



The Arunima Resort Golf Club in Narail is buzzing with guest birds this winter. The eye-soothing water lilies are another tourist attraction in the resort at Panipara village in Kalia upazila, 48km off Narail town.

PHOTO: PONUEL S BOSE

# 'Light and sound' show begins at Lalbagh Fort

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday evening inaugurated the country's first 'light and sound show' at Lalbagh Fort in the capital, aiming to attract more local and foreign tourists.

The show involves special lighting effects that will be projected onto the building's façade and synchronised with a recorded narration and music to dramatise its archaeological history.

Eminent writer and poet Syed Shamsul Haq prepared the narration while cultural personalities Shimul Yousuf and Asaduzzaman Noor gave their voice.

Between mid-November and mid-March, there will be two 30-minute shows every day, except Sunday, -- one between Maghrib and Esha prayers, and another after Esha prayers.

Speaking on the occasion, Hasina said her government always put its efforts to uphold the culture and traditions of the country.

In 1996, the Awami League government took the initiative to introduce such an event on the site. "But we could not finish that project during our tenure. Later, BNP-Jamaat alliance government

did not carry forward the project," she said.

Hasina said after assuming office in 2008, her government again took the project in hand. "The scope of recreation in Dhaka is very little. This light and sound show will give people a scope for recreation."

She mentioned that the show would also attract the foreign tourists.

The premier also said the government has taken initiatives to develop naturally beautiful places and archaeologically important sites to attract more tourists.

The price of a ticket for the light and sound show will be Tk 20, with an entry fee of Tk 10 for Bangladeshis and Tk 100 for visitors from Saarc countries and Tk 200 for others.

The cost of preparation for the show was around Tk 2.83 crore, and the monthly revenue from the show is expected to be around Tk 5 lakh.

Such kind of show will be introduced in many of Bangladesh's 448 archaeological sites, including Buddhist Vihara in Paharpur, Saatgombuj Masjid in Bagerhat, Kantaji Mandir and Mahasthangar, according to the sources at the cultural affairs ministry.

## POWER CUT AT LALBAGH

# 10 DPDC officials suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten officials of Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC), including three executive engineers, were suspended yesterday following two phases of power outage at a programme attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the city's Lalbagh Fort.

The Light and Sound Show, which the premier inaugurated in the evening, plunged into darkness twice due to the sudden power outages.

Power went out first at 6:27pm soon after the show began. The standby generator then started to supply electricity immediately.

The function was again disrupted when the generator went out of order. The entire premises remained in darkness for some moments before power supply from the national grid resumed.

The suspended DPDC officials include executive engineers Rafiqul Islam, Fazlul Karim, Sheikh Ziaul Hasan, Mohiul Alam, duty officer Shahidul Hasan, complaint officer Abdul Hakim, and four sub-assistant engineers, according to news agency UNB.

The DPDC has formed a three-member committee to probe the incident.

"We want to see whether any indifference of our officials is responsible for the incident," a DPDC official told The Daily Star last night.

## Ex-minister

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deputy director of the commission.

The duo realised the bribe from German telecom engineering giant Siemens for awarding it a \$40 million work order of the state-run telecommunications company-- Teletalk -- in 2003-04 fiscal year, she said.

Aminul and Mizanur then laundered the money to Hong Kong, she added.

Despite several notices, neither of them appeared before the ACC to give their statement in this connection, Shahin said adding that Mizanur has a US citizenship and he lives there permanently.

The case was filed with Ramna Model Police Station on June 7, 2012 by ACC Deputy Director Tawfikul Islam.

# Open trade with illegal gas lines

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connection three months ago. None was given any receipts.

Asked why they were giving so much money for illegal connections, villagers said the local AL leaders and contractors told them that the lines would be legalised soon. Others said getting the legal connection from Titas takes months -- a fact Titas officials readily admit.

However, the "subscribers" are not paying any monthly bill. The AL leaders and contractors told them that the bills would have to be paid to Titas once the lines are legalised.

Late last year, the government legalised nearly 1 lakh illegal gas lines that had been obtained after the government stopped giving new connections in mid-2010. This emboldened the wrongdoers.

At present, the daily gas supply in the country is 2,250 million cubic feet, with a daily shortfall of around 500 mmcf. The restriction on new connection was imposed due to this shortage.

Villagers in Pirojpur union said the gas connections were part of the electoral pledges of both the AL and the BNP over the last 15 years.

They said Rezaul Karim, former state

minister for liberation war affairs, had promised gas connections during the BNP government rule in 2001-2006. Local AL lawmaker Abdullah Al-Kaiser had made the same pledge after being elected in 2008.

According to them, the local AL leaders started making a fortune through giving these illegal connections during the political turmoil in October-December last year, when all attention was on the looming political uncertainty.

Some villagers said they took the illegal lines as the AL leaders and contractors told them that if they missed the chance, they might not get the connection anytime soon.

There are allegations that some Titas officials, local administration, and police also make some quick bucks from the illegal trade. But The Daily Star could not verify the claim.

Titas officials hold the local politicians and contractors fully responsible for the dangerous and illegal business.

Syed Mojibur Rahman, a member of Pirojpur union, is alleged to have played a big role in this.

Talking to this newspaper, he admitted playing some roles but denied taking any money. "As a local

representative, I do want that people get gas connections. The government should legalise them."

Mozammel Hossain, vice-president of union Jubo League, said the connections came some way or the other. "The government should now regularise them."

When the Titas authorities came to know about the illegal connections a few months ago, they sent several teams to disconnect the lines. But they had to go back in the face of strong resistance from locals. Locals even harassed and assaulted the officials on several occasions.

"Recently, we disconnected a number of lines in a village in the presence of a magistrate. The villagers got so furious that they encircled us and we had to reinstate the connections before we were allowed to leave the area," said a Titas Gas official, on condition of anonymity.

Last September, locals beat up Titas officials when they went there to disconnect the lines. A general manager of Titas had to be hospitalised for 10 days recently after one such attack.

The regional office of Titas has provided about 850 household connections since May last year, with about

17,000 applications under process. It serves 40,000 households, 132 commercial establishments and 378 factories.

Its officials said the issue of clandestine connections was reported in the media but no action had been taken.

Manoj Kanti Boral, deputy commissioner of Narayanganj, said it was for the Titas to disconnect the lines. "But we will provide security if Titas wants."

A top government official in Dhaka said the situation worsened as the administration did not act timely. "It will not be easy to solve this, as many quarters are involved."

Explaining the contractors' role, Petrobangla Chairman Prof Hossain Mansur said the local politicians enlisted some former contractors, who have expertise, to help them out in the lucrative business.

There are about 200km illegal lines (including those in Narayanganj) taken from Titas, he said, adding: "In the past, we disconnected some lines, only to find later that those were reconnected."

He also spoke of the grave danger of such connections, given the poor quality of the distribution lines.

Already, some accidents have

happened in the area. In one accident, a gas riser exploded in Paragaon village in Rupganj, spreading panic among the villagers. The situation was brought under control by switching off the riser.

Asked about the alleged involvement of some Titas