Probe into fuel crisis initiated

UNB, *Dhaka*

The energy ministry has formed a two-member inquiry committee to investigate the reason behind the gasoline crisis that gripped the country just before the Eid day.

The committee, headed by joint secretary (administration) of the ministry Md Alauddin, was asked to submit its report within next seven working days.

Energy Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Ruhul Alam Chowdhury said ruthless action would be taken if anybody is found responsible for the crisis.

Energy Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin said the fuel supply across the country would become normal soon as the state-owned oil depots started supplying petroleum from Tuesday night.

Briefing the reporters, he said the ministry was taken by surprise to see the fuel crisis. "Because, there was no logical reason for such a crisis."

He said petrol pump operators every day lifted about 1,300 tonnes of gasoline for last three days before the Eid while the normal requirement is between 6,000 and 8,000 tonnes per day.

"The crisis indicates there was something beyond the economics," he said.

He said the country has adequate stock of gasoline, because there is no fund shortage for import of petroleum. Asian Development Bank and a foreign bank have

Prayer Timing

January 4		
	Azan	**Jamaat**
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

PHOTO: STAR

Attendance in the government and private offices was thin although the Eid vacation ended yesterday. The photo was taken from Sonali Bank head office in the capital.

19 killed in road crashes in 4 days

STAR REPORT

At least 19 people were killed and 56 others injured in road accidents across the country since Saturday last.

Rina Begum was killed and her husband Shamsuddin Ahmed, was critically injured yesterday when a speedy pickup van hit their motorcycle at the back at Mamarispur on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Bhaluka upazila.

Shamsuddin, who is an army personnel, was rushed to the Combined Military Hospital in a critical condition.

Toll supervisor of Rupsha Bridge Shamim Ahmed was killed at Kudir Battala under Rupsha upazila yesterday as he slipped off a running Khulna-bound passenger bus.

Tohina Begum, a minor girl, was run over by a speedy bus on Kishoreganj-Dhaka highway at Chhoisoti area on Tuesday, reports our Kishoreganj correspondent.

Pantu Ali, 48, of Harinakundo upazila of Jhenidah, was killed as a tank lorry from Chuadanga collided head-on with his power tiller on Tuesday. His companion was injured in the incident.

Massive search for Indonesian plane missing with 96

AFP, *Jakarta*

Indonesian rescue teams mounted a massive air, land and sea search yesterday for a missing airliner as anguished families and the media slammed authorities over false reports of survivors.

Distraught relatives flew to Makassar on Sulawesi island to be close to the search as military aircraft, navy ships and police and civilian teams focused efforts on the waters just west of the island and an area inland.

The Adam Air Boeing 737-400 with 96 passengers, including three Americans, and six crew vanished

Decision to stall power price hike may hinder donor funding

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's decision to stall its earlier decision on electricity price hike might push the future of donor funding in the energy sector into uncertainty, sources said.

The immediate past BNP-led coalition government had decided to up the electricity price from January 1 under donor pressure to reduce losses.

According to the decision, the government decided to hike price of each unit of electricity by five

Cold wave kills 17 in last 2 days

STAR REPORT

A cold wave sweeping through the northern, southern and central parts of the country for the last couple of days claimed at least 17 lives.

The first spell of cold wave of this winter also affected hundreds with respiratory and cold related diseases.

Our sources at the meteorological department say temperature in the region dropped sharply without much fluctuation. Average lowest temperature recorded in most northern districts yesterday was around 10 degrees Celsius, 8 degrees Celsius in Rajshahi being the lowest of them all. The highest temperature, 25.4, was recorded in Jessore.

Besides extreme cold, heavy fog is also adding to the sufferings of the locals as poor visibility has been disrupting vehicle movement on the streets. The sun was not visible before noon at most places of the region.

The met office sources also said this mild cold wave is likely to reach Tangail and Mymensingh after sweeping through all districts of Rajshahi division.

In Nilphamari, Alema Bewa, 78, of Char Khori Bari under Dimla upazila and Kafil Uddin, 69, of Golmunda village under Jaldhaka