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Govt decides to lift duties on rice imports

Moves to boost stock hit by production loss

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD ABBAS

The government is set to import a substantial quantity of rice and withdraw import duties to boost stock.

It has taken the step following rice production loss due to the recent floods, which caused prices to go up in the local market.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday decided to withdraw all import duties and would issue an order (Statutory Regulatory Order) on Sunday.

Senior NBR officials told The Daily Star that the NBR has decided to withdraw the existing 25 percent duty on rice imports.

- ➔ Food ministry to import rice through open tender, G2G deals
- ➔ Ministry has begun exploring G2G deals with Vietnam, Myanmar
- ➔ Food directorate wants 10 lakh tonnes rice imported
- ➔ Rice prices have been rising here due to crop damage by floods
- ➔ Rice prices fell 11 percent globally in a year

On top of this, the NBR would slash the advance income tax on rice imports to 2 percent from the current 5 percent.

The alarm bells have been ringing for quite a few days and there have been movements to expedite and facilitate rice imports.

On October 20, the NBR reduced import duties to 25 percent from 62.5 percent to help regulate the local rice market.

This week, the Directorate of Food submitted a report on the country's overall rice stocks to the food ministry. Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) sent another report to food and commerce ministries, and the NBR about the rice price situation.

Both reports recommended withdrawing all import duties on rice to encourage imports.

Food ministry officials said Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus sat with the ministry officials, including Food Secretary Md Masudul

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THE HOMECOMING OF CHAMPIONS: The triumphant Bangladesh women's football team rejoice on an open-top bus during a parade through the streets of Dhaka yesterday following their arrival from Kathmandu where they successfully defended the SAFF Women's Championship title. The champion team were cheered all along through the parade that started from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and ended at the Bangladesh Football Federation House. Story on Page 11.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

RMG FACTORY CLOSURE 2 workers shot during clash with law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clashes between police, army personnel, and demonstrating garment factory workers left two workers with gunshot wounds and several others injured in the capital's Kachukhet and Mirpur-14 areas yesterday morning.

A police truck and an army pickup were set on fire, said Kazi Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station.

Police said the workers of Creative Designers Ltd took to the streets around 8:30am after their factory was suddenly

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AL govt created lawless economy

Says Debapriya Bhattacharya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authoritarian political practices by the previous Awami League government gave rise to crony capitalism and the cronies later started to control the politics to dictate the terms of the economy, said Debapriya Bhattacharya, chief of the panel to prepare a white paper on the state of the economy.

A lawless economy was created and it was institutionalised through a nexus of bureaucrats, people with and without uniform, political leaders and a section of business people.

These people had captured the public organisations, Bhattacharya said at a view exchange meeting yesterday with journalists of the Economic Reporters' Forum at the Planning Commission.



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JP head office vandalised, set on fire

Attackers say 'brick chunks were thrown at them first'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party headquarters at the capital's Kakrail was set on fire and vandalised last night by a group of people marching under the banner of "Anti-fascist students, workers, and masses".

Abdur Rahman, president of Sramik Odhikar Parishad, an associate body of the Gono Odhikar Parishad, said activists of his party were marching with lit torches when some people from the Jatiya Party office building threw brick chunks at them from upstairs.

JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun said the allegation of objects



being thrown at the procession was "a blatant lie".

At the scene of the incident around 7:15pm, Abdur told this correspondent that the attack left the marchers incensed and then they vandalised the JP office before setting it alight.

Witnesses said many of the marchers were holding sticks and wearing helmets. Several JP leaders and activists who were at the five-storey building fled when the commotion began.

The procession, led by Abdur and Bin Yamin Mollah, a top leader of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad, started from TSC of Dhaka University, protesting "the ill attempt and anti-state conspiracy of

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