

Aurora cremated with military honours

AFP, New Delhi

India cremated with full military honours yesterday retired Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora who was hailed as the architect of the 1971 war with Pakistan that led to the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

Cabinet ministers, senior military officers and a former Indian prime minister, I.K. Gujral, attended the funeral in New Delhi of Aurora who died of a heart attack Tuesday at the age of 89.

Diplomats from Bangladesh also laid a wreath on the funeral pyre of Aurora.

Aurora is survived by a son and daughter.

The Sikh is best remembered as the chief of India's eastern command who led Indian troops and Bangladeshi guerrillas to victory over Pakistan in December 1971

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US energy company to invest \$1.6b

MoU signed for gas-fired power project, coal mine, fertiliser plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Global Vulcan Energy International (GVEI), a US-based company, yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bangladesh government for investing over \$1.6 billion in power production, coal mining and fertiliser projects.

GVEI will invest \$900 million for setting up gas-fired power projects, \$375 million for a coal mine and a coal-fired power project, \$200 million for two carbon-based organic fertiliser plants, and \$150 million for a series of coal based projects in Bangladesh.

The US company will complete the feasibility study of the proposed projects within next six months, says the MoU signed by Nazrul Islam, executive member, Board of Investment (BoI), and Ford F Graham, president of GVEI.

Mahmudur Rahman, BoI executive chairman, and Showkat A Kazi, chief executive officer of GVEI, witnessed the signing at the BoI office in Dhaka.

The BoI executive chairman told reporters that the BoI signed MoU for more than \$5 billion foreign investment during the last six months - that included \$2.5 billion from Tata Group of India and \$1

billion from a Chinese company.

He said if everything goes smoothly the US company would formally start work of a few of their projects from next January.

The company intends to use coal for diverse purposes including carbon-based fertiliser project and coal-based methanol gas project, Mahmudur Rahman said.

Ford F Graham said they are very much impressed by observing the overall investment situation in Bangladesh. He expressed optimism

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Agitation unto justice

Vows Kibria family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of slain Shah AMS Kibria yesterday vowed to continue with peaceful programmes and, if need be, announce fresh ones until the killers and mastermind of the murder are brought to justice.

"We'll not let the issue die before our demand for arrest and punishment of the culprits is met," Asma Kibria, wife of the slain former finance minister and leading diplomat, said yesterday. She was talking to The Daily Star after a 'Blue for Peace' silent demonstration in Dhanmondi in the capital.

Asma said the recently-launched 'Janatar Dabipatra' (a letter writing campaign) has been extended for two months until July following response from people across the country. She has asked all to write letters to the prime minister through her demanding a fair trial of Kibria killing.

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PHOTO: STAR

Asma Kibria, 4th from left, wife of slain Awami League leader Shah AMS Kibria, their family and members of civil society line up along a Dhanmondi road yesterday to demand trial of the perpetrators of the gruesome murder.

2 abducted cops have been killed

Says arrestee

BDNEWS, Madaripur

Two policemen, who were kidnapped from Shakharpur area of Rajoir upazila in Madaripur on April 3, have been killed.

A leader of outlawed Sarbahara Party Akkel Ali, arrested in connection with the kidnapping of the police personnel, disclosed this to

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SAVAR TRAGEDY

Families demand compensation be doubled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The families of those injured and killed in the garment factory collapse on April 11 at Savar yesterday demanded that they be given a minimum of Tk 2 lakh as compensation, saying that Tk 1 lakh is not enough.

They also demanded that pending salaries be paid immediately for

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Blasts rock British consulate in US

Building slightly damaged, no injuries

REUTERS, New York

Two homemade grenades exploded outside the Manhattan office building that houses the British Consulate, shattering windows in the pre-dawn hours yesterday as voters went to the polls in a general election.

There were no injuries reported, and no motive was known.

The explosions occurred shortly after 3:30am (8:30 a.m. British time) and were caused by two metal "novelty grenades," one in the shape of a pineapple, the other a lemon, both packed with gunpowder, police said.

The incident, which briefly upset the financial markets, occurred as polls were opening. Prime Minister Tony Blair is seeking a third term in office after a short campaign where he battled public anger against his support of the war in Iraq.

"We do not at this point have any idea who did it or a motive," New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg told a morning news conference at the scene.

"It is true the British Consulate is

in that building, but I don't think anybody should jump to conclusions," Bloomberg said. He said there had been no warning call before the blast or any call since claiming responsibility.

"Fortunately nobody was hurt," he said. "What exactly happened is under investigation."

