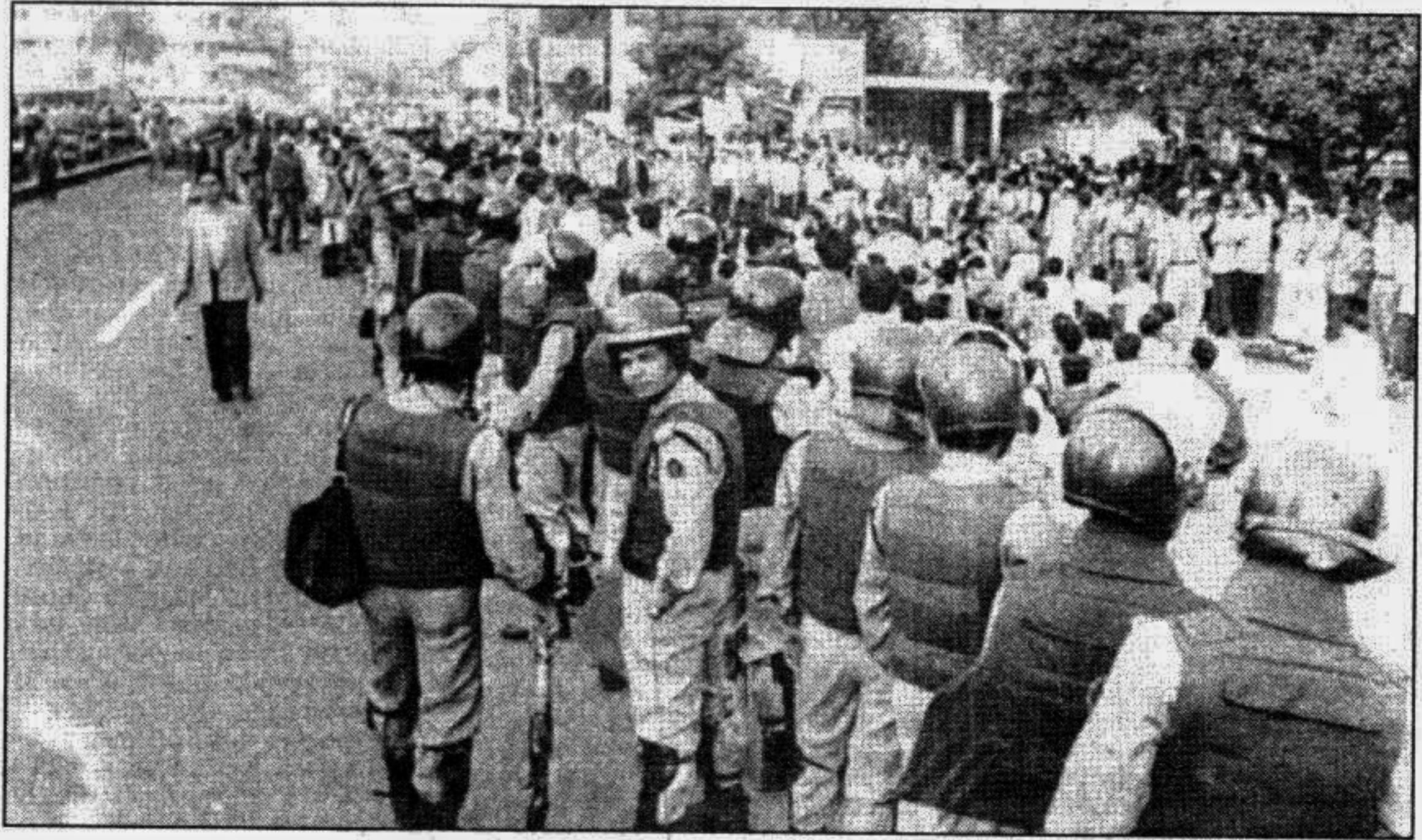




Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the arrest of its activists and police attack on its procession. — Star photo



Police cordoned off the adjoining areas at Muktagong yesterday where JCD activists assembled in larger numbers to stage a protest rally. — Star photo



The unruly activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) vent their spleen by damaging vehicles at city's Bijoynagar area during a protest rally yesterday. — Star photo

US visa services restricted temporarily

The US Embassy in Dhaka has temporarily restricted some visa services in the current month and January next due to unavoidable circumstances, reports UNB.

As the Consular Section of US Embassy must limit some consular services in December 1999 and January 2000, there will be no interviews for non-immigrant visas from January 3 to 5, said a USIS press release.

No interviews for immigrant visas will be conducted from January 1-15 while delivery visa interviews will not be conducted from December 15 to January 15, the release added.

It said there would be no "public information day" on January 4 or 11. Due to American holidays, there will be no consular services on December 26 and January 2.

