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# The Daily Star

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## Rumour of Menon's death sparks off violence

By Staff Correspondent

Worked up by a rumour that Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon had succumbed to a heart attack, mobs went on a rampage setting ablaze six vehicles and damaging at least 80 more in the city yesterday.

The rumour began to spread at around 9:30 in the morning and gradually plunged the city into tension and despair and ultimately led to an hour-long spell of violence.

Most newspaper offices received telephone calls inquiring "is it true that he is dead." Apparently to assure the people, Radio Bangladesh started broadcasting special announcements on Menon's health condition from 12-45 pm.

Work in most offices stopped due to the rumour.

Trouble first started near GPO, when a procession of Ganatantrik Chhatra Ojha (GCO) became violent and damaged at least 40 vehicles parked at the "muktangan" and adjoining areas.

They set a private car on fire in front of GPO and another one in front of the Home Ministry.

Three vehicles were also set ablaze in front of the National Press Club, one of which was totally burnt, and a dozen others were damaged.

Vehicles were also damaged in other parts of the capital including Jagannath College, Paltan, New Market and University areas.

Police charged batons and lobbed teargas shells to dis-

perse the violent mobs near GPO and Press Club areas.

In the wake of the rumour, opposition leaders Sheikh Hasina and a number of Five-Party leaders visited the CMH and informed their party workers that Menon was improving.

Scores of Five-Party activists and political workers thronged the Workers' Party office at Topkhana Road and volunteered to donate blood following appeal that "Menon needs more blood."

The rumour also spread to other parts of the country and phone calls came from the districts asking as to whether Menon was alive or not.

The second spell of violence erupted when unidentified gunmen fired shots and



Menon at the intensive care unit of CMH yesterday. — PID photo

blasted bombs from inside the GPO premises following the all-party protest rally held there.

Several thousand supporters stormed the GPO compound but could not apprehend any of the gunmen.

Several cocktails were also hurled from inside the Baitul Mokarram Mosque.

Some party leaders requested the police to enter into the GPO and arrest the culprits but police did not pay heed to them.

Later, the agitated all-party supporters hurled brickbats at police while police retaliated by lobbing tear-gas shells.

One Salahuddin was caught allegedly with a cracker in his hand.

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### Menon improving, says medical bulletin

By Staff Correspondent

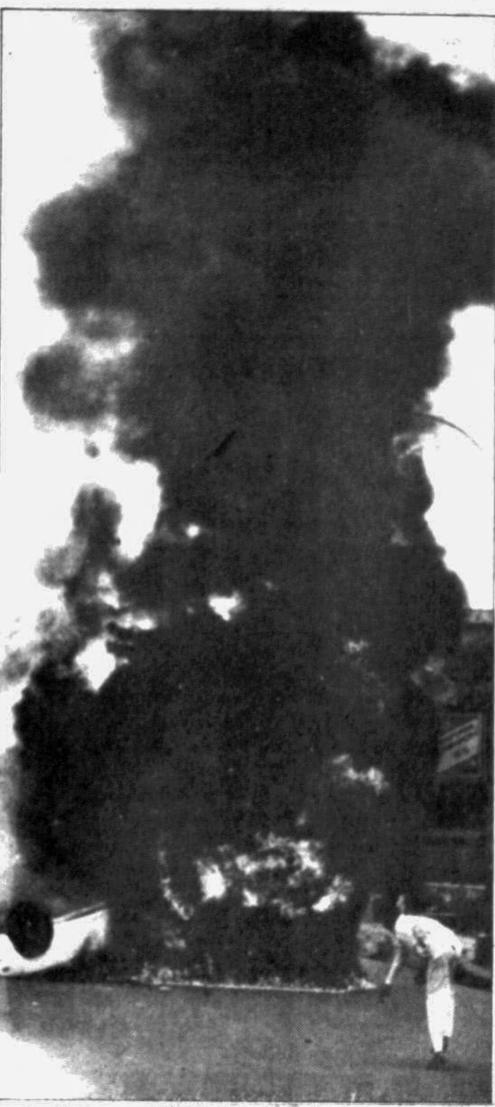
Rashed Khan Menon is improving and his condition was stated to be stable yesterday, according to family and hospital sources.

"His condition is improving. He even talked to us and to his wife," said the on-duty medical officer at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) over telephone late last night.

Earlier in the afternoon, Lutfunnessa Beauty, wife of the Workers Party and Five Party leader, in a brief statement to waiting newsmen at the hospital said: "His condition has improved but he has to be kept under observation at the ICU as his liver has been damaged."

Menon was shot from close range.

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A car blazing near GPO in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Call for hartal tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A dawn-to-dusk hartal has been called all over the country tomorrow (Thursday) to protest the assassination attempt on Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon MP.

Menon was shot by unidentified assailants Monday evening and was now under treatment at the Combined Military Hospital in the capital.

The call of the hartal came at a protest meeting by different opposition political organisations in Dhaka yesterday.

The meeting held in front of the GPO demanded immediate resignation of the Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

A declaration of the meeting, announced later, said that the government was responsible for the assassination.

See Page 12 Col 3

## Allout measures taken to arrest miscreants: Press Note

Two persons suspected to be involved in the armed attack on Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, MP, have been arrested by the police, according to a Press Note issued by the Home Ministry in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The Press Note said the government has taken all-out measures immediately to arrest the miscreants associated with the barbaric and heinous attack on Menon.

Meanwhile, centering the attack on Menon, some interested quarters circulated an unfounded and unfortunate rumour about his (Menon) death at different places of the country including the Dhaka city since Tuesday morning. As a result, violence broke out in the city.

See Page 12 Col 7

## Govt, opposition planning strategies to ride over situation

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met with her senior Cabinet colleagues last night to plan strategies to ride over the situation arising out of the assassination attempt on Rashed Khan Menon, MP.

The meeting was attended by Abdus Salam Talukder, Minister for LGRD and Secretary General, BNP, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Agriculture Minister M Majid-ul-Huq, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Social Welfare Minister Tariqul Islam and Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

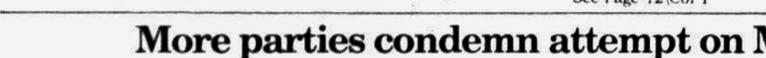
The meeting was going on till the last reports came in at 1:10 am.

Meanwhile, the protesting Opposition parties held a meeting last evening with Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in the chair to chalk out a common strategy.

The two-and-a-half hour meeting held at the official residence of Sheikh Hasina was adjourned to meet again today.

Opposition sources told The Daily Star that the meeting failed to reach an agreement on immediate formation of a political alliance against the government. The Awami League leaders, sources said, proposed for an alliance while the others said that it was time for an issue-based alliance focusing on law and order situation. They, however, did not rule out the necessity of such an alliance.

See Page 12 Col 1



People crowded Workers' Party office in the city yesterday to donate blood for Menon. — Star photo

## Khaleda visits Menon again

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia went to Combined Military Hospital Tuesday morning to see the Workers Party Secretary General Rashed Khan Menon, MP, who received bullet injury Monday night, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister talked to the team of surgeons attending the injured leader and enquired about his present condition. The physicians told the Prime Minister that the condition of Menon was "steadier than before."

Menon is now in the intensive care unit and the best possible treatment is being given.

See Page 12 Col 7

## JP MP, 12 others picked up for questioning

By Staff Correspondent

Police picked up at least 13 persons including a former MP of Jatiya Party and his two relatives for questioning in connection with the gun-attack on Workers' Party leader, Rashed Khan Menon, till Tuesday night, according to police source.

Assailants shot at Rashed Khan Menon near his party office at Topkhana Road in the city at around 8:35 pm Monday.

Of those detained for interrogation, 12 were brought to the Detective Branch of police at Mintu Road for questioning while another Morshed Sanullah was taken into Ramna Police custody. Morshed was picked up from Topkhana Road area Tuesday.

Former Jatiya Party MP, from Projpur Constituency-2, Alhaj Monirul Islam Monir was taken from his Eastern Housing Society residence at Topkhana Road at around 1:30 am Tuesday by Detective Branch police, family sources said.

See Page 12 Col 8

## Eliadah's detention illegal: HC

By Staff Correspondent

A division bench of the High Court Tuesday declared the detention order of Eliadah McCord illegal.

Justice AKM Razaque and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury gave this verdict on a writ petition filed on May 24, this year challenging the detention order.

Eliadah McCord, a teenaged American girl, was arrested with 2.70 kilograms of heroin at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on February 25, this year and detained at the Dhaka Central Jail.

Eliadah's solicitor, former attorney general, Advocate Kazi Abdul Wahab filed the writ petition challenging the detention order.

## NEWS BRIEFS

**Khaleda greets Afghan President**  
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated Prof. Burhan-Uddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, reports BSS.

**Police team off to Bosnia**  
 A team of Bangladesh police left Dhaka yesterday (Tuesday) for Bosnia-Herzegovina to join the UN peace force. An official statement said the team included 15 officers in the rank of Assistant Police Super, Sergeant and Sub-Inspector. They will perform monitoring duties under the supervision of the UN Peace Force, reports UNB.

**Ganotantrik Forum meets today**  
 Bangladesh Ganotantrik Forum will hold an emergency meeting of conscious citizens and representatives of different organisations at its 76/A, Segun Bagicha office at 3 pm today (Wednesday). The meeting is aimed at deciding on a programme to build up united movement against the evil forces trying to disrupt democracy and stability in the country, says a press release, reports UNB.

**25 hurt in city road mishap**  
 By DMCH Correspondent  
 A head on collision between two minibuses left at least 25 passengers wounded at Tikatuli in the city Tuesday afternoon. Of the injured, seven were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and six others were given first aid there.

## More parties condemn attempt on Menon 'Govt fails to maintain law and order'

By Staff Correspondent

Different political parties and organisations Tuesday strongly condemned the attempt on the life of Rashed Khan Menon, MP, General Secretary of Bangladesh Workers' Party.

They also bitterly criticised the government's failure in maintaining law and order in the country and demanded the resignation of the Home Minister.

They also held Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command responsible for the incident.

Bangladesh Workers' Party in a statement Tuesday said the attack on Menon was a part of the undeclared war by the Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command quarter on the pro-independence forces.

It demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the miscreants responsible for the attack.

It also said when the Home Minister had been shamelessly talking about 'improved' law and order situation, while political and business leaders were being systematically killed.

The convenor of Bangladesh Ganotantrik Forum, Dr Kamal Hossain in a statement yesterday said the attempt on the life of Menon was a pointer that no one's life was safe in this country.

Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) Tuesday said the Jamaat and its cronies were attacking politicians according to their prepared list of personalities.

It also demanded the immediate resignation of the Home Minister.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in a statement said the attempt on the life of Menon was a pre-planned strategy of Jamaat-Shibir and Jubo Command to push the country towards a grave consequence.

It said the government could hardly avoid the blame of failing to provide security to the people.

Sammilita Sankrirtik Jote said the shooting of Menon was done according to the Jamaat-Shibir-Jubo Command's open declaration to kill the pro-independence leaders.

It said no government action against these heinous quarters had deteriorated the law and order situation in the country.

The Jote also demanded resignation of the Home Minister.

See Page 12 Col 3

## Islam discourages begging: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Tuesday said social degradation, terrorism and violence can be checked to a great extent "if we can sincerely uphold Islamic ideals and values," reports UNB.

"Islam is a religion of equality and humanity," she said at a function at the ICC auditorium here, arranged on the occasion of distribution of rickshaws among the distressed and unemployed.

The Zakat Board, under its Tk 17.5 lakh scheme, plans to distribute 250 rickshaws among the distressed throughout the country.

Begum Zia Tuesday handed over 69 rickshaws to the poor people of greater Dhaka district.

Pointing to the inherent philosophy of zakat, Begum Zia said it has been made farz (compulsory) for the affluent in order to share mercy of Allah with the distressed of the society.

The Prime Minister reminded the people that Islam always discourages begging and unemployment and has laid the highest importance to the development of human dignity, which she termed as development of human resources.

The government has laid out a programme to provide employment to the distressed.

See Page 12 Col 6

## 5 more die of diarrhoea in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 18: Diarrhoea claimed five more lives in the district today, raising the death toll to 11 in a month, officials said, reports UNB.

Unofficial sources, however, claimed that 19 people had so far died.

Sadar thana is the worst-affected area where at least 1,211 people were reported sick. Unofficial counts put at 3,000 the number of people affected by the eruption.

The dead are Mokbul (45) of-village Barowogh in Raiganj thana, Liton (11) of Kazipur and Khadeza Khatun (8), Asiya (28) and Arju (7) of Sadar thana, sources at the Civil Surgeon office said.

## 3 Rohingyas killed in clash with police

By Staff Correspondent

The trouble erupted after a group of militant anti-repatriation refugees resisted some officials from enlisting the names of those inmates who are willing to return home in Myanmar. Attacked by the armed Rohingyas the officials called out police and Ansars who first used batons.

Retreating in the face of baton charges the refugees quickly regrouped themselves and launched a counter-attack on police and Ansars who then were forced to fire at least 67 bullets.

Police opened fire on a mob of Rohingya refugees protesting their repatriation in Ukha yesterday leaving three people killed and several other injured.

Police said they fired in self defense on the mob at Haidapalong Camp after batons failed to disperse the protesters who attacked the officials and security forces with lethal weapons.

At least nine policemen and several officials were injured by the refugees they said reached by telephone at Cox's Bazar.

See Page 12 Col 7

## Indian Foreign Secy due Friday

Indian Foreign Secretary JN Dixit will arrive in Dhaka on August 21 on a two-day visit to discuss bilateral and other issues with Bangladesh side, it was learnt in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

He will have wide-ranging talks with Foreign Secretary Reza Rahman.

Two Foreign Secretaries will have an overview of the state of bilateral ties and are likely to take up such issues of common concern like the next SAARC summit in Dhaka and the coming Non Aligned summit in Jakarta.