New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said the building housed other foreign offices and that police had made precautionary checks at other diplomatic sites in the city but had found nothing so far.

"Let me stress, we have no known motive for this action at this time," Kelly said.

Kelly said counterterrorism experts, intelligence officers and the FBI were all involved in the investigation.

He said the explosion was caused by two small improvised explosive devices placed in the soil of a large concrete flower box - typically used in New York to prevent vehicles from driving into buildings.

Tigers fly to England today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team will leave Dhaka today for London for their first ever Test series in England.

The tour involves two Tests and a tri-nation one-day international series with the hosts and world champions Australia being the other teams.

Bangladesh have some mixed memories from their previous visits to England. In their first trip, they caused the upset of the 1999 World Cup when they beat eventual runners-up Pakistan. Bangladesh were not even a Test side then.

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Prayer Timing		
May 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

India positive about new Saarc summit dates

Delhi 'suspends' barbed-wire fencing

STAR REPORT

India has responded positively to the new dates proposed by host Bangladesh for holding the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka.

Bangladesh has proposed to host the twice postponed summit either September 4-5 or November 13-14 this year.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan told reporters though the dates coincide with Indian prime minister and external affairs minister's foreign tours, they will "readjust"

their schedules with the proposed summit dates, according to the UNB.

"India will be ready to participate in the summit on any dates," Khan said reading out a portion from an official note.

The foreign minister said he is waiting to receive final confirmation of the summit dates from current Saarc chair Pakistan.

Meanwhile, our correspondent from New Delhi reports: India is understood to have decided to

suspend barbed-wire fencing within 150 yards of the border with Bangladesh and will try to arrive at a solution to the issue through diplomatic channels.

The border fencing, which had begun in February this year, was discussed at a two-day high-level meeting with Home Minister Shivraj Patil in the chair.

The meeting ended here on Wednesday and was attended by the representatives from the Prime

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15 hurt as cocktails explode at JP meet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

At least 15 people were injured, seven of them critically, when a gang exploded cocktails at a meeting of Kasba upazila Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) at Natun Bazar at the upazila headquarters yesterday.

The critically injured were admitted to Kasba Upazila Health Complex and the others were given first aid.

JP workers and eyewitnesses said some unidentified miscreants hurled three cocktails at the newly formed Kasba JP unit's meeting at

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25 killed in wave of Iraq attacks

REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad

Insurgents unleashed a series of ambushes and bomb blasts targeting Iraqi security forces in Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 25 people in the latest attacks in a surge of violence that has rocked the capital.

A suicide bomber strapped with explosives blew himself up at an Iraqi army recruitment centre in western Baghdad, killing at least 13 people and wounding at least 15, police said.

Insurgents regularly target army and police recruits, and the recruitment centre, in a former airfield, has been repeatedly attacked by suicide bombers.

Gunmen ambushed a police convoy in western Baghdad, shooting dead 10 policemen and then setting their vehicles ablaze, police said. Another police convoy was

attacked around the same time, and there was no immediate word on casualties.

Insurgents also detonated a car bomb apparently targeting the deputy interior minister, police said. He was unhurt but one of his bodyguards was killed and six people were wounded.

Over the past week guerrillas have stepped up their violent campaign to topple the country's US-backed government and drive out foreign troops, defying predictions that the insurgency would crumble following Iraq's historic Jan. 30 elections and the formation of a new cabinet.

On Wednesday, a suicide bomber killed as many as 60 people in an attack on a Kurdish political party

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Dr Kamal sings Mohiuddin song

Seeks his reelection in CCC polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged people of the port city to elect Awami League-backed Nagorik Committee mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the May 9 Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls.

"Mohiuddin has devoted his life for your (people of the port city) cause. As mayor twice (also incumbent mayor), he proved it and made Chittagong a beautiful city with your support. It is now your duty to elect him once again," Dr Kamal said at a big election rally here at Laidighi Maidan.

Terming Mohiuddin a fighter for people's welfare, the eminent jurist

said his courageous stand saved the interest of Chittagong Port as well as of the country.

Explaining this, Dr Kamal said, "The estuary of the river Karnaphuli, which is a key point for the country's premier seaport, was about to be leased out to a foreign company. But Mohiuddin as mayor resisted the ill move, making the whole nation indebted to him."

He went on, "Bury politics of corruption and violence by voting for Mohiuddin and celebrate a victory day on May 10. He deserves victory in the polls."

Nagorik Committee organised the rally as the last major showdown ahead of the elections.

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