

27 BNP men arrested for 'creating panic'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested 27 BNP men at Nakla upazila headquarters under Sherpur district for allegedly creating panic among the locals early yesterday.

Locals said some 200 leaders and activists belonging to two factions of BNP Jhenaigati upazila unit gathered at the residence of former BNP whip Alhaj Zahed Ali Chowdhury on Friday night to settle the dispute between the two groups over formation of the upazila committee.

Police said the BNP men of the two factions armed with sticks reached Nakla from Jhenaigati at around 10:00pm by 50 to 60 motorbikes and a bus and later sat in a meeting at the residence of Zahed Ali Chowdhury at the upazila headquarter.

At around 1:00am, leaders and activists of both factions came out of the residence and took out separate processions, creating panic among the locals. Hearing noise, law enforcers rushed to the spot and arrested 27 people, they added.

Contacted, Sherpur Police Superintendent Md Anisur Rahman said the BNP men were holding meeting without informing the law enforcers at a time when the law enforcement agencies throughout the country are on high alert.

They also chanted slogans at dead of night, creating panic among the locals, he said, adding that police rushed to the spot to avert a possible clash between the two BNP factions and picked up 27 leaders and activists while the rest managed to flee.

District BNP Convener advocate Saiful

Islam Kalam and Zahid Chowdhury denied the allegation. A case was lodged against the 27 with Nakla Police Station under Speedy Trial Act.

Our Staff correspondent in Dhaka adds: BNP yesterday strongly condemned the arrest of 27 leaders and activists of Jhenaigati upazila BNP unit at Nakla and demanded their immediate release.

In a statement, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain claimed that police arrested the local leaders and activists without any reason.

"Police arrested them when they were returning to Jhenaigati from a meeting organised to discuss the upcoming party council at Nakla," said the BNP secretary general. He demanded immediate release of the BNP men.

AL lawmaker Ruhi refutes allegation of extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Mostaque Ahmed Ruhi, the ruling party lawmaker from Netrakona-1 constituency, has denied the allegation of extortion by opening a bank account in the name of "destitute welfare fund".

Speaking at a press conference at Netrakona Press Club Thursday night, Ruhi said he has been working for the welfare of poor people and he is not involved in any corruption or extortion.

Leaders of Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazila units of Awami League (AL) organised the press conference protest-

ing the news items published in The Daily Star on November 15 and in Jai Jai Din on November 19 against the lawmaker.

On November 15, The Daily Star published that lawmaker Ruhi has reportedly been realising huge amounts of money from local contractors, coal importers, dealers in white clay, two sub-registry offices and market lessees in the name of an unregistered destitute welfare fund.

During the press conference, Ruhi refuted the allegation of extortion in an emotion-choked voice.

Saidur Rahman Akunji, general secretary of Durgapur

Expatriate held with forex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

An expatriate was held with foreign currencies worth around Tk 39 lakh at Shah Amanat International Airport on Friday night.

Arrestee Shamsul Alam, 35, is son of one Abul Hossain of village Noapara under Rauzan upazila.

Police recovered Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal and UAE Dirham searching his luggage and body.

He was scheduled to leave Chittagong for Dubai by an Air Arabia flight at 10:30pm.



Trees fall victim to land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Criminals have cut down around 600 trees on two acres of disputed land at Radhanagar village in Sreepur upazila of Magura district.

The trees, destroyed during the callous act early Friday, include three to five year old mahogany, epil epil, mango, guava and banana trees, said police and locals.

Locals said Gobinda Chandra Sen and Swapan Chandra Sen of Radhanagar

inherited the piece of land from their father but Ramzan Ali of adjacent Kadirpara village occupied the land with the help of some local BNP leaders in 2003 and planted trees there.

Swapan later filed a case, which is still under trial at a local court, sources said.

"Gobinda and Swapan owned the land but Ramzan along with some dishonest people occupied it when the BNP-led four-party alliance was in power," said a local teacher requesting anonymity.

The teacher however could not say anything about the people involved in tree felling.

Contacted, Swapan said Ramzan fled the village after cutting down the trees.

Ramzan could not be reached for his comment as he left the area after the incident.

Police is trying to find out the culprits responsible for tree felling, said Sreepur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Azizul Haque.

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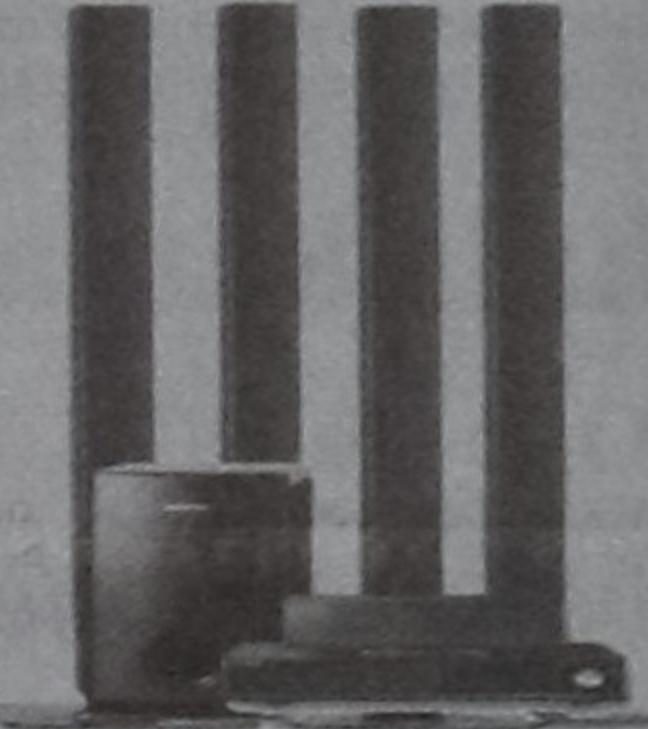
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