



About 500 people take part in the annual fishing festival on New Year's day yesterday at the Chalanbeel's Boral river in Bhangura upazila of Pabna.

PHOTO: STAR

Israel charges Palestinian woman in viral 'slap video'

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli authorities have filed charges against a Palestinian woman after a video showing her and her cousin slapping and kicking two Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank went viral.

Nour Tamimi, 20, had on December 15 along with Ahd Tamimi, 16, assaulted two soldiers in their village of Nabi Saleh in the occupied West Bank. The soldiers were in the yard of a home to prevent Palestinians from throwing stones at Israeli motorists nearby, according to the charges filed at the Ofer military court on Sunday.

Ahd Tamimi's family says the incident occurred in the yard of their home.

A video shows the cousins approaching two Israeli soldiers and telling them to leave before shoving, kicking and slapping them.

Ahd Tamimi is the most aggressive of the two in the video.

The heavily armed soldiers do not respond in the face of what appears to be an attempt to provoke rather than seriously harm them.

They then move backwards after Ahd Tamimi's mother Nariman becomes involved.

Nour Tamimi, who was arrested on December 20, was charged with aggravated assault of a soldier and disturbing soldiers carry out their duties, the indictment read.

She was set to appear in the Ofer court later yesterday for a hearing on whether she will be held in detention until her trial begins.

Ahd Tamimi and her mother will face the same military court for a hearing, during which the prosecution could announce its intention to press charges.

Ahd Tamimi, arrested on December 19, has been lauded as a hero by Palestinians who see her as bravely standing up to Israel's 50-year occupation of the West Bank.

She has been involved in a series of previous confrontations, leading Israelis to accuse her family of using her as a pawn in staged provocations.

Two 'Neo JMB'

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their plans from their possession, said Palash Kanti Nath, additional deputy commissioner of CMP, who led the drive.

The counter terrorism unit conducted the drive at a five-storey building around 12:30am and arrested them on the fourth floor, he said.

Palash said the arrestees were under the unit's custody for further quizzing.

'Missing' banker

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Wednesday saying that Shaikat went missing on Tuesday. They said he last informed his wife around 11:00am that he was going to his bank's head office in Gulshan from the Shyamoli branch on official work, and to meet a banker friend.

Factional clash

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group were locked in an altercation with those of Nabil Ahmed, another former assistant organising secretary of JCD Sylhet Metropolitan unit, in Court Point area over who would speak first at a rally.

At one stage, the two groups attacked each other with sticks and sharp weapons, injuring Shimu and eight others of both the groups. The injured were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where Shimu died later.

Wahab Miah, deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said additional law enforcers had been deployed in the city to avoid any further untoward incidents.

US got nothing in return giving Pakistan \$33b

Says Trump

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that the United States has "foolishly" handed Pakistan more than \$33 billion in aid over the last 15 years while getting nothing in return and pledged to put a stop to it.

"They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!" Trump wrote on Twitter. "The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools."

It was not immediately clear what prompted Trump's criticism of Pakistan but he has long complained that Islamabad is not doing enough to tackle Islamist militants.

The New York Times reported on Dec. 29 that the Trump administration was "strongly considering" whether to withhold \$255 million in aid to Pakistan.

It said US officials had sought but been denied access to a member of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network captured in Pakistan who potentially could provide information about at least one American hostage.

Pakistan's foreign minister, Khawaja M. Asif, wrote on Twitter: "We will respond to President Trump's tweet shortly inshallah...Will let the world know the truth...difference between facts & fiction."

Shakib the runaway leader

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The premier Bangladesh all-rounder has previously occupied the top spot in the ICC's rankings on and off. But the 2017 was a special year when he dominated the all-rounder's top spot in Tests, ODIs and T20Is for most part of the year.

"Among all-rounders, Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan was the runaway leader across formats with Ashwin-Jadeja (of India) in Tests, Mohammad Hafeez (of Pakistan) in ODIs and Glen Maxwell (of Australia) in T20Is snatching the baton from him at different points in time," the ICC said in a statement on Monday.

Shakib ended an eventful year as the top all-rounder in Tests and T20Is. Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez finished the year as the top ODI all-rounder. But Shakib's dominance in all three formats was enviable. He led the Test all-rounder's ranking for 284 days, ODI ranking for 283 days and T20I for a stagger-

The Trump administration said in August that it was delaying sending the \$255 million in aid to Pakistan. Last month, Trump said in a speech the US government makes "massive payments every year to Pakistan. They have to help." Pakistan counters that it has launched military operations to push out militants from its soil and that 17,000 Pakistanis have died fighting militants or in bombings and other attacks since 2001.

