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35 days to the  
3rd Millennium

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## Hartal claims one in capital, hurts 60

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed and 60 people were injured, three of them bullet-hit, in incidents of violence in the capital and other parts of the country during the opposition-called hartal yesterday.

Police detained 36 people in the city on charges of picketing and rioting.

The BNP-led opposition alliance called the hartal demanding resignation of the Awami League government and fresh general elections.

Nasir Miah, a truck driver

was killed when a petrol bomb was hurled on his vehicle at Shahjahanpur in the city at about 5:00 pm (although our Staff Photographer took a snap of the dead, we decided not to print it). The two helpers of the truck - Babul and Zakir - were also injured.

The three were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Nasir, 30, was declared dead and critically injured Zakir was admitted to the hospital with burn injury.

Chase and counter chase

between pickets and anti-hartal activists, allegedly backed by police, took place in different parts of the city during the hartal hours, witnesses said.

Bombs were blasted sporadically during the day. In some areas, gun shots were also heard. The incidents of bomb blast increased during the last hours of the hartal, witnesses said.

Harun-ur-Rashid and Showkat Hussain, reportedly Jamaat-e-Islami workers, suspected of the bomb blast, were arrested.

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## Shipwreck off Chinese coast kills 150

Many more missing in freezing waters

BEIJING, Nov 25: A ferry pummeled by violent winds and towering waves caught fire and cracked open off the coast of eastern China, leaving more than 150 dead and many others missing, official media and local officials said today, reports AP.

The ship, the Dashun, wrecked amid gale-force winds late Wednesday near Yantai, in eastern China's Shandong province, as it headed for the northeastern port of Dalian carrying 312 passengers and crew, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

More than 150 people were killed and more than 100 others were missing, the government-run China News Service reported from Yantai. It said 36 people had been rescued. No foreigners were among the dead or missing, who were mainly from Shandong and China's northeast, it said.

"It was very tragic. The sea was covered with bodies," said a Yantai city fire brigade officer.

who refused to give his name.

Asked if rescuers had found any survivors, he replied: "Yes, too few."

He added that waves were pushing bodies toward the shore.

First word of the disaster came from a passenger with a cell phone who called Dalian police, said an official at the city's Sea Inspection Bureau.

The ferry sent out distress signals when flames were found on its second deck, but other ships in the area were unable to approach the vessel due to the weather conditions, Xinhua said.

The fire spread to the third deck, and the main helm of the ship broke apart about four hours later. The ship later stopped sending distress signals and drifted until it was found stranded late Wednesday, the report said.

The vessel, operated by the Yanda Ferry Company, was also carrying 60 vehicles, the report said.

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## 5-year-old used as shield, stabbed in city

By Staff Correspondent

A criminal stabbed a five-year-old boy at Gopibagh in the city in a desperate bid to escape after having stabbed a young man, using the minor as a human shield yesterday morning.

The infant was identified as Babu, son of one Malek, of Gopibagh area. With critical stab wounds in his abdomen, Babu was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), police said.

The other injured — identified as Jafar, 22, — was also admitted to DMCH with stab injuries on his head, police added.

Local people caught Wasim Abdullah, the criminal and handed him over to Sutrapur police.

According to police Jafar had an altercation with Wasim Wednesday night. Following the incident Wasim stabbed Jafar on the head at Gopibagh area at about 10 am yesterday.

Local people rushed to the spot on hearing Jafar's screaming and chased Wasim. It was at this stage that Wasim took Babu hostage at dagger point and threatened to stab the boy if the people proceeded to interfere.

At one stage Wasim stabbed the minor Babu in the abdomen. The local people nabbed him, beat him up and later handed him over to Sutrapur police.

Wasim was produced before the CMM's Court yesterday. A case was filed with Sutrapur thana yesterday.

## Boy and the brute



### Sleeping off the trauma

First he was held hostage by a mugger for a safe passage and then stabbed. Five-year-old Anwar Hossain has survived but will he be able to leave behind the trauma?

— Star photo: Anisur Rahman

## CSE hopes to dodge Y2K

Lone bourse in the world to trade through millennium chaos

By M Shamsur Rahman

The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) will try to bypass the millennium bug by going back to the manual trading system for the time being, just in case its automated procedure gets bogged down.

In the backdrop of worldwide fear of computer malfunctioning at midnight December 31, the CSE is set to begin mock manual trading sessions next month under the so-called 'open outcry system', now a thing of the past after the country's both bourses went online.

If that happens, CSE will be the only trading house in the world to keep open through vulnerable period, according to the Federation of International Stock Exchanges (FIBV).

