

CLOSURE OF OIL DEPOTS

Fuel pumps to run dry on last two days of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decision to keep all oil depots closed for five days from December 29 to January 2 for Eid-ul-Azha will lead to drying up of the petrol pumps on the last two days.

"Our petrol pumps do not have the capacity to stock oil reserve for five days. So, if the oil supply remains closed for five days, the country will face severe oil crisis during the Eid," Mohammad Nazmul Hoque, president of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association, said yesterday.

The petrol pump owners from across the country yesterday protested the government decision, saying the transport, business and agriculture system of the

county will shut down due to a dearth of fuel during this period.

They also urged the government to keep the oil depots open for today so that the distributors can collect sufficient oil for supply up to January 2.

At a press conference in the capital yesterday the association leaders said if the decision is not changed, the rawhide business during Eid-ul-Azha will suffer severely due to the unavailability of fuel.

"We will not be responsible if the transport system suffers due to the fuel oil crisis," Nazmul Hoque said, adding that it is "unique" to keep oil depots closed for five days in a row.

He said there is no example in the world of keeping oil depots closed for such a long time at a

stretch and urged the government to keep the oil depots open at least for today.

Meanwhile, our Sylhet correspondent reported that at least 10 filling stations in the city and around were shut down yesterday due to a crisis of petroleum products.

Hundreds of oil tankers could not collect oil as the Padma and Jamuna oil companies did not supply fuel yesterday.

Owners of filling stations in Sylhet expressed dissatisfaction over the government decision to keep oil depots closed for five days.

Mohsinur Rashid, president of Sylhet Division Petroleum Dealers, Agents and Distributors' Association, said oil supply had

Yunus for 'mega' port to boost economy

CU CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Muhammad Yunus yesterday emphasised the need for mega maritime port, airport, highway and railway for attracting the investors and traders to bolster the country's economy.

"If we can give service opportunities for foreign countries to trade using our airport, maritime port and highways, we would be able to keep pace with the fast developing countries like China and India," he said.

"If we fail to avail the opportunity at first, we will miss the train and the opportunity may go to another hand," he said.

The Nobel laureate was addressing as the key discussant at a meeting titled "Development Thoughts on Chittagong" at the seminar room of Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB),

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PHOTO: STAR

Passengers cram onto the locomotive of a Jamalpur-bound train as they head for home to celebrate Eid with their families. The photo was taken from Tongi Railway Station yesterday.

Citizens' body asks AL to scrap deal with bigots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of eminent citizens of the country yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Awami League (AL) demanding the cancellation of the five-point deal between the AL and the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM), saying that it would undermine secularism in the country.

They said the electoral deal will also contribute to the rise of religious militancy.

"We believe that Khelafat Majlish is a radical Islamist militant group which is against the spirit of the Liberation War and has links with the international terrorist network from Afghanistan," read the memorandum of the "Anti-Fundamentalist and Anti-militant Conscious Citizens' Society."

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Explosives, Rab garb found at militant den

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers yesterday seized bomb-making materials and uniforms of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) when they busted two militant dens at Mograpara in Narayanganj and Kaliakoir in Gazipur following leads from two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) activists arrested in Tangail on Friday.

The items seized from Mograpara in Narayanganj include power gel and detonators used in preparing bombs, seven sets of black uniform that resembles Rab uniform, seven pairs of black boots, four masks, 26 Islamic books, one CD, some documents and a handwritten letter.

Bomb-making materials recovered from a house at Shafipur under Kaliakoir in Gazipur include 21 detonators, 500grams coal powder, transistor coil and four batteries. Besides, police arrested one and picked up three others from Kaliakoir area for interrogation. JMB commander Hasan had rented the house three months back.

Meanwhile the two JMB cadres, Abdur Rahman Alal alias Fahad and

Saiful Islam, arrested in Tangail on Friday with four firearms, ammunition and detonators, confessed to police that they had been executing orders from JMB commanders Hasan and Rakib.

Tangail police arrested Fahad and Saiful this Friday with firearms and detonators after they shot and wounded a policeman and an informant during checking luggage of a passenger bus at Rabna bypass intersection on Dhaka-Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Extension Road in Tangail.

A special team from Rab headquarters and members of different intelligence agencies interrogated both of the JMB members on Friday night, reported our Tangail correspondent.

The two also confessed that they had been following Hasan's lead to break free arrested members of JMB and to launch a massive terror attack, a police official quizzing the two arrested JMB men told The Daily Star yesterday.

Members of Rab, police and

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3 die in Meghna launch collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A mid-river collision between two launches on the Meghna Friday midnight at Char Jalalpur near the meeting line of Chandpur and Shariatpur districts left three people dead and at least 20 injured.

Superintendent of Police of Chandpur district said the collision occurred when MV Shuravi-VI, heading for Barisal from Dhaka,

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GREETINGS

The Daily Star

Wishes its valued readers, patrons, well-wishers and advertisers a Happy New Year.

Prayer Timing		
December 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Prices of essentials shoot up again as Eid nears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The price of essentials shot up again in both retail and wholesale markets ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha pushing the moderate-earners and the poor in distress.

Visiting different retail and wholesale markets in the capital, it was observed that the price of meat has marked a sharp rise as the price of cattle soars in the city's cattle markets.

Beef was selling at Tk 150-160 per kilogramme but now it is selling at Tk 170-180 per kilogramme, mutton was Tk 220-230 per kilogramme now it is Tk 250. Buffalo meat was Tk 140 a kilo but now it is being sold at Tk 160.

Quddus Ali, a butcher at Charulata market in Moghbazar, told The Daily Star that their business is suffering tremendously as the price of cattle continues to soar.

"I am selling beef at Tk 170 per kilogramme, if I could sell it at Tk 193, I would have averted loss," he

claimed.

Price of green chilli, onion and pilaf rice shot up both in retail and wholesale markets as their demands increased ahead of the Eid.

Pilaf rice was selling at Tk 36-38 per kilogramme only two days ago but now it is selling at Tk 40-45, the retailers said.

Soya bean oil is now selling at Tk 65 per kilogramme, a three-taka increase from the previous price. Super palm oil is now selling at Tk 55 per kilogramme. It was selling at Tk 52 only a couple of days ago. Palm oil is currently available at Tk 52 per kilogramme, it was Tk 50 earlier.

Indian onions were being sold at Tk 20-24 per kilogramme earlier but now it is selling at Tk 15-16. Local onions (newly harvested ones) were selling at Tk 12 per kilogramme. It is now selling at Tk 18. Green chilli was Tk 25-30 per kilogramme yesterday. It was Tk 15 three days ago.

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