

POLICE ATTACK ON JOURNALISTS

Stern action to be taken against persons involved

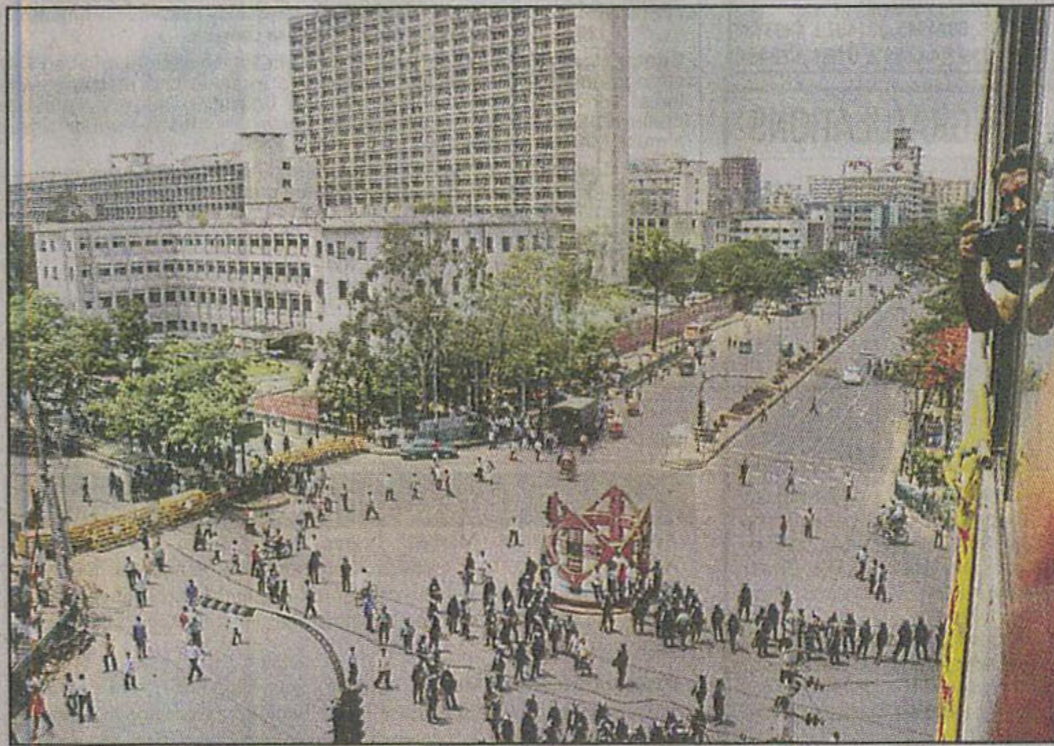
PM tells parliament

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government will take stern action against those responsible for the heinous attack on the journalists in Chittagong recently. "We will go for action as per law of the land after receiving reports from the judicial inquiry committee," she said replying to a supplementary question in the Jatiya Sangsad. She, however, told the House that immediately after the incident, the government had suspended some members of law enforcement agencies on the basis of allegations. Khaleda said it's a responsibility of both the members of law enforcement agencies as well as the media personnel to help each other in

discharging their respective professional duties. She said the government has ensured freedom of press and journalists as well. "There is no obstruction to publishing any sort of objective news and views in the newspapers at present," she added. Replying to Maj (Rtd) Monzur Quader of BNP, she said the BNP government believes in freedom of expression. She said in the past freedom of expression was curtailed and publication of all newspapers barring only four was banned through an executive order. She said only BNP government had provided freedom of expression in late '70s as it believes that democracy and freedom of press are co-related.

Referring to the ongoing drive against adulterated foods, Khaleda said the government has a plan to conduct the drive in a large scale. She was replying to a question from BNP lawmaker M Giasuddin Ahmed. The prime minister said the mobile courts have realised Tk 3.25 crore in fines in 7,000 cases during the Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha. Besides, these courts have taken action against 375 people for the crimes. She said the tendency of making and selling adulterated foods has reduced after the drive while it created huge public awareness. The activities of mobile courts were widely published in media, she added.



Traffic movement on the roads around the secretariat in the city remains suspended for a few hours yesterday as the police barricaded the roads during a demonstration of Jubo Sangram Parishad when its leaders and workers tried to lay siege to the home ministry in protest against terrorism and police atrocities on journalists and women activists.

Full autonomy for local govt bodies demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairmen and members of different Union Parishads (UP) observed a token hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday demanding full autonomy for local government bodies. They staged the demonstration under the banner of Bangladesh Union Parishad Oikya Jote as part of their continued movement to press home their nine-point demand in order to strengthen the Union Parishads and Upzila Parishads and thus promote balanced development. The other demands include arrangement of Upzila Parishad election as per Supreme Court directives in Kudrat-e-Elahi Panir case in 1992, an end to undue interference by parliament members in local government activities and repeal of all laws restricting autonomy of local

government institutions. The local government representatives also demanded that the authority and responsibilities of women members elected to the reserved seats be specified and 25 per cent of the annual development budget be allocated to the Union Parishads. The Jote leaders announced that they will hold a rally at Muktangan in the city on May 15 to press home their demands. Among others, Jote Chairman Golam Sarwar and General Secretary Mushtaqur Rahman Mashur took part in the demonstration. Former minister for law Advocate Abdul Matin Khosru, CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar of Shujan and ASM Abdur Rob expressed solidarity with the movement of the UP chairmen and members.



Outgoing Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi calls on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Arson attack on NGO office condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) has strongly condemned the arson attack on an office of Samata Unnayan Sangstha in Sirajganj and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. A gang of criminals has burnt down the office at village Gunergati

at dead of night recently. Such act is nothing but an evil attempt to impede the progress towards poverty eradication and development, the FNB said in a statement yesterday. It also urged the government to take proper steps so that the NGOs can carry out development activities in a congenial atmosphere.

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