

India moves to curb onion export

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India yesterday imposed a minimum export price of \$800 per tonne for onions – much higher than the prices at which importers were buying.

The export price will remain effective until December 31 this year, said a notification issued by India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade. The move is apparently to discourage exports and contain the price in the Indian market.

Importers were quoting \$150-\$205 per tonne of Indian onions before the minimum export price was imposed, said Dipankar Ghosh, organising secretary of the Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association in Bhomra, a land port in the southwest region bordering India.

Import price will increase by over four times, and landing price of the bulbs will be over Tk 100 a kg at the port, he said.

The curb on export by the Indian authority comes two and a half months after it slapped 40 percent duty on the export of onions to tame escalating prices in its domestic market.

The move is likely to fuel price hike of onions in Bangladesh, which meets a portion of its demand through imports mostly from India.

Dipankar said the wholesale price of onions jumped to nearly Tk 100 a kg at the land port yesterday evening from around Tk 80 per kg.

Yesterday, consumers in Dhaka had to buy a kg of locally grown onion for as much as Tk 105 and imported onion for up to Tk 85, according to market price data by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Retail price of onions in Dhaka was 21 percent higher from a month ago, and 90 percent higher year on year from Tk 50-55 a kg, showed the TCB data, although the government claims about good harvest of the bulbs.

In Dinajpur, the price of onions soared due to supply shortfall resulting from a seven-day suspension of trade on the occasion of Durga Puja, and the problems in opening letters of credit (LCs), reports our correspondent there.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel in Chattogram yesterday. The 3.31km tunnel under the Karnaphuli connects the port city's Patenga with Anwara upazila.

PHOTO: PID

Russia shells Ukraine's Kherson

Kyiv holds peace formula talks in Malta, Russia absent

REUTERS

Russian forces heavily shelled the centre of the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson yesterday, injuring eight people and destroying or damaging at least 15 buildings, a senior city official said.

Pictures posted on social media showed at least three sites dotted with piles of rubble and the interior of one building strewn with shattered building materials and other debris.

Roman Mrochko, head of the city's military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app that three of the injured were being treated in hospital. He said two buildings had been destroyed, three suffered heavy damage and 10 less damage.

"In the evening the entire city trembled," Ukraine's Emergency Services said on

Telegram. "The enemy targeted the very centre of Kherson."

The posting said emergency workers had rescued two women, in their 70s and 80s, who had been blocked in a building, and brought a fire under control in a rubble-strewn area.

Ukraine's Sputnik public broadcaster said Russian forces had also shelled Beryslav, a town further north on the Dnipro River in Kherson Region, wounding one person.

Meanwhile, national security advisers from around 65 countries have gathered in Malta for a weekend meeting organised by Ukraine to discuss its peace formula for ending the war with Russia.

It is the third such meeting this year after smaller ones in Jeddah and Copenhagen but Russia is not involved.

POST-COUP MYANMAR Rebels, military clash for second day

AFP, Bangkok

Heavy fighting between rebels and the Myanmar military stretched into a second day near the country's northern border with China, armed groups said yesterday.

Myanmar's junta seized power in a February 2021 coup that sparked renewed fighting with powerful ethnic rebel groups in northern Shan state.

An alliance of ethnic rebel groups launched coordinated attacks on military positions across the country's north on Friday, posing a fresh challenge to the junta as it struggles to quell resistance to its rule.

BNP rally foiled amid violence

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Tension had been high over the last few days centring on the high-stake BNP and AL rallies within a radius of two kilometres.

The BNP organised its rally, joined by tens of thousands of its activists from Dhaka and elsewhere, in front of its headquarters to press home its demand for elections under a non-partisan interim government. The AL held its "peace and development rally" at Baitul Mukarram south gate to counter BNP's.

HOW THE CLASH SPREAD

Since morning, BNP leaders and activists started thronging the rally venue indroves, chanting anti-government slogans. By 11:00am, the entire road stretching from Kakrail intersection to Notre Dame college in Arambagh was packed by party activists and supporters.

Things started to heat up around 11:30am when the ruling party activists on two



Aminul Parvez

pickups and a bus were stopped by BNP activists near Kakrail mosque. The AL men were heading towards the Baitul Mukarram mosque to attend their rally, police and witnesses said.

The BNP activists vandalised the pickups and the bus, and a clash ensued. Police present at the spot detained one man involved in vandalism, they said.

Following the clash, more BNP activists rushed to the spot and were seen intercepting pedestrians. Around 12:30pm, they started chanting slogans denouncing police and hurling brick chunks at them, according to our correspondents present at the scene.

Another clash broke out between BNP activists and law enforcers in front of Kakrail mosque around 1:00pm. The law enforcers threw sound grenades and tear shells to disperse them, our correspondents report.

The demonstrators responded by throwing brick chips, and charged the law enforcers with sticks, prompting a chase and counter-chase.

The protesters assaulted several journalists and police members there. A police box near Kakrail Church was torched, while another in front

of Kakrail mosque was vandalised. A minibus and a microbus were torched in front of the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

"A policeman was hacked to death. We have pictures. A Chhatra Dal leader brutally beat him up. He was not only beaten but attacked with a machete," he said.

He added the BNP activists attacked an Awami League procession and set fire to the pickups carrying the leaders and activists of the AL.

"They broke the gate and entered the Chief Justice's house. In such a situation, police cannot remain silent. Police did their job and dispersed them," the minister said, adding that BNP activists also set fire to Rajarbagh police hospital and an ambulance.

"Our police force dealt with them with great patience.... They [BNP] are trying to create a situation similar to 2014," he added.

At a press briefing later in the night, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Habibur Rahman also warned of legal actions against violence and vandalism in the name of today's hartal.

