

# Missile Man laid to rest

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including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Thousands of people lined the roads to get a last glimpse of his body as it was taken from his ancestral home to a local mosque.

Rich tributes have been paid to Kalam since his death, including on social media, where the tag #KalamSir was the top trend on Twitter India for two days.

Kalam was born in 1931 into a middle-class family in Rameshwaram, a town well-known for its Hindu shrines.

His father owned boats which he rented out to local fishermen, but he himself began his career as a newspaper vendor.

He then earned a degree in aeronautical engineering from a technology institute in Chennai (Madras). Kalam joined the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in the neighbouring state of Kerala in the 1960s as one of its first three engineers.

He played a major role in the centre's evolution to a key hub of space research in India, helping to develop the country's first indigenous satellite-launch vehicle.

Indian scientists have hailed him as the father of the Indian nuclear bomb and its missile delivery systems. He also played a key role when India

tested its nuclear weapons in 1998.

The former president was proud of his Indian education and liked to describe himself as "Made in India", having never been trained abroad.

**TWITTER TRIBUTES**

There has been an outpouring of grief on Twitter and since his death on Monday, nearly half a million tweets have mentioned "APJ Abdul Kalam".

Twitter users have used phrases like "inspiration", "legend", "great human being" and "people's president" to describe Kalam.

Most users seem to be united in their thought that India has lost "a great son" and "leader" after his death.

Hashtags like #KalamSir and #RIPKalam have been popular among his admirers. #KalamSir has generated around 100,000 tweets. The hashtag has been used by people who saw him as a teacher and guide. Kalam was known for his friendly interactions with students across the country.

Most Twitter users are using #Rameshwaram to pay their final tributes to the former president on Thursday.

Thousands, including top politicians, paid their respect at his funeral in the southern city of Rameshwaram. And it seems those who could not be in the city are using the hashtag to show their love for Kalam.



A portion of the First Buriganga Bridge at Postogola in a dilapidated condition, posing as a hazard to commuters. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Afghan Taliban

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The death of Mullah Omar - reported by the Afghan government on Wednesday - was confirmed by the Taliban yesterday, report Reuters and BBC.

"The leadership of the Islamic Emirate and the family of Mullah Omar... announce that leader Mullah Omar died due to a sickness," a Taliban statement said, using the movement's official name.

Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour was appointed leader at a meeting of the Taliban's top representatives, many of whom are based in the Pakistani city of Quetta, according to the sources who were present at the shura, or gathering.

"The shura held outside Quetta unanimously elected Mullah Mansour as the new emir of the Taliban," said one commander at the Wednesday night meeting.

"The shura will release a statement shortly."

Siraj Haqqani, leader of the powerful Haqqani militant faction, will be a deputy to Mansour, both commanders added.

But AFP reported that the militants are yet to choose a leader.

Militant sources have told AFP that

Mansour is leading the race to take over, but stressed that no final decision has been taken yet.

A Taliban official said the process had several stages: the group's ruling council would choose a candidate who must then be approved by a college of religious clerics.

Omar's son Mullah Yakoub was favoured by some commanders, sources said, but at 26 he was considered too young and inexperienced for such a key role.

If elected, Mansour will be only the second leader the Taliban have had since Omar, an elusive figure rarely seen in public who founded the ultra-conservative Islamist movement in the 1990s.

The Taliban eventually conquered most of Afghanistan, imposing strict Islamic law before being driven from power in 2001 by a US-led military intervention.

The Afghan government said on Wednesday that Omar died more than two years ago in the Pakistani city of Karachi.

"We are aware of the reports and trying to ascertain the details," Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Qazi Khalilullah said.

The announcement threw into

disarray a fledgling peace process fostered by neighbouring Pakistan aimed at ending more than 13 years of war between the hardline Islamist Taliban and the Western-backed Afghan government in Kabul.

The two Taliban commanders did not directly confirm Mullah Omar's death, but one said: "If we are electing a new leader to head the movement, you can yourself understand what that implies".

