and fighting terrorism.

## ADB: Climate change

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that will disrupt the ecosystem, damage livelihoods and possibly even cause wars, it said.

"Unabated climate change threatens to undo many of the development advancements of the last decades, not least by incurring high economic losses," the report from the Manila-based bank said.

By the end of the century, parts of the continent could see mean temperatures shoot up to eight degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as the global mean temperature rises by half that, it added.

"A business-as-usual scenario will lead to disastrous climate impacts for the people of Asia and the Pacific, especially for poor and vulnerable populations," it said.

But it said the region could avert disaster by shifting to renewable energy sources.

The 2015 Paris climate accord commits nations to keep global temperatures well below 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times.

While a 2 degrees Celsius rise will be difficult to manage, "one can assume that a 4 degrees Celsius increase would lead to humanitarian disasters in many nations and result in unmanageable migration flows or locked-in populations", the report said.

Asia as a whole would see sea levels rise by 1.4 metres (4.6 feet) within this century, nearly twice the projected increase under the Paris deal, and face more destructive cyclones, it said.

In this scenario, the report said the region's coral reef systems would collapse from mass bleaching, with severe consequences for fisheries and

tourism.

Melting Asian glaciers would cause both floods and water shortages, disrupting agriculture, and increase dependence on rainfall to meet water needs.

The impact of such changes on access to energy and natural resources were all potential powderkegs for conflict, it said.

The study projects additional heat-related deaths of nearly 52,000 elderly people across the region annually by the 2050s, nearly 8,000 extra diarrhoeal deaths in South Asia, and some 10,000 more malaria and dengue deaths in Asia.

Asia's global economic links mean that extreme climate events could disrupt supply chains not only in the region but also in the rest of the world, it warned.

Despite stunning economic growth that saw Asian per capita incomes rise 10-fold in the past 25 years, it remains home to the majority of the world's poor, the ADB said.

This, along with the fact that a large share of its population inhabit low-lying coastlines, has made the world's largest continent "particularly vulnerable" to climate change.

Myanmar, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Thailand are among the world's top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events, it said.

The ADB vowed in 2015 to double its climate finance mitigation investments to \$6 billion by 2020, including \$2 billion to help countries shift to renewable energy.

## AQIS getting more active

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due to Taliban advances in Afghanistan and al-Qaida's relationship with operatives from the Taliban and other groups, such as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

"Al-Qaida operatives in Bangladesh were particularly active, conducting a range of attacks. In addition, al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent conducted a steady propaganda campaign from its media arm As-Sahab," he said.

However, the group conducted few attacks in Afghanistan or Pakistan and was largely irrelevant in the Taliban-led insurgency, Jones said.

In September 2014, al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri had announced the creation of regional affiliate al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent, taking advantage of sanctuaries in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

"A new branch of al-Qaida was established - Qaida al-Jihad in the Indian subcontinent, seeking to raise the flag of jihad,...and return the Islamic rule across the Indian subcontinent," al-Zawahiri had said.

The group was led by Asim Umar--an Indian and former member of Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami - a Pakistan-based terrorist group with branches across the Indian subcontinent. Umar was flanked by Abu Zar, his first deputy.

In October 2015, US and Afghan forces targeted a large training camp in Kandahar Province, killing over one

hundred operatives linked to al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, Rhodes said.

According to Katherine Zimmerman, research fellow, American Enterprise Institute, the al-Qaida presence in the Indian subcontinent remains weak after Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the launch of a new affiliate in September 2014.

Al-Qaida divides the Pakistani theatre by ethnic group, he said. The Pashtun are part of its Khorasan theatre, which includes Afghanistan and Iran, and the Punjab is under al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), which works through the Indian Punjab and Bangladesh, Zimmerman said.

"A recent surge in propaganda from AQIS leadership may indicate an attempt to revive the group," Zimmerman told the lawmakers.

Zimmerman said al-Qaida never fully lost its sanctuary in Pakistan and used this base to project forward into Afghanistan again as the US drew down militarily.

"By 2015, al-Qaida was running large training camps inside Afghanistan. The US began revising its assessments of al-Qaida's strength in Afghanistan based on the discovery of these training camps," he said.

"The US killed senior al-Qaida leaders operating in Afghanistan in an October 2016 air strike, their presence a telling indicator that al-Qaida had returned to the country," he added.

## 7 killed last year

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between the Santals, factory staff and police over the eviction claiming the ownership of the land of Sahebganj-Bagda sugarcane farm of Rangpur Sugar Mills on November 6.

Global Witness documented the murders of 200 land and environmental defenders in 2016. This report is dedicated to their lives, and to all those around the world who stand up for land rights and protection of the environment.

"With many killings unreported, and even less investigated, it is likely that the true number is actually far higher," the report stated.

The report also pointed out that it is increasingly clear that globally governments and companies are failing in their duty to protect activists at risk and they are permitting a level of impunity

that allows the vast majority of perpetrators to walk free, emboldening would-be assassins.

"Incredibly, it is the activists themselves who are painted as criminals, facing trumped-up criminal charges and aggressive civil cases brought by governments and companies seeking to silence them. This criminalisation is used to intimidate defenders, tarnish their reputations and lock them into costly legal battles."

The report stated that the phenomenon of violence against land rights activists is not only growing but spreading as well with murders recorded in 24 countries, compared to 16 nations the year before.

It blamed investors for fuelling violence by backing projects that trash environment and trample human

rights.

Brazil remains the deadliest country in terms of sheer numbers while Nicaragua has overtaken Honduras as the most dangerous place for activists per capita, according to the report.

The rights group has been publishing annual reports on threats to activists since 2012, although it has data going back to 2002.

The report observed that the rhetoric on sustainable development and climate change will prove empty if those defending their land and the environment continue to have to risk their lives in doing so.

"Governments, companies and investors, therefore, must take a stand and guarantee that local communities and defenders are consulted rather than killed."

## Cracks in Ctg bridge

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up makeshift wooden platforms against the anchors of the bridge to cross it.

Local farmer Shah Alam said people of Shantir Bazar, Monglar Mukh, Mayanai, Uttar Dhopachhari, Tripura Para and Naikongghari use the way to go to the upazila town and nearby upazilas as the other sides of the area is surrounded by hills.

"During the rainy season, locals cross the canal wading through chest-deep water. We had expected that the bridge would end our sufferings. But now it seems that sufferings are far from over."

Abul Hossain, a grocery shop owner, crossed the canal carrying his goods on his shoulder. He said during the Ramadan he had to spend an additional Tk 2,000 for hiring two rickshaw-vans to carry goods to his shop.

"We are now counting extra bucks every day for carrying goods," he added.

Siraj Miah, owner of a lemon orchard in Uttar Dhopachhari, said they could not take lemons to the wholesale markets in Dohazari and Satkania as the

bridge remains damaged.

"Hundreds of jackfruits are also rotting in local gardens," he told The Daily Star.

Md Arif, owner of construction firm AK Syndicate Construction Company, claimed they had completed the construction work following the conditions set out in the work order.

He said the bridge was built upon pilings driven five feet into the ground.

"The bridge was damaged after strong currents of rainwater from nearby hills eroded the soil from the pile base of the bridge," he said.

Jahirul Islam, upazila project implementation officer, claimed there was no technical problem in the construction work.

Chandanaish Upazila Nirbahi Officer Lutfur Rahman formed a four-member committee to probe the incident. The committee is supposed to submit a report by today.

"If the committee finds any corruption or negligence in the construction work, we will recommend punishment for those responsible," said the UNO.