"We will take legal action by applying maximum force if anyone tries to harm people's lives or properties in the name of hartal," he told reporters at the DMP Media Center around 10:45pm.

THE DEAD AND ARRESTS

Shamim Mia, from Mugda in the capital, succumbed to his injuries sustained during clashes in Nayapaltan area in the afternoon.

BNP claimed he was a ward-level leader of Jubo Dal, although his family could not confirm his political affiliation.

He was taken to the Rajarbagh Central Police Hospital in a critical condition, where doctors declared him dead.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Rezaul Haider, director of the hospital, said there was no sign of injury on his body.

He is believed to have died of a heart attack, added Rezaul.

Earlier, Aminul Parvez, a constable of DMP's CTTC unit, died of injuries he sustained during a clash in Fakirapool, the DMP media cell told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, BNP in a statement last night claimed over 1,000 of its activists were injured and bullet hit. More than 300 were detained by the police yesterday.

"We want to assure you that if anyone blocks roads, vandalises and sets fire to vehicles, we will take action. Everything will go on

BNP's movement

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arms smuggling and for that he has been convicted. He has also been convicted in the August 21 grenade attack case."

The PM said Khaleda had rigged the February 15 election in 1996 and for that reason the people of Bangladesh deposed her from power through a movement.

From the rally, the PM formally inaugurated the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel.

Built under the Karnaphuli river, the 3.31km tunnel connects the port city's Patenga with Anwara upazila.

The tunnel will be opened to traffic at 6:00am on Monday.

The premier said BNP founder Ziaur Rahman was involved in the brutal killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family

members. "They only know how to kill, nothing else."

Hasina said the BNP had killed over 20,000 leaders and activists of the AL.

Stating that the AL always works for the development of the country, the PM said this tunnel, which will be linked to Asian highway, will expedite Bangladesh's development further.

She said the AL government is taking the country forward through taking up multi-sectoral development projects.

Poverty rate and extreme poverty rate have dropped because the democratic trend and development activities continued in the country, the premier added.

Hasina urged the overseas jobseekers not to go to abroad by giving money to middlemen. In this regard, she referred to Probashi

Kalyan Bank for loan without any collateral.

The PM called upon the people to cast their votes for the AL in the next general election so that the development process in the country can continue.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a goodwill message on this occasion. The message was read out by Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen. He later handed it over to the PM.

Hasina also inaugurated 11 completed projects and laid the foundation stones of six others in Chattogram from the rally.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, presidium members Begum Matia Chowdhury and Mosharraf Hossain, Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud, and Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, among others, spoke at the rally.

At least 17 journos hurt

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grand rally venue in front of its central office in Nayapaltan.

Rafsanjani said he was beaten with iron rods until he fell to the ground. The attackers continued beating him up. They also took his phone.

He kept trying to tell the attackers that he is a journalist. He somehow managed to get up at one point and run towards a 12-storey building in the area where some other journalists were present.

Rafsanjani received treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. There were red marks on his body.

Touhidul Islam Tareque, a multimedia team reporter of the same Bangla daily, was also attacked by BNP men when he was covering the police-BNP clashes in Nayapaltan. His phone was taken too.

Touhidul's colleague Abu Saleh Musa was beaten up by some Awami League men when he was covering the ruling party's "peace rally" near Baitul Mukarram.

Another Kalbela reporter, Robiul Islam Rubel, was hurt after being hit by a brick chunk.

BNP men attacked reporters Tanvir Ahmed and Sheikh Nasir of Ittefaq Online near Kakrail.

A journalist of the daily New Age, Ahammed Foyez, sustained head injuries after being hit by shotgun pellets.

Journalist Arifur Rahman Rabbi of daily Desh Rupantor was wounded after he was hit.

Journalist Masud Parvez Anis of the daily Borer Kagoj was attacked by "BNP men" in front of Notre Dame College in Arambagh.

a procession. Participants of the procession were carrying placards of Gono Odhikar Parishad.

The procession was attacked by a group of unidentified people and the police intervened.

Masum was beaten by both police and his attackers even though he was wearing a press card, said his colleagues at the Inqilab.

The attackers hit him in the head, and he fell to the ground unconscious. The attackers still continued beating him up.

Masum later received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A car carrying Ekushey TV journalists Touhidur Rahman and Arifur Rahman was intercepted on a flyover by some unidentified people. They were forced out of the car, their camera was thrown below, and the car was set on fire.

Two photojournalists of Bangla daily Kaler Kantha, section in-charge Sheikh Hasan Ali and staff photographer Lutfar, were beaten up while they were covering clashes between the supporters of the AL and the BNP in front of the chief justice's residence in Kakrail.

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Three journalists of Bangla Tribune – Chief Reporter Salman

Tareque Shakil, photographer Sajjad Hossain and reporter Jobayer Ahmed -- sustained injuries after they fell on the street during the clashes and were trampled.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in a statement condemned the attacks on journalists.

Jatiya Press Club and a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists in separate statements denounced the attacks on journalists.

Govt devised

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reflection of the statements made by Awami League leaders and police since the announcement for the BNP's rally."

Terming the attack on the rally unprecedented, Fakhrul condemned the attack.

He also alleged that a number of cases were filed against BNP leaders and activists to refrain them from joining the grand rally.

"But such efforts went in vain. When they saw that people poured into the rally venue, police and criminals from Awami League launched the attack with sticks and arms," he added.

Fakhrul said police and "Awami League criminals" came up to the BNP central office firing rubber bullets and teargas shells.

Senior BNP leaders who were on the stage were injured in the police firing of bullets and teargas canisters, he said.

He claimed that Jubo Dal leader Shamim was killed in the police firing.