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McKinnon new Commonwealth Secy-Gen

From Toufique Imrose Khalidi

DURBAN, South Africa, Nov 12: Don McKinnon, the New Zealand foreign minister, was chosen as the successor to Commonwealth Secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku today, President Mbeki announced here.

"We have elected Mr McKinnon as the new secretary general of the Commonwealth, the South African president said in a brief statement after a closed-door executive session of the heads of government.

McKinnon, who came accompanying Mbeki and Chief Anyaoku at the press conference, stayed back to make a statement and answer queries.

For McKinnon, it was a happy finale after "two and a half years of campaign".

"It will be warmly received in New Zealand having lost the rugby, cricket and football," a beaming McKinnon said.

He said he would strive to take the Commonwealth to the public, who knew very little about the organisation.

Bangladeshi's Farooq Sobhan was the other contender.

Probe report

12 cops named as Shikdar's beneficiaries

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 12: Twelve people now serving in the KMP and district police have been named in the probe committee report as beneficiaries of Ershad Shikdar.

The report was submitted on Thursday by the committee headed by NSI director Masudul Huq.

Additional Police Commissioner AHM Nooruddin, Deputy Police Commissioner Abdullah Azad, ASI Tamizuddin, constables Alam, Abul, Kabir, Uttam, Razak and Meti and Naik Jahangir of KMP and District Police Super Ataul Gani Badsha and ASP Khandaker Md Iqbal have been named in the report as Ershad's beneficiaries.

When contacted, none of the

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Opposition to bring out processions tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance, has taken action preparations for Sunday's 'mass procession', sources said.

As part of the programme, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote will organise public meetings and bring out processions separately in all city, district and thana headquarters.

Sources told The Daily Star that the alliance has decided to turn Dhaka into a 'city of processions' on Sunday.

The parties will announce fresh programmes simultaneously from their meetings.

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Prayer Timings

November 13

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-23	5-28
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Rockets explode near US, UN offices in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 12: Attackers fired seven rockets that exploded near the US Embassy, the UN building, an American cultural centre and downtown Islamabad government buildings today, wounding at least six people, officials and witnesses said.

"This is quite serious," Gen Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military ruler, told The Associated Press. He had no immediate comment on the identity of the attackers, saying it was under investigation.

The explosions occurred within a two-minute span over several kilometers in the centre of the capital. Three blasts occurred near Pakistani government buildings, about half a kilometer from Parliament and its adjacent President House.

Before today, there had been little unrest in Pakistan since Musharraf ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a coup last month.

"These are rockets fired from cars by unidentified people who

have managed to flee," said a senior city official, Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Ali Khan.

A US official said no Americans were hurt.

The explosions came two days before a UN deadline for the Taliban militia leadership in Afghanistan, Pakistan's neighbour, to turn over suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden for trial. The United States accuses him of masterminding bombings of US embassies in Africa last year.

The Taliban, and supporters that include Muslim groups in Pakistan, have warned the United Nations against a plan to impose sanctions on Afghanistan to force bin Laden's handover.

Gen Pervez Musharraf today said he is willing to talk to Taliban militia in a bid to resolve the issue of suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden.

"If he is involved in terrorism, yes, surely, I would like to ne-

gotiate with the Afghan government... to resolve the issue," Musharraf told AP.

"Two of the explosions were near the American Centre and the US Embassy," centre spokesman Mark Wentworth said. "All the Americans are safe."

Hundreds of people gathered outside the American Centre to watch a car burning there. A blackened rocket launcher could be seen inside it, and witnesses reported seeing rockets fired from cars just before the explosions occurred.

"I saw the car jump five to 10 yards (meters) after the blast, but luckily no one was close to it," said witness Anjum Ahmed.

Police and paramilitary troops patrolled the streets and searched vehicles. They erected barricades and pushed away on-lookers, warning of the possibility of more explosions.

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Durban 'club of democracies' begins talking prosperity



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is greeted by South African President Thabo Mbeki (C) and his wife Zanele (R) upon her arrival at the International Conference Centre in Durban yesterday for the Commonwealth summit. —AFP photo

From Toufique Imrose Khalidi

DURBAN, South Africa: Nov 12: South Africa paid tribute to the 50-year-old modern Commonwealth for helping it end apartheid and President Thabo Mbeki called for building "democratic, non-sexist and prosperous" societies at the opening session of the summit here this morning.

As "the free and democratic South Africa" took pride in hosting the last CHOGM of the millennium, the outgoing secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku called the Commonwealth "a club of democracies" which "today meets at the summit without any representatives of a military regime".

The head of the 54-nation organisation, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, recalled the London Declaration which launched the modern Commonwealth 50 years ago and vowed to "remain united as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress".

Mbeki however served a reminder to all that "the democratic project is a matter that

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No possibility of hartal before Shab-e-Barat

By Rezaul Karim

The opposition alliance will announce some fresh agitation programmes tomorrow to intensify its movement for resignation of the government.

There is no possibility of calling any hartal before the Shab-e-Barat, considering annual examinations at educational institutions.

But there will be a 48-hour rail-road barricade across the country at the month end. Tentative dates for the barricade are November 28-29 (Sunday-Monday), top leaders in the alliance told The Daily Star yesterday.

The programme will be announced at tomorrow's separate public meetings of the alliance components in the city.

The liaison committee of the four component parties — BNP, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote — will finalise the programme at its meetings today and tomorrow, the leaders said.

During the barricade, inter-district movement of trains and motorised vehicles will not be

allowed, but transport services inside cities and towns will not be obstructed.

If there occurs any untoward incident causing loss of life due to government action during the barricade, the opposition may announce a no-stop 72-hour hartal, possibly from November 30 to December 2 (Tuesday-Thursday), they said.

Before the Shab-e-Barat, there will be some 'light programmes' like demonstrations and public meetings in different parts of the country and mass contact to drum up support for the planned barricade.

Though one or two of our alliance partners do not want to spare even school examinations, but BNP as a responsible opposition, is determined not to disrupt the examinations," said a top leader of the party.

Meanwhile, time for the proposed meeting of the four party chiefs — Khaleda Zia, HM Ershad, Golam Azam and Azizul Haq — is also being discussed.

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Commissioning of BJMB BIWTC income from ferry service falls 'drastically'

By Staff Reporter

The annual income of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) has declined by more than Tk 23 crore after commissioning of Bangladesh Jamuna Multi Purpose Bridge (BJMB).

The number of vehicles using BIWTC ferry service along the Aricha-Nagarbari route fell 'drastically' after opening of the BJMB, sources said.

The income of BIWTC fell to Tk 62 crore in fiscal 1998-99 from Tk 85.58 crore in the previous fiscal.

Large number of vehicles plying on the road connecting Dhaka with northern districts, which earlier used the BIWTC ferry services, have changed the

route and are now using BJMB to cross the mighty Jamuna.

Talking to a group of newsmen on Thursday, BIWTC Chairman A K M Shamsul Haq said, as income from Aricha-Nagarbari route declined, the corporation pressed some of its ferry boats into service in other routes.

"To increase its income, the corporation is going to introduce new ferry services along some new routes." As many as 20 new ferries are going to join the BIWTC's fleet. Of these, four are new Ro-Ro ferries. Another 16 are being repaired with new engines.

The new ferries will be in-

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Mammi murder Mother, sister of Ripon may be chargesheeted

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 12: Charge sheet in the Mahmuda Sultana Mammi murder case is expected to be submitted by police in next ten days, investigators told The Daily Star today.

The victim's husband Abul Kalam Azad Ripon, his mother Monwara Begum and only sister Rukhsana Yasmin Runa are likely to be chargesheeted in the case. Seven-month pregnant Mammi was killed by her husband in the early hours of October 30.

Ripon's father Abdul Aziz Sikder and two brothers — Abu Zafar Swapan and Abu Bakr Shimul — are likely to be dropped from the charge, police said.

Ripon's sister Runa who was taken on two days' remand was sent to jail custody today after interrogation.

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Sharif's party launches legal battle

KARACHI, Nov 12: Party supporters of the deposed Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif today launched a legal battle to defend their leader against accusations he plotted to kill the country's military ruler, reports AFP.

"Sharif is innocent and the case is a bundle of contradictions so we have decided to launch a legal battle to defend him," said Iqbal Radh, a member of the legal team at Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League party.

Sharif, ousted in a coup last month, has been accused of conspiring to kill the country's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf.

The former premier is also being investigated for kidnapping and attempting to hijack a plane and if convicted he could face the death penalty.

Sharif, 50, was pushed from office after he tried to sack Musharraf, then head of the army, while he was out of the country last month.

Sylhet Cadet College tragedy Adjutant, instructor suspended

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 12: The Sylhet Cadet College has been closed sine die following the death of two students yesterday.

Iqbal and Reza, both students of class seven, were crushed under a roller on the college ground yesterday morning.

Students were sent to their houses by inter-city trains and special buses today, said an official of the college this afternoon.

Adjutant of the college, Major Manjur and Instructor Haidar Enamul Haque have been put under suspension. Some more employees may face suspension on charge of negligence in duty, sources said.

Those put under suspension will be allowed 2 or 3 days to vacate their quarters in the college campus. They will be immediately attached to the Station Commander, Jalalabad Cantonment, Sylhet, the source added.

The two committees formed to probe the incident started work today.

An official while talking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity admitted that PT Instructor Enamul Haque had asked the students to pull the iron roller on the college ground in the name of physical exercise in the last 3 days. It is not allowed, he said. The groundsman are to do the job, not the students.

The College Adjutant also can not ignore the responsibility as things took place in his presence, he said.

Sources claimed that three

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Army redeployed in Saidabad area for smooth traffic movement

By Staff Correspondent

Army was re-deployed in the city's Saidabad area yesterday to ensure smooth traffic movement.

"Police and army will jointly manage traffic in the area", said a top official of traffic police.

Army has been deployed there for the second time. Earlier, they were deployed at the beginning of the year.

The joint operation involving 100 personnel from each side is led by DC Traffic Mush-taque and Lt Col Saif, sources said.

The operation followed a meeting between the Chief of Army Staff and top police officials.

"The joint operation will continue as long as required", a police official said.

Computer shop looted in city

By Staff Correspondent

Armed goons looted computer accessories and cash worth about Tk 6.5 lakh from a computer shop at Shantinagar in the city Thursday afternoon.

A case was filed with Moti-jheel thana by Shafikul Islam, owner of the shop, police said. None was arrested till writing of this report last evening.

The owner of the company told The Daily Star that some of his rivals might have been involved in the incident. He, however, could not specify who they were.

A group of eight people brandishing pistols took the staff members and clients present in the office and took away

hostage the accessories and cash at about 3:25 pm Thursday, it was alleged in the FIR.

One of the gang members was carrying a mobile telephone set in his hands, the FIR said, adding that they received instructions on the phone. The gang member also informed someone over the phone that

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Former president Mohammadullah passes away

Former President Mohammadullah died of a heart attack on Thursday night at the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases here. He was 78, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife, three sons, two daughters, a host of relations and a large number of well-wishers and political colleagues.

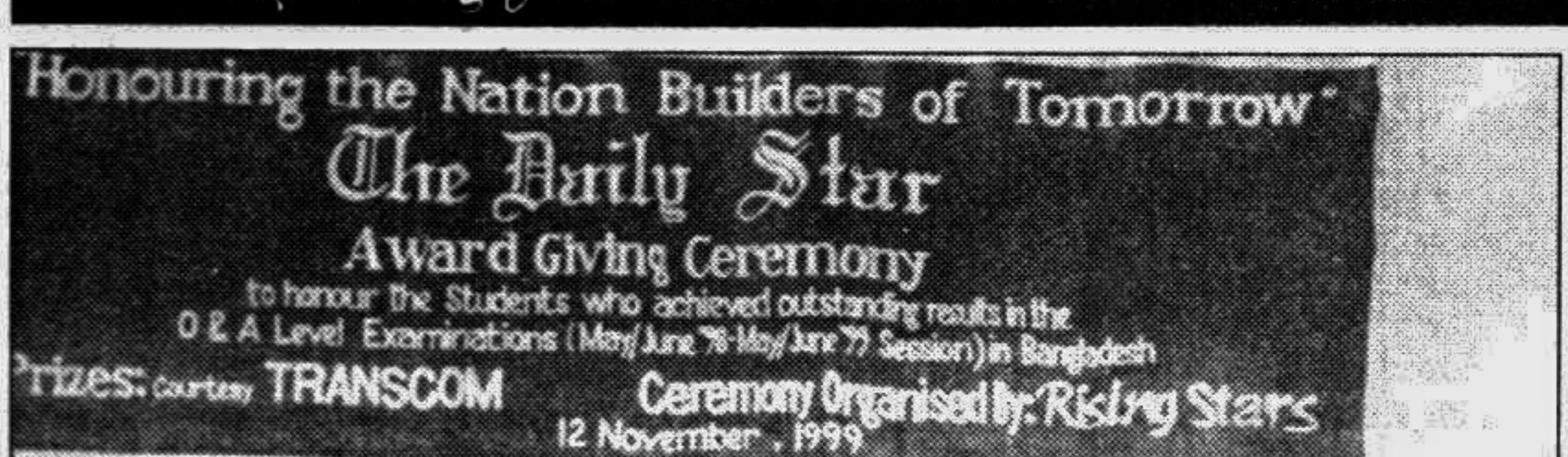
His namaj-e-janaza was held at the Bangladesh Navy Mosque after Juma prayers yesterday and later he was laid to rest at the Bangladesh Navy Graveyard at Banani in the city, family sources said.

He was President from December 1973 to January 1975. Earlier, he was elected Deputy Speaker of the first Constituent Assembly of independent Bangladesh and later became speaker after the death of its first Speaker Shah Abdul Hamid.

Born in Noakhali in 1921, Mohammadullah passed the Entrance examinations from Luximpur High School in 1938 and had his graduation with

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The Daily Star honours the nation builders of tomorrow



The speakers and participants at the award giving ceremony yesterday. — Star photo

Free country from curse of illiteracy, poverty

By Staff Correspondent

With a view to inspiring the students to strive harder for academic excellence, The Daily Star honoured yesterday the highest performing students in O' Level and A' Level examinations held between May/June '98 and May/June '99 under the Cambridge University and the University of London.

In a unique function entitled "Honouring the nation builders of tomorrow", attended by 209 award receiving students, teachers from all participating schools and parents, Education Minister ASHK Sadeque gave away the colourful certificates and prizes as the chief guest.

It was for the first time that brilliant achievers in O-level and A-level examinations were honoured by a national daily.

In addition to the certificates, special prizes were given to students receiving highest marks in specific subjects. Grand prizes were awarded to eight students who received 10 and 11 'A's in their O-level examinations.

The function was also attended by Nurul Islam Nahid, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education; David C Walker, High Commissioner of UK; Rakib Uddin Ahmed, Education Secretary and Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star.

The Education Minister in his brief address said Bangladesh needs more scientists, engineers, doctors, computer programmers and management experts which "we do not have now." He urged all to come forward and make all-out efforts to make over a country free from the curse of illiteracy and poverty.

Six science and technology universities will begin functioning by next year and six more will be established later," the minister said.

Rakib Uddin Ahmed said English is no longer a foreign language, rather, it has become a tool of education, business and communication.

The government is trying to encourage English education so that our children can get more opportunities abroad, he added.

David C Walker appreciated the excellent results of Bangladeshi students in O and A level examinations and said "O and A levels are now truly international examinations."

He said English was previously a language of Anglo Saxon or British but had now become a global means of communication.

Nurul Islam Nahid said, "Free the country from the clutches of illiteracy and poverty to make Sonar Bangla a reality, as dreamt by the mar-

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WELCOME

OUR HEARTIEST FELICITATION TO THE HON'BLE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS PRESIDENT TO CHITTAGONG



THE INDUSTRIALISTS & BUSINESSMEN GREET THE RESPECTED GUESTS TO CHITTAGONG — THE INDUSTRIAL HUB OF SOUTH & SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE COMMERCIAL CAPITAL OF BANGLADESH.

WE ARE GLAD & PROUD TO BE ABLE TO ARRANGE THIS AUGUST GATHERING OF CHAMBERS PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH IN CHITTAGONG.



CHITTAGONG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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