The top US general in Afghanistan, John Nicholson, said in November that he had not seen a change in Pakistan's behavior toward militants, despite the Trump administration's tougher line against Islamabad.

In a speech last month in Afghanistan to US troops, Vice President Mike Pence said "for too long Pakistan has provided safe haven to the Taliban and many terrorist organizations, but those days are over. President Trump has put Pakistan on notice."

Hamdullah Mohib, Afghanistan's ambassador in Washington, said in a Twitter posting yesterday that Trump's tweet was a "promising message to Afghans who have suffered at the hands of terrorists based in Pakistan for far too long."

The Pakistan embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment yesterday.

ing 310 days.

The left-handers scored a magnificent 217 in the Wellington Test to start the year. He pivotal parts in all three major wins -- away at Sri Lanka in Bangladesh's 100th Test, the first-ever Test victory against Australia at home, a fascinating come-from-behind Champions Trophy win against New Zealand at Cardiff -- with the bat and ball.

He has scored 665 runs in seven Tests in 2017. He also took 29 wickets with a 10-wicket haul against Australia being his best. His Test figures could have been even better had he not skipped Bangladesh's two-Test series against South Africa after the BCB granted his request for a break from the longer format.

Already the T20I captain, Shakib will now lead Bangladesh in Tests and it can be hoped that his excellence with bat and ball extends to his leadership in his new stint as captain in the New Year.

At least 3 new faces

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ministry he would be appointed.

Sources close to Kazi Keramat Ali, lawmaker from Rajbari-1, said he also got a phone call from the Cabinet Division to be at the Bangabhaban.

Keramat Ali, a four-time MP and the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on government assurances, might be made a full minister, sources in the AL said.

A presidium member close to the PM also told The Daily Star that Mustafa Jabbar, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, best known for being the creator of software Bijoy, would be included in the cabinet.

Jabbar is a close ally of the ruling party. He worked on its manifesto "Digital Bangladesh" before the 2008 polls.

Sources said making him a minister would be a reward for his contribution to the ICT sector.

Narayan Chandra Chanda, lawmaker from Khulna-5, last night told The Daily Star that he also received a call from the Cabinet Division and was

asked to be at the Bangabhaban this evening.

"I got a call in the afternoon. I have been invited to the Bangabhaban tomorrow [today] at 6:00pm," he said.

On July 14, 2015, the PM as part of a major reshuffle in her then one-and-a-half-year cabinet, promoted Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to home minister, while Yeafesh Osman was promoted to science and technology minister.

She also made Nurul Islam BSc a technocrat minister giving him the charge of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry.

At that time, actress Tarana Halim, lawmaker from a reserved seat for women, was made state minister for post and telecommunication while lawmaker Md Nuruzzaman was made state minister for food.

In late 2014, Minister Abdul Latif Siddique was sacked from post and telecommunications ministry after he made "anti-hajj comments" at a programme in New York.

Pranab due on Jan 14

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee is expected to pay his first private visit to Bangladesh on January 14 to attend a literary conference and to address programmes of two private universities in Dhaka.

He is likely to deliver speeches at the convocations the universities and address the concluding session of the Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan on January 15.

The former Indian president is also expected to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Abdul Hamid.

During his visit, he may visit the site of the Chittagong Armory Loot by a band of freedom fighters which was masterminded by Masterda Surja Sen in 1930.

Mukherjee had visited Bangladesh with relief materials in 1988 when it was hit by severe floods. His maiden visit to Bangladesh as president was in March 2013.

Assam leaves

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could use the issue to target the state's Muslim minority.

Political leaders have vowed to deport anyone staying in the state illegally.

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal sought Sunday to reassure anyone left off the draft list, saying every "bona fide Indian citizen" would eventually be included.

The BJP won elections in the state in 2016 after promising to root out what it alleged were illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and protect the rights of indigenous groups.

Migrants have long been accused of illegally entering the state and taking land, causing tensions with local people and sporadic outbreaks of communal violence.

Anyone living in Assam must now prove that their forebears appeared either in the state's only previous register of citizens, compiled in 1951, or on any electoral roll published before March 1971 to be eligible for citizenship.

With millions anxious about their fate, the government strengthened security across the state before releasing the list.

2 journalists

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www.newsnarayanganj24.net, and Tanvir Hossain, executive editor of the news portal.

Sayem Ahmed, a local businessman, filed the case with Narayanganj Model Police Station, alleging that the news portal tarnished his image by publishing a fake news item.

