

BNP factional clash leaves 25 injured 8 houses torched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least 25 people were injured and eight houses burnt as two factions of BNP clashed in Bagerhat yesterday evening.

Six motorcycles, refrigerators, and other valuables were also damaged during the incident happened at Kuliadpur village in Bishnupur union, said locals and police.

Tensions between former Bishnupur union BNP leaders Ruhul Amin alias Ruhul Member and Mostafizur Rahman, stemming from disputes over establishing supremacy and committee formation, had been on the rise since last August.

The conflict escalated on Monday night when a scuffle injured several people.

By yesterday afternoon, over 100 people, allegedly from Mostafizur's faction, attacked the homes of Ruhul and his brothers, intensifying the clash.

Attackers vandalised and looted valuables, and set houses ablaze.

Ruhul Amin's wife, Rojina Begum, claimed the violence was politically motivated to prevent her husband from assuming party leadership.

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Donation boxes looted from 3 Ctg temples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Unidentified miscreants allegedly looted donation boxes, ornaments and valuables from three Hindu temples in Chowdhuryhat-Fateyabad area under Hathazari upazila of Chattogram early yesterday.

The temples are: Shree Shree Jagatbandhu Ashram, Shree Shree Bisweshwari Kali Temple, and Satya Narayan Temple. "The looting in the three temples happened within several hours, which is unusual and likely done by professionals. There are no CCTV cameras in the temples, nor any guards or priests on the premises," said Kazi Tarek Aziz, additional superintendent of police. He said police visited the spots.

"No idols were vandalised in the temples. The criminals just took away the cash and other valuables. We are trying to collect CCTV footages from nearby establishments," he said.

Liton Palit, general secretary of Jagatbandhu Ashram, said, "The theft likely took place between 3:00am and 5:00am. No idols were vandalised, but the burglars took away cash from four donation boxes, some brass utensils, and gold ornaments of the goddess. We will file a GD soon."



PHOTO: STAR

984 brick kilns on farmlands

Topsoil being used for manufacturing bricks, affecting agriculture, environment in Rangpur division

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The topsoil of vast areas of farmland in the agriculture-based northern districts is being used for manufacturing bricks, causing significant harm to agriculture and the environment.

Officials from the Department of Environment (DoE) and the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Rangpur division said 984 brick kilns, all set up on farmlands in eight districts, operate in violation of government regulations.

These kilns use the fertile topsoil from surrounding farmlands to make bricks. The collection of topsoil typically begins after the Aman paddy harvest and continues for about one and a half months.



used on these lands flow into nearby water bodies, causing pollution.

"We are conducting drives against brick kilns built illegally on agricultural land," he said.

Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram, said

about 30 bighas of farmland lose their topsoil annually to each brick kiln. "We can only raise awareness among farmers about not selling topsoil but lack the authority to take legal action against brick kiln owners," he said.

Despite being aware of the consequences, farmers are forced to sell the topsoil of their farmlands to brick kiln owners, they alleged.

Sadek Ali, a 65 year old farmer from Doljor village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, said, "I used an overdose of fertiliser and pesticide, hoping for better crop production, but the results were disappointing," he said, adding that brick kiln owners continue to collect topsoil.

Mansur Ali, a 55 year-old farmer

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CMCH admits to cutting hill without permission DoE issues notice for hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Brigadier General Mohammed Taslim Uddin, director of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), yesterday admitted to cutting down a hill in the port city to build a burn unit without obtaining permission.

"We applied for permission to cut a hill to build a burn unit. We started cutting down the hill in the meantime, although we have yet to receive permission from the Department of Environment. However, we have stopped construction work after getting direction from the higher authority," he said during a stakeholder meeting at CMCH.

He said they were working to prevent landslides by cutting the hill's slope.

"We will construct a building on flat land and are focusing on retaining structures to prevent landslides," said the CMCH director.

The DoE issued a notice to CMCH for a hearing scheduled on January 13, after obtaining evidence of hill cutting.



This hill was illegally cut on the orders of Chattogram Medical College Hospital authorities for building a burn unit. The CMCH authorities simply applied for permission to cut the hill but began the operation before receiving authorisation from the Department of Environment.

PHOTO: STAR

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ASSAULT ON SANTAL WOMAN Accused UP chairman held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police yesterday arrested a local union parishad chairman for allegedly assaulting a Santal woman and subsequently setting her house on fire in Gaibanda.

Rafiqul Islam, Gobindaganj's Rajahar union parishad chairman, was arrested from a hotel in the Gulistan area of the capital.

Nishat Angela, superintendent of Gaibanda police, said a team from Gobindaganj police station arrested the prime accused around 8:15am.

On Tuesday, 47 prominent citizens of the country issued a statement demanding punishment for those involved in the incident.

According to the case statement, on December 3, Rafiqul Islam and his men began filling up 16 decimals of land belonging to Santals. He claimed the ownership of the lands by forging documents, said Santals. When some Santal men and women protested, Rafiqul beat up a Santal woman.

That same night, Chairman Rafiqul's people set fire to the woman's house, alleged the victim's son British Soren. The next day, the victim's son filed a case against Rafiqul, his brother, and four other named individuals, along with 20 to 25 unnamed persons, according to the police.

The Gaibanda district BNP unit expelled Rafiqul following the incident.

OC Bulbul Islam of Gobindaganj Police Station, said, "The main accused Rafiqul Islam has been arrested from a hotel in Dhaka. We will bring him back to Gaibanda to complete the legal process."

Former Dhaka-10 MP Mohiuddin held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested former Awami League lawmaker from Dhaka-10 and ex-FBCCI President Shaiful Islam Mohiuddin in the capital's Uttara area yesterday afternoon.

Mohiuddin was arrested from his residence in Uttara's Sector 4 in connection with a case filed with Uttara West Police Station, said Md Mohibullah, officer-in-charge of Uttara East Police Station.