

# Planned OMS has no price impact yet

**STAR REPORT**

The government's announcement to start open market sale (OMS) of rice from tomorrow had no impact on its prices in retail market until yesterday, although the commerce minister has claimed rice prices are declining.

While coarse rice was selling at Tk 18 a kg in different markets in the capital, the minister said, "Rice prices have declined by Tk 20 to Tk 30 a maund on Monday and eased further by Tk 40 a maund today (Tuesday)."

"The price situation is now improving gradually," Altaf Hossain Choudhury told a group of reporters at his office yesterday.

About the intervention of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Chittagong onion market on Monday that prompted a strike by the onion traders, he said the Rab is working in different places across the country to stop hoarding.

Altaf said he had sent his people to Gulshan market in Dhaka where traders quoted rice price Tk 1 per kg less than what the price was two days back. He hoped rice prices would come down further after the start of OMS tomorrow.

Visiting some markets in Dhaka, The Daily Star correspondent however found no impact of the government plan to start OMS of rice.

Retailers in Karwan Bazar, New

Market and Mirpur markets said wholesalers and big traders have hoarded huge quantity of rice and are releasing it at higher prices, which pushes the retail prices up across the country.

"We could buy rice at Tk 13 to Tk 14 a kg and easily make Tk 1 profit. But with the recent price hike, it is now difficult for us to make Tk 0.50 profit per kg as our purchasing cost is much higher," said a retailer at Karwan Bazar market.

The prices of most vegetables at Karwan Bazar have remained static while that of some items marked a slight fall of Tk 1 or Tk 2 a kg.

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Two Hindu devotees offer prayers to Goddess Durga on Mahasaptami at Dhakeshwari National Temple Puja Mandap in the capital yesterday.

## AHSANULLAH MURDER Dal leader's bail petition rejected

Hearing for charge-framing Oct 24  
COURT CORRESPONDENT

A tribunal in Dhaka yesterday rejected bail petitions of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Nurul Islam Sarker and five others accused in the Ahsanullah Master MP murder case.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 also fixed October 24 for hearing on charge-framing against the accused.

Nurul and eleven others in custody were produced before court  
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## Bomb threat to GMG flight triggers panic

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A bomb threat triggered panic and a thorough search of the aircraft and passengers of Barisal-Dhaka flight of GMG Airlines yesterday afternoon but the threat turned out to be a hoax.

An unidentified caller informed GMG airlines Barisal office over phone at about 9:10am that one of the passengers of the Dhaka-bound flight might carry bombs with him or in his luggage, civil aviation, police and airlines sources and passengers said.

Local GMG office staff Robin and Shahriar said they informed their higher authorities in Dhaka about  
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With their arms pointed at traders, Rab members inquire about fish prices at Doyaganj Kitchen Market yesterday.

## BDR pushes back nine Indians

BSS, Panchagarh

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) pushed back nine Indian Muslims through Panchagarh border early yesterday.

Border Security Forces (BSF) of India pushed them into Bangladesh territory Monday morning through Amarkhana border, BDR sources and villagers said.

Villagers held the Indians and handed them over to the patrolling BDR men. They are Idris Ali, 32, his wife Nazma Begum, 25, their daughter Tania, 3, and son Kazal, 2, housewife Reshma Begum, 22, and her daughter Asma, 6, and Jobeda Begum, 50, Johurul Islam, 20 and Ali Ahmed, 28, of Madanpur-Khandor area of New Delhi, India.

Delhi police forcibly picked them up eight to nine days ago, brought them to the borders and handed over to the BSF to push them into Bangladesh, they said.

# 6 Iraqis, American contractor killed

Oil pipeline set on fire, CARE official kidnapped

AFP, Baghdad

Four Iraqi national guards, two Iraqis and a US contractor were killed and 89 people wounded in two mortar attacks in and around Baghdad and Samarra yesterday in the latest deadly strike against US and Iraqi forces, officials said.

Unknown assailants fired mortars on an Iraqi National Guard base in Mashahda, a town about 40 km north of Baghdad. The interior ministry said four people were killed and 82 wounded.

The US-led military confirmed an attack on the facility but said no US

soldiers had been hurt.

Army helicopters were used to shuttle the wounded to a military hospital, it said in a statement.

Iraq's fledgling security forces have been a prime target for insurgents in the country in the aftermath of last year's US-led invasion.

The US-led military is another favourite target and it also suffered a direct hit on a compound in Baghdad that left one US contractor dead and seven people injured, including a US soldier, a spokesman said.

"We had mortar and RPG (rocket propelled grenade) fire that hit

inside our compound this morning," a military spokesman told AFP.

The US soldier and one of the six Iraqi civilians injured in the attack were in a serious but stable condition, he said.

The Iraqi nationals had all been working in the compound.

The attacks came less than a week after bombings killed five people in the Green Zone, the previously impregnable compound in Baghdad housing Iraqi government offices and the US embassy.

Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR), a subsidiary of the US oil services

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
5	20		5-32
6	21	4-39	5-31

Prayer Timing		
October 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-38	4-44
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-32	5-37
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## FEEDER SERVICE OPERATIONS Court rule raises suspension fears

RAFIQ HASAN

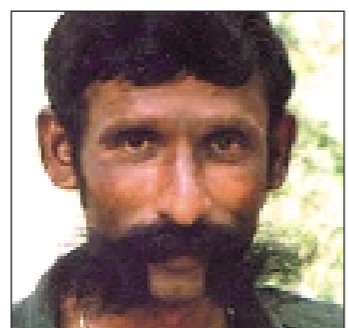
A conflict between local and foreign feeder service operators from Chittagong and Mongla ports has surfaced in the wake of a High Court (HC) ruling in favour of local ship owners, raising fears of suspension of operations like in May last year.

Over 700 containers with export-import cargo had been stuck up at Chittagong Port when foreign feeder vessel operators suspended their operations from Chittagong last year.

"We will look into the matter if the situation demands," said

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## India's top bandit Veerappan killed



AFP, Chennai

India's most wanted criminal Koosé Muniwamy Veerappan, accused of more than 100 murders and on the run for decades, has been shot dead after driving into a police trap, officials said yesterday.

The death of Veerappan, known for his trademark handlebar moustache and said to be around 60 years old, brings to a close the longest

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Commuters suffer as usual, as the long tailbacks in Malibagh area yesterday made a mockery of the just held Traffic Week.