Police, however, say Sayem is accused in a number of cases, including abduction, attempted murder, and extortion, filed with different police stations in the district.

Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge (investigation) of the police station, said Sayem sought help from the court to file the case, and they took the lawsuit on the court's directive.

Asked whether they talked to the police headquarters before taking the case, the OC replied in the positive.

"We are investigating the case," he added.

Talking to this newspaper, Sayem said, "The news portal published a false, baseless and defamatory report about me on December 26. It tarnished my image in the society, and hurt my family and business."

Shahjahan Shamim, also a filmmaker, however, said, "The news item was based on facts. We also mentioned Sayem's quote in that."

"There are many allegations against him [Sayem]. We hope that truth will be revealed if the administration investigates the matter properly," he said.

Local journalists condemned the case filing.

There has been a widespread criticism against Section 57 of the ICT act and rights activists and journalists have been critical of the controversial section from the very beginning. They say the section goes against the people's right to freedom of expression and free speech as it contains vague wording, allowing its misuse against newsmen and social media users.

Around 300 cases were lodged under the section in the first seven months of last year. More than two dozen journalists were sued and several of them were arrested.

The debate over the section and demands for its repeal intensified following the arrest of veteran journalist Probir Sikdar in 2015. The journalist was arrested and sent to jail after he posted a status on Facebook.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque on August 2 last year instructed all police stations to consult the legal wing at the police headquarters before registering any case under the section.

The ruling Awami League had also directed its activists to take permission from its central unit before filing any case under the section.

On November 29 last year, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu told reporters that section 57 and other controversial provisions of the ICT act would be removed as the draft of the Digital Security Act was finalised.

Prosecution demands

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Judge Shahed Nuruddin of the tribunal set today for hearing the defence arguments, when state-appointed lawyer Chaitanya Chandra Halder for Mohammad Hanif, a fugitive accused and owner of Hanif Paribahan, will place his arguments.

The prosecution on December 27 completed its closing arguments on facts. Yesterday, Rezaur took around two hours to complete his submissions to the makeshift court set up at a building on the city's Nazimuddin Road. He was assisted by several lawyers, including Akram Uddin Shyamol and Farhana Reza.

Twenty-four leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associate bodies were killed and over 300 others suffered splinter injuries in the August 21 attack on an AL rally in 2004.

Many of the injured became crippled for life while Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped with ear injuries.

Of the 49, eight accused, including three former inspector generals of police, are now on bail while 18, including Tarique, have been absconding.

Twenty-three accused, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and ex-deputy minister for education Abdus Salam Pintu, now behind bars, were produced before the court yesterday.

The highest punishment for criminal conspiracy is death.

PROSECUTION'S SUBMISSIONS Rezaur said a total of 225 prosecution witnesses, including 46 victims, gave testimonies and produced a lot of documentary evidence to prove the charges.

He said the accused got involved in the criminal conspiracy to carry out the gruesome attack and implemented their plans to leave the AL and pro-liberation forces without leadership by killing Hasina and other top leaders of the party.

The attack was carried out so that banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (Huji) can run their activities without any hindrance; and Kashmir, Pakistan and Myanmar-based militant organisations -- Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Tehreek-e-Jihad-e-Islami and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation -- can use Bangladesh as a route for transporting arms and ammunition for their activities, the lawyer told the court.

According to the chief prosecutor, the purpose of the attack was to ensure rise of the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

He said at least 40 accused, including Tarique, elder son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, held several meetings in 2000, 2003, early in 2004 and in August that year at different places in the city, including Hawa Bhaban, to orchestrate the attack.

The Hawa Bhaban, then political office of the BNP chairperson, was widely considered as the alternative centre of power during the tenure (2001-2006) of the BNP-Jamaat government.

Rezaur said as per the decisions and plans drawn up in the meetings, at least 12 accused, who were holding administrative posts as ministers, police and detective officials, gave administrative and financial support to the attackers.

They also refrained from carrying out their duties to ensure necessary security for the AL meeting on Bangabandhu Avenue and didn't give

information even though they were aware of the attack beforehand, the lawyer added.

He said three unexploded grenades were recovered from the scene, but Tarique, Lutfozzaman Babar and the accused police and detective officials destroyed those grenades without taking permission from the court.

They destroyed the evidence to save the real culprits, he said, adding that the accused did not allow the victims' family members to file cases. Instead, they filed a case through a policeman to save the culprits, he said.

