

1. Sheikh Hasina Charged with Crimes Against Humanity: What You Need to Know**Background**

On June 1, 2025, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) announced that former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could face charges of crimes against humanity. She has been in exile in India since August 2024 following mass protests and her eventual ousting from power. Bangladesh formally requested her extradition in December 2024.

**What Is Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)?**

- Established under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 to try war crimes committed during the 1971 Liberation War against Pakistan.
- Originally created to prosecute Pakistani forces and collaborators.
- The Act allowed prosecution for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed between March 25 and December 16, 1971.

Revival of the Tribunal

- After decades of dormancy, the tribunal was revived in 2009 by Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government.
- The 1973 law was amended to allow prosecution of civilians.
- The revived tribunal targeted political opposition members, including leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, accused of supporting Pakistan during the war.
- More than 100 people were sentenced to death, though the tribunal faced international criticism for violating fair trial standards (e.g., permitting trials in absentia).

What Is Sheikh Hasina Accused Of?

According to Bangladeshi prosecutors, five main charges have been filed:

- 1. Murder and Attempted Murder:** Allegedly linked to a violent police crackdown that killed over 450 protesters.
- 2. Use of Excessive Force:** Accused of ordering attacks using helicopters, drones, and lethal weapons against student protesters.
- 3. Targeted Killings:** Specifically named in the killing of student Abu Sayed near Begum Rokeya University.
- 4. Inflammatory Statements:** Accused of inciting violence by branding protesters as descendants of razakars (1971 war collaborators).
- 5. Unlawful Shootings:** Connected to the deaths of six protesters in Chankharpul (Dhaka) and six more in Ashulia.

What Sparked the Protests?

- Protests began over a quota system in public jobs and education for descendants of 1971 war veterans.
- Though the government scrapped the quota, Hasina's inflammatory remarks escalated the unrest.
- The crackdown that followed intensified nationwide anger, culminating in her ouster.

Controversy Around the Tribunal

- Rights groups have long questioned the fairness of ICT proceedings.
- Critics say the tribunal became a political tool under Hasina to target opponents.
- The law's provisions—such as allowing trials without the accused present—clash with international human rights norms.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

2. Assam's Controversial Move to Arm Civilians

What Happened?

The Assam government, led by the BJP, announced plans to issue arms licenses to select indigenous communities in remote, Bangladesh-bordering areas for "self-defence."

Why It's Problematic

- Risks vigilantism and inter-community violence.
- Blurs the line between state law enforcement and armed civilians.
- Past examples like Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh led to serious human rights violations.



Legal Concerns

- The Arms Act, 1959 and Arms Rules, 2016 prohibit mass arming of communities.
- Identifying eligible groups can be divisive and hard to regulate.
- Weapons could enter illegal arms markets or fall into the wrong hands.

Call for Reversal

The Assam government should focus on strengthening official law enforcement instead of outsourcing security to civilians—an act seen as abdicating state responsibility.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Internal Security

Source: The Hindu

3. Operation Spider's Web

Why now?

Ukraine recently announced that it had successfully undertaken a stealth operation inside Russian enemy lines. The operation, titled Operation Spider's Web, reportedly took 18 months to plan and execute.

How was this Operation Executed?

According to the Ukraine Secret Service (SBU), its agents moved dozens of short-range drones laden with explosives inside Russia, loading them onto trucks with their containers disguised as wooden sheds. The operation evoked comparison with the mythical Trojan Horse.



What has Ukraine claimed?

1. An official claimed that the attack destroyed 41 Russian warplanes situated in the country's airbases, with strikes conducted in four airbases. The SBU also claimed that it destroyed Russian strategic bomber aircraft worth billions of dollars at different bases by deploying these drones remotely. These include A-50 surveillance planes, the supersonic Tu-160 and Tu-22 bombers, and the Tu-95s, which are capable of carrying nuclear bombs and cruise missiles.

The SBU estimated the damage caused by the drone strikes to be worth \$7 billion.

2. The SBU claimed that the attack struck Belaya air base in Irkutsk, over 2,500 miles (4,000km) from Ukraine. Other targets included the Olenya air base in Murmansk, Dyagilevo air base in Ryazan and Ivanovo Severny air base in Ivanovo.

Why is this Attack Significant?

The attack marks a significant victory for Ukraine in its ongoing war against Russia. Since 2022, Ukraine has found itself on the back foot, due to Russia's military prowess. The use of these attack drones represents a streamlined approach to targeting Russia's military infrastructure.

For one, the airbases themselves were previously believed to be impenetrable given their distance from Ukraine. Olenya, in the Murmansk region, is about 2,000 km away from Ukraine, while Belaya in the Irkutsk region is in south-eastern Siberia and over 4,000 km away from the frontlines.

The aircraft which were struck represent significant losses for the Russian side: the A-50s are early warning aircraft, while the bombers have been used to carry heavy missile attacks on Ukrainian cities.

Russia's Defence Ministry confirmed attacks on airbases in five regions in the country, and claimed that "all attacks were repelled" on military airbases in the Ivanovo, Ryazan and Amur regions. The Amur airbase was not mentioned by the SBU.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues

Source: Indian Express

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