

Rane supporters ransack Saamna office in Pune

Supporters of Maharashtra Revenue Minister Narayan Rane vandalised the office of the Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamna here to protest a caricature of their leader, who left the Shiv Sena to join the Congress four years ago.

According to police, the incident took place Thursday night when about 25 supporters of Rane entered the Saamna office in Sinhgardh Road here and started throwing stones and breaking fixtures.

Said Arun Nigrekar, co-publisher of the daily: 'They entered the office and started throwing things around without listening to anybody. Only when we called police did they leave.' They caused damage worth about Rs.300,000.

Police arrested 29 supporters and posted guards outside the office.

Supporters of the Congress leader were furious after Saamna parodied him as a coy Maharashtrian bride wearing a maroon sari and laden with jewellery. The caricature accompanied a report about a press conference by Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh, where he compared Rane to a newly wedded bride who moves to the groom's home and takes time to adjust to the new environment.

Rane defected to the Congress from the Shiv Sena about four years ago and has been vying for the chief minister's post. He has also made several trips to [New Delhi](#) to stake his claim.

On Thursday, a group of nearly 100 supporters of Rane had gathered at the Saamna office in Thane near [Mumbai](#) but left after they encountered police.

Saamna executive editor and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said the protesters could not reach the newspaper's office in Prabhadevi, central Mumbai, as police and Shiv Sainiks were around.

However, they managed to burn copies of the newspaper while raising slogans against the Shiv Sena.

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