To divert the incident, the accused forced several people, including Joj Mia, to give false confessional statements and attempted to implicate 28 innocent people with the attack, the chief prosecutor told the court.

Babar and several other accused helped Tajuddin, an accused who supplied grenades, to leave the country with a fake passport, Rezaur said, adding that the accused performed their duties as per the criminal conspiracy hatched in those meetings.

BACKGROUND

After the attack, a case was filed with Motijheel Police Station on August 22, 2004.

The CID submitted two charge sheets, one for hatching conspiracy and killing and another for supplying and using grenades. The second charge sheet was filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

During the BNP-Jamaat rule until October 2006, the investigators were out to misdirect the probe to protect the real culprits, according to the prosecution.

During the tenure of the last caretaker government, charge sheets in the two cases were filed against 22 people, including Abdus Salam Pintu and 21 Huji men, including Mufti Hannan.

However, the investigators could not identify the mastermind and the sources of the grenades used in the attack, the prosecution said.

A further probe into the cases was launched in 2009 to find out the source of the grenades.

A supplementary charge sheet was submitted against 30 accused, including Tarique, Lutfozzaman Babar and former Jamaat secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, in July 2011.

In March 2012, the tribunal indicted 52 accused, including Tarique, on murder charges while 41 accused were indicted in the case filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

The 11 other accused in the murder case were not implicated in the explosive case. They include three former ICPs, three ex-CID officials, two former senior police officials, Khaleda's nephew Duke, and two former army officers ATM Amin and Saiful Islam Joarder.

The court conducted the two cases simultaneously.

Jamaat leader Mojaheed has already been executed for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War while Mufti Hannan and another Huji man were executed in the case filed over the grenade attack on former British high commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Chowdhury in Sylhet.

Their names were dropped from the cases.

10 killed in Iran unrest

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"Our nation will deal with this minority who chant slogans against the law and people's wishes, and insult the sanctities and values of the revolution."

Pro-regime rallies were held across several towns and cities, but videos on social media showed seemingly widespread anti-government protests in cities including Kermanshah, Khorramabad and Shahinshahr.

A school for clergy and government buildings were torched in the north-western town of Takestan and videos showed police using tear gas and water cannon to disperse a small protest in Tehran's Enghelab Square on Sunday evening.

The authorities did not give details on who was responsible for the fatal shootings.

COUNTRY MUST HAVE DISCIPLINE The authorities have confirmed more than 400 people were arrested since the outbreak of the unrest, of which around 100 have been freed.

Judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani joined Rouhani in warning against illegal action.

"Those who have rightful demands must be guided in lawful ways and those who riot and commit sabotage and chaos and set fire to public property... must be confronted decisively," he told the state broadcaster.

"The country must have discipline," Larijani added.

Verifying rumours and videos remained challenging due to travel restrictions and sporadic blocks on mobile internet and popular social media sites including Telegram and Instagram.

The protests began as demonstrations against economic conditions in second city Mashhad on Thursday but quickly turned against the Islamic regime as a whole, with thousands marching in towns across Iran to chants of "Death to the dictator".

Trump, a fierce critic of Tehran, used one of his first tweets of 2018 to again

lash out at a favourite target.

"Iran is failing at every level despite the terrible deal made with them by the Obama administration," Trump tweeted, referring to the nuclear pact agreed under his predecessor Barack Obama.

"The great Iranian people have been repressed for many years. They are hungry for food & for freedom. Along with human rights, the wealth of Iran is being looted. TIME FOR CHANGE!"

LIVING COSTS, UNEMPLOYMENT

After initial silence, state media began showing some footage of the demonstrations on Sunday, focusing on young men attacking banks and vehicles, an attack on a town hall in Tehran, and images of a man burning the Iranian flag.

Rouhani came to power in 2013 promising to mend the economy and ease social tensions, but high living costs and a 12 percent unemployment rate have left many feeling that progress is too slow.

"We have no problem bigger than unemployment. Our economy needs an operation. We must all stand together," Rouhani acknowledged yesterday.

The authorities have blamed external forces for fomenting violence, saying the majority of social media reports were emanating from regional rival Saudi Arabia or exile groups based in Europe.

Authorities ruthlessly put down the 2009 protests, which followed a disputed presidential election that gave hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a second term. At least 36 people were killed in the 2009 unrest, according to an official toll, while the opposition says 72 died.

In the years since, many middle-class Iranians have abandoned hope of securing change from the streets. But low-level strikes and demonstrations have continued, with groups such as bus drivers, teachers and factory workers regularly protesting against unpaid wages and poor conditions.