CSE's wide-area network (WAN) system — which currently links Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong — is dependent on the telephone system provided by the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB).

CSE officials say they are ready to face the glitches of the new millennium and have prepared a two-tier contingency plan to encounter millennium problems if the system fails.

"We have decided to maintain a contingency pool of com-

puters with the brokers' module of the system loaded and a broker would not be allowed to trade from more than one terminal in case the networking system fails," according to Chief Executive Officer Wali-ul-Marof Matin of the CSE.

He says the members would be asked to bring in their own machine if number of traders exceeds the number of machines and, in case of failure in the main system, the CSE will revert to the manual 'open outcry system'.

The members would be asked to appear at CSE's local offices and take part in manual order matching system.

The trading period will be redefined for a brief period allowing trade for limited orders to be prescribed in an order form. The members will receive bid-offer limit or a sheet mentioning the circuit breaker for each company, the CEO said.

"The orders would be entered into the PCs at local offices which will be part of a central system and private cellular services would be used in case of a BTB failure," Marof said.

He said that a trading floor would be ready to auction one scrip at a time.

## Khaleda sees fall of AL govt soon

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said success of the countrywide hartal yesterday made fall of this government imminent.

In a statement yesterday, she congratulated the countrymen for observing the hartal spontaneously and called on the government not to delay its resignation.

She said this "isolated government" has failed miserably, to run the country and has created fresh problems and increased suffering of the people due to its misrule and anti-national activities.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said the ruling party has made the Jatiya

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### Delight in destruction

A rickshaw set ablaze (top), an auto-rickshaw being turned upside down (middle) and a minor boy writhing in pain from bomb injury during hartal hours yesterday. All these poignantly reflect the usual indifference of political activists to the life and property of commoners for whom they say they are out on the streets.

—Star photo: A K M Mohsin and Amran Hossain

## Hasina repeats no-hartal pledge, call for dialogue

KUMARKHALI, Kushtia, Nov 25: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today reiterated that her party would never call hartals and again urged the Leader of the Opposition to come to talks to solve any problem renouncing politics of hartal, reports UNB.

"Please don't kill the people throwing bombs, don't create sufferings of the people calling unnecessary hartals. Join the politics of development, ask me any question you like in Parliament," she requested the leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

### Notice

Due to unavoidable circumstances arising out of yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal, we have been forced to truncate the Daily Star on Friday to 16 pages. We regret our valued readers' inconvenience.

—Editor

liament Khaleda Zia.

Addressing a big public meeting at Kumarkhali Degree College in the afternoon, the Prime Minister reiterated her overture for dialogue with her political rival. "Don't loiter on the streets, come and join discussions to solve all problems."

She said rejecting the offer for talks, the Opposition Leader proved they do not want development of the country. They do not believe dialogue and democracy.

Hasina said they do not do politics for the people, they do not want democracy. If they had faith in democracy, in the people, they could not call hartal so often, which only cause sufferings to the people.

"I have already declared that I will not call hartal anymore, even if I go back to the opposition," said Hasina questioning the justification of opposition-sponsored strikes.

She questioned on what grounds the opposition parties were calling hartal.

She said once they were demanding resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner as their one point and then shifting to demand for resignation of the government, once they are launching movement on one point, once on two points and again on four points.

She alleged that in the name of hartal the BNP-led opposition was taking revenge on the people as they had rejected them in the last elections.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Central Awami League leader Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, State Minister for Textiles K M Jahangir, Jilul Hakim, MP, Col (ret'd) Farook Khan, MP, and local leaders Zaki Hossain Zafar and Abdul Awal Miah also addressed the meeting presided over by thana AL President Abdul Jalil.

## Biman okays Citibank plan

By Shehab Ahmed

Bangladesh Biman management has placed a draft proposal for the approval of the government from the Citibank of New York, which hopes to work as a consultant to the national carrier to off-load its 49 per cent share.

The Biman management initiated the draft from the Citicorp on Tuesday and forwarded it to the government. It has also been sent to the World Bank for vetting, Biman sources said.

the Citibank would send the final proposal detailing the blueprint for privatisation of the Biman's 49 per cent share under a two million dollar World Bank aided project.

Of the 49 per cent 40 per cent shares would be offered to a strategic partner. Biman employees and officials would be given the nine per cent share under the plan, which is expected to be completed by June next year.

Citibank was selected from a

short list of four western companies and banks that participated in a global tender.

The bank would also help the Biman to get a strategic partner to buy the 40 per cent stake in the airlines and help its expansion.

The airline flies to 24 destinations world wide with a fleet of four DC-10-30 aircraft, two A-310 Airbus, three F-86 and two ATP's and 5,500 employees and officials.

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