National communication strategy for arsenic mitigation launched

National Communication Strategy for Arsenic Mitigation in Bangladesh was launched in the city yesterday to help mount countrywide awareness and campaign of disseminating communication materials, holding public meetings, media programmes and training, reports BSS.

Launching the strategy, Health and Family Welfare Minister Salauddin Yusuf described arsenic contamination as a major national health hazard and said arsenic contaminated tubewells were found in 210 thanas under 59 districts out of 64 districts in the country.

He noted that so far 15 arsenic patients had died and another 5,000 patients have been identified while about 25 million people are at risk of being affected by arsenic poisoning.

The Health Minister laid importance on collective effort of the people, different ministries and agencies for mitigating this national problem.

Addressing the launching ceremony, the visiting UNICEF Executive Director Carol Belamny said this important initiative, which would increase awareness and understanding

of the contamination of ground water, is a key part of Bangladesh's response to the arsenic issue.

She said the central message of this campaign is a simple one: The water you drink might not be safe; there are straightforward ways of finding that out, and there are straightforward steps to take in response.

Belamny expressed her optimism that this UNICEF supported communication materials would get the audience's attention and get the message across.

But, she said, UNICEF knows that a communication campaign alone is not enough to respond to the contamination of ground water. All the communicators who will be involved in this particular campaign, who include health workers, doctors, PPHE engineers, agricultural extension workers, imams and high school students, are also now partners in this effort, she added.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Minister for LGRD Saber Hossain Chowdhury said arsenic contamination problem is a health hazard of multi-dimension and united efforts is needed to overcome the problem.

Presided over by LGRD Joint Secretary Syed Anwarul Islam, the ceremony was also addressed by DPHE Chief Engineer Md Gadrizuzzaman.

At the launching ceremony, the Health Minister distributed communication materials to a number of students, health workers, extension workers, tubewell mechanics, union parishad chairmen and imams as part of the programme.

Release of JCD activists demanded

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus as part of its countrywide agitation programme, demanding release of its leaders and workers, including its president Habibunabbi Sohel and general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pinto, reports UNB.

JCD DU unit announced that a demonstration will be staged in front of the DU Vice Chancellor's office at 11 am today.

Police arrested some 51 JCD activists on Friday prior to the 40th convocation ceremony of the Dhaka University.

JCD also held a rally at the foot of the Aparajeyo Bangla at noon, which was chaired by DU unit president Manir Hossain.

Addressing the rally, the JCD leaders condemned police and BCL atrocities on the streets to gag the voice of the opposition student activists.

The student leaders said police and pro-Awami Chhatra League cadres captured the campus during the convocation while most of the students rejected the programme.

Manjur Elahi, ASM Nuruzzaman, Azizul Bari Hejal, Rokibul Islam Bakul, ABM Mosharrif Hossain, Abdul Bari Dany, Shafiqul Bari Babu, Shahidul Islam Babul and Asaduzzaman Asad addressed the rally.

A joint meeting of JCD DU unit, Dhaka city (north), Dhaka city (south), BUET unit, Jagannath University College unit and Jahangirnagar University unit with central committee will be held at the party office at 6 pm today, said a press release.

Meanwhile, JCD acting president Manjur Elahi and general secretary Bazlul Basit Anzu in a statement condemned the killing of two Shibir activists on the Chittagong University campus on Sunday.

PM shocked at attempt on life of Lankan president

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed her shock at the dastardly attempt on the life of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga that had seriously injured her and claimed many precious lives, reports UNB.

In a message yesterday, the Prime Minister wished Lankan President's speedy recovery and return to normal life.

She also sympathised with the families of those killed in the suicide bomb attack and prayed that they will be able to bear the tragic loss with courage and fortitude.

939 arrested in combing operation

A total of 939 people were arrested and eleven illegal arms, 17 bullets and two bombs were recovered during the countrywide combing operation by the police, BDR and Ansars yesterday, reports BSS.

Of the arrested, 428 are wanted criminals and listed terrorists. Others were arrested on different charges.

ICSMB summer session exams Jan 21-27

The Summer Session (July-December 1999) examinations of Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Managers of Bangladesh (ICSMB) will be held from January 21 through January 27, between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm at Notre Dame College of Motijheel, says a press release.

Students have been advised to submit their examination forms along with prescribed fees at the institute office on or before January 6.

Meanwhile, admission for January-June 2000 session is going on at intermediate level. Graduates with 6 points may apply before January 20, the release added.

Bangladeshi third in int'l Quran competition

Gari Mohammad Mozammel Hossain of Bangladesh has secured third place in men's category at the 41st International Al-Quran Reciters Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, held on December 19, reports BSS.

A total of 27 participants from 27 countries took part in the competition, says a press release.

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