The Taliban's official spokesman said in a statement early yesterday that its official team of negotiators based in Doha was "not aware of this process" in Pakistan.

Later in the day, the Pakistani foreign office said a planned second round of meetings set for today would be delayed at the request of the Taliban leadership. The two sides held inaugural talks in Pakistan earlier this month.

Mansour's appointment is unlikely to please everyone in the Taliban. Key field commanders have criticised the peace process and vowed to fight for power, rather than negotiate it.

Omar's death marks a significant blow to the Taliban, which is riven by internal divisions and threatened by the rise of the Islamic State group, the Middle East jihadist outfit that is making steady inroads in Afghanistan.

# Mosque caretaker killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals murdered a khadem (caretaker) of a mosque at Dhanmondi in the capital last night.

The victim is Dulal Gazi, 50, of Barisal. He had been working at Dhanmondi Eidgah Jam-e-Mosque for the last 18 years, said police.

The imam of the mosque came out of his room around 8:45pm for offering his Esha prayers, said Rezaul Karim, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Dhanmondi zone).

When he returned to the room around 9:15pm, he found the body of Dulal lying on the floor. The victim was strangled to death with a towel, said the police official.

Quoting the imam, whose name could not be known immediately, Rezaul said Tk 2,000 was also missing from the room.

Police suspect Dulal was killed by thieves.

# Israel threatens of preemptive Sinai strikes

AFP, Jerusalem

A senior military officer has said Israel could attack militants affiliated to the Islamic State group in neighbouring Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, if they were about to attack Israeli soldiers or civilians.

The "threat of terror from Sinai" has grown in recent years, Brigadier General Royi Elcabets said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the end of his two years as commander of the Edom division that controls the border with the Sinai, Elcabets said IS's Egypt affiliate could attempt to attack Israel.

# Europe-Australia

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drastically lowers fuel consumption.

Dutch airline KLM has teamed up with Delft University of Technology to produce concept designs that could be the future of planes.

The main feature is a wing design that will ensure better fuel efficiency due to the aircraft being more streamlined.

The AHEAD aircraft, which stands for Advanced Hybrid Engine Aircraft Development, is being designed to carry 300 passengers over a range of 8,700 miles.

Writing on the company's blog, KLM engineer Rob Duivis says: "A blended wing body is one of the very promising designs to minimise the drag and, is so doing, making aircraft much more fuel-efficient."

Another key feature are the two hybrid engines, which make the plane much greener.

The first burns either cryogenic hydrogen or liquefied natural gas (LNG), and the second burns either kerosene or biofuel, thus reducing emissions into the atmosphere.

This is instead of turbofan engines, where heated air powers turbines.

"By using two different combustor and fuel systems, the engine's total efficiency increases and emissions are reduced," added Duivis.

But don't get excited just yet, as KLM's concept is a long way from becoming reality.

"The AHEAD design is a long-term study, with many aspects yet to be researched," said Duivis.

"The timeframe for introduction of an aircraft of this type is expected to appear sometime around 2050."

# Reunion waits

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milk. Magura superintendent of police had made the arrangement for sending Nazma to Dhaka, he added.

"Though Nazma is too weak and cannot do anything without the help of others, we had to bring her here for the baby's survival," Bacchu said.

Nazma was undergoing treatment at the gynaecology ward of the DMCH.

Asraf-ul-Haq, head of Paediatric Surgery Department at the DMCH, told The Daily Star that the newborn was sent to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the DMCH from the Paediatric Surgery Ward yesterday as she was at the risk of being infected with neonatal septicaemia.

Her platelets count has dropped to 50,000, which is supposed to be at least 1.5 lakh, he said.

"We asked for the mother of the newborn as the baby needs breast feeding to fight septicaemia," the doctor added.

Khawja Abdul Gofur, assistant director (admin) of the DMCH, said the

immune system of the newborn was very weak because of her low birth weight. Her weight is 2kg, which is supposed to be 2.5kg after birth, he added.

Sheuli Begum, aunt of Suraiya, said the baby had become feeble after doctors gave her several stitches on Wednesday.

The factional clash between the Jubo League men in Magura had left one killed and another injured.

Bacchu, however, said his family was still worried as the attackers were threatening them over the phone to withdraw the case they filed on Friday against 16 people, including Magura district BCL Vice President Sen Suman.

Two people have been arrested so far. Though eight days have gone by, police could not arrest any of the 14 other accused in the case.

Asaduzzaman Munshi, officer-in-charge of Magura Police Station, said additional police were deployed at Doyarpar area. Law enforcers were trying to arrest the other accused.

# India hangs Yakub

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president and Supreme Court rejected 11th-hour appeals for clemency.

"It is complete. Yakub Memon was hanged today at 7:00am," Nagpur police sub-inspector RV Halami told AFP.

Memon, a former accountant, was convicted of plotting a series of co-ordinated bomb attacks that rocked India's financial capital Mumbai in March 1993, killing 257 people and injuring around 700 more.

The Bombay Stock Exchange, the offices of Air India and a luxury hotel were among about a dozen targets of the blasts.

They were believed to have been staged by Mumbai's Muslim-dominated underworld in retaliation for anti-Muslim violence that had killed more than 1,000 people a few months earlier.

Security was tight near the targets and at sensitive areas across Mumbai yesterday, with heavily armed police outside Memon's former home and at a cemetery where the body was taken for burial late in the afternoon.

Memon and two of his brothers were convicted in 2006 by a specially-designated court using controversial anti-terror legislation that was introduced after the 1993 attacks and is no longer on the statute books.

The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act lapsed after two years and was never revived, with activists accusing the government of using it to harass Muslims.

Memon was the only one of 11 people found guilty over the atrocity to have his death sentence upheld on appeal. The others had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

He denied any involvement in the blasts during a staggered trial and appeal process that bitterly divided opinion in India and led to calls from rights activists and an ex-judge for his life to be spared.

Former Supreme Court judge Harjit Singh Bedi had also said reports that Memon co-operated with investigators and returned voluntarily from Pakistan, where he fled, should have been taken into account when hearing his appeal.

Others pointed out that one of his brothers, Tiger Memon, was alleged to have masterminded the attacks, along with Mumbai gang boss Dawood Ibrahim. Both have been on the run since 1993.

Lawyers for Memon made a last-ditch mercy petition to Supreme Court Chief Justice HL Dattu after Indian President Pranab Mukherjee

rejected a clemency plea late Wednesday.

But the court dismissed it in a pre-dawn hearing, paving the way for Memon's execution shortly afterwards.

Kirti Ajmera, who was severely injured in the bombing at the stock exchange, welcomed the hanging.

"I'm happy that justice has been done, although it has been delayed by 22 years, but ultimately I will not be satisfied until Tiger and Dawood are punished too," the 58-year-old told AFP.

Amnesty India described the execution as "cruel and inhuman".

"It is a misguided attempt to prevent terrorism, and a disappointing use of the criminal justice system as a tool for retribution," executive director Aakar Patel said in a statement.

Eight members of the Memon family were charged over the attacks and all denied any role in the atrocity.

They left for Dubai in the days before the 1993 bombings, but all except Tiger were arrested when they returned to India the following year.

Memon's father died during the long-running legal proceedings, three were acquitted and three others are serving life in prison, including Yakub's sister-in-law, Rubina Memon.

The attack also embroiled Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt, who is serving time for buying weapons from gangsters accused of orchestrating the bombings.

Executions in India are only carried out in the rarest of circumstances.

# JSC, JDC exams

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Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday made the announcement in a meeting with national monitoring committee on JSC examinations.

The tests would be held in a peaceful atmosphere with no scopes for examinees to resort to unfair means, he said.

Stern actions would be taken against those who would be found involved in question leak and spreading rumours about this, the minister warned.

Nahid further said those involved in preparation, moderation and distribution of question papers in different boards and at Bangladesh Government Press, known as BG Press, would be kept under observation.

All the coaching centres and photocopy shops across the country would also be under watch, he added.

# Fine start, faulty ending

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team to put pressure on their opponents on a tricky surface. Although most of the batsmen played patiently they still paid the price for poor shot selection.

Imrul misjudged the length of a very good delivery from Jean-Paul Duminy that ended his patient 93-ball 30, but there was no answer to why Tamim Iqbal chased a wide delivery from Steyn and edged a simple catch to Hashim Amla at slip only to become the landmark 400th victim of one of the greatest modern day fast bowlers.

Bangladesh went for lunch at 75 for one with Mominul looking composed, but the left-hander's injudicious back-foot cut gave Duminy his first of two quick wickets and the Proteas a major breakthrough. He scored an 87-ball 40.

Mushfiquur joined Mahmudullah to repair the damages and both looked solid as the Tigers went for tea at 154 for three, but the latter's sluggish flick against Steyn landed at short midwicket, ending his innings on 35 after 91 balls.

Then it was Litton Das, who made his maiden fifty in the Chittagong Test, who

departed after playing a premeditated sweep shot against a quicker ball from Duminy that turned and bounced sharply to get the batsman's leading edge straight to short midwicket. Shakib Al Hasan, on 35, had no answer to a beautiful and probably the best delivery of the day from Morne Morkel that squared the batsman up.

Steyn finished the day with three wickets. Duminy also picked up three to usher hopes for the Bangladesh spinners including leg-spinner Jubair Hossain.

# Govt to defend

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defend the convict during the hearing on the appeal, but there is none to defend the government. This enables many convicts to get acquittal on charges.

Hailing the government's decision, an executive magistrate told this newspaper that it would help them protect the government's interest in a better way.

A mobile court can penalise an offender with up to two years in jail or fine him an unspecified amount.

Speaking at the meeting, some deputy commissioners said they forward some complaints of common people to the police, but the cops do not take those complaints into cognisance. As a result, people don't get service from the government.

The law minister assured the DCs of issuing an order to the authorities concerned to this end. He asked the officials to encourage people to resolve disputes through pursuing the alternative dispute resolution system to keep cases out of courts, said meeting sources.

Talking to newsmen after the conclusion of the conference, Cabinet Secretary M. Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said the DCs put forward 565 proposals for the government, including 31 priority suggestions for the prime minister.

"We've asked the DCs to work as per directives of the prime minister,"

he mentioned, adding that the Cabinet Division would regularly monitor whether the PM's directives were implemented or not.

Inaugurating the conference, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday issued a set of 21 directives to the deputy commissioners. She asked the officials to come out of old bureaucratic mentality.

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY**

Public Administration Minister Syed Ashraf Islam informed the DCs that the government wants to decentralise the administration. The DCs will have to play an important role to achieve the goal, he added.

The government should hire additional manpower for the local administrations, said DCs. They also proposed installing CCTVs at key government establishments to ensure security.

**CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRY**

Some DCs demanded the government build hotels and motels in tourist destinations. They also wanted additional flights to several districts and introduction of an easy luggage handling system at airports to flourish tourism in the country.

Minister Rashed Khan Menon told reporters that he sought cooperation from the DCs to bring 10 lakh foreign tourists to Bangladesh in next three years.

**INFORMATION MINISTRY**

The DCs proposed setting up community radio stations in the coastal areas to alert fishermen about any possible natural disasters in the deep sea.

Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu asked the officials to preserve the information and data about Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the symbols of Liberation War across the country to celebrate Bangabandhu's 100th birth anniversary and 50 years of the country's independence in 2020 and 2021.

Terming mass media the fourth estate of the country, he said the DCs should be media-friendly.

The administration must ensure free flow of information and resist "information-terrorism" and yellow journalism, he added.

**SHIPPING MINISTRY**

Some DCs proposed that the ministry should bring all the vessels under a registration system and issue licences to master drivers to check river accidents and build a professional workforce for the sector. The officials also urged the ministry to dredge some rivers to save them.

Minister Shajahan Khan directed the DCs to protect rivers from grabbers, and demarcate the boundaries of all rivers across the country.

The government has a plan to procure 20 new dredgers by this year, he told reporters after the meeting.