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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.

Bangladesh'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 AHIM Nooruddin, Deputy Police Commissioner Abdullah Azad, ASI Tamizuddin, constables Alim, Abdul, Kabir, Uttam, Razzak and Moti and Naik Jeangir 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

See Page 12 Col 8

## Opposition to bring out processions tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has taken about 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.

See Page 12 Col 8

## Inside Today

### Article

## Not the 'Other Half' but Part and Parcel of the 'Whole'

Column: Beneath the Surface by Abdul Bayes Page 4

### Star Literature

Book review: Of state and nationalism: Fiction: The inseparables; and Poems Pages 6 & 7

### Business

Garments owners' reluctance to repay creates forced loans

Barshefsky discouraged by talks with China on WTO entry Pages 8 & 9

### Prayer Timings

November 13		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
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 Pervaiz 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.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blasts.

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 handing over.

Gen Pervaiz 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.

Behind the US Embassy a UN car was burning.

"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 onlookers, warning of the possibility of more explosions.

See Page 11 Col 7

## 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.

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

See Page 12 Col 7

## 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 Bangabandhu 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-

See Page 11 Col 8

## Mammi murder Mother, sister of Ripon may be chargesheeted

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 12: Charge sheet in the Mahimuda 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 Abdul Kalam Azad Ripon, his mother Monwara Begum and only sister Rukhsana Yasmin Runa are likely to be charged 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.

See Page 11 Col 1

## 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 Radhi, 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.

See Page 11 Col 1

## 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 Havinder 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.

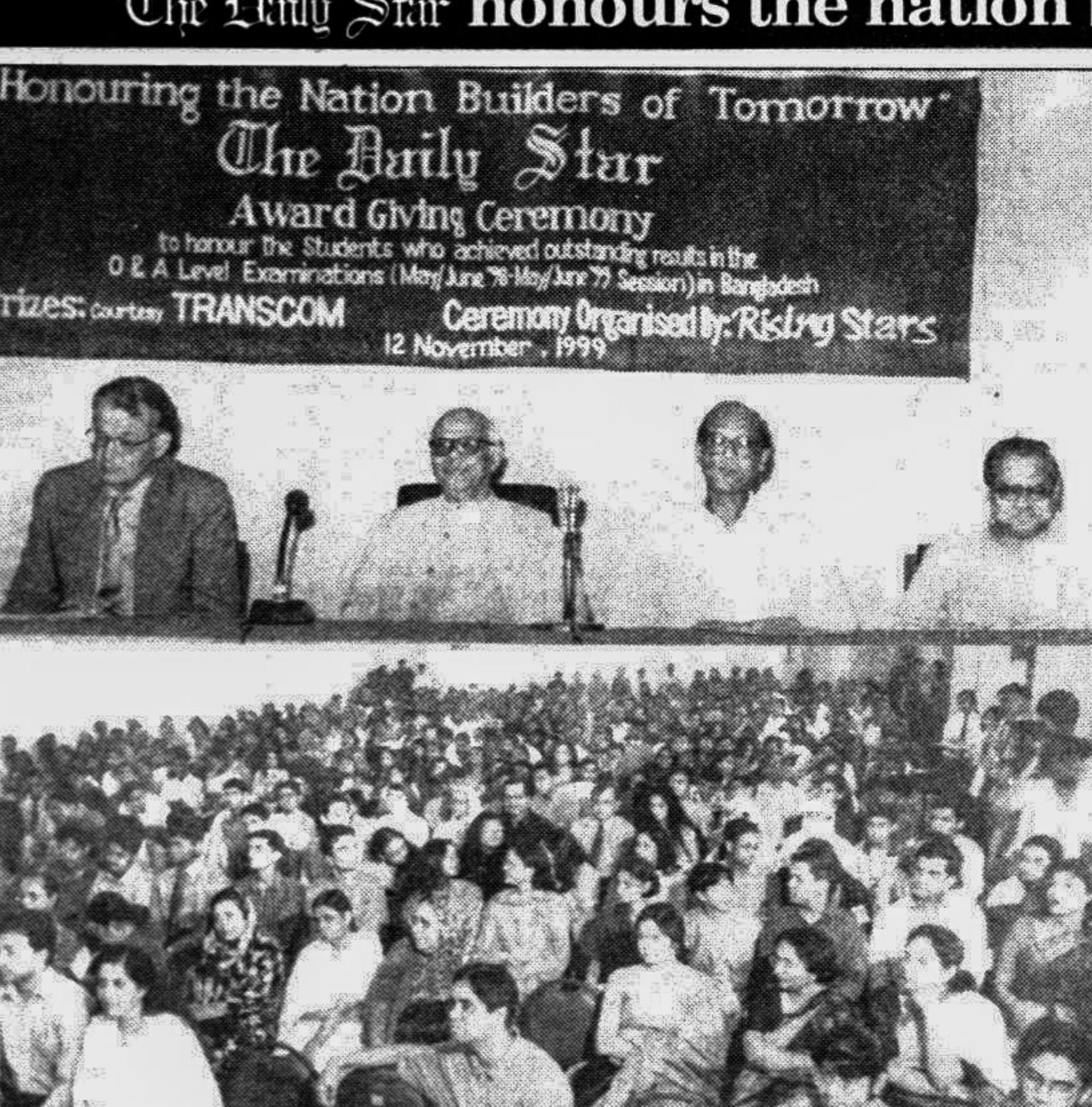
An official while talking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity admitted that PT Instructor Enamul had asked the students to pull the iron roller on the college ground in the name of physical exercise in the last 3 days. It is not allowed, he said. The groundsmen are to do the job, not the students.

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

Sources claimed that three

See Page 11 Col 2

## The Daily Star honours the nation builders of tomorrow



The speakers and participants at the award giving ceremony yesterday.

## 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 now has become a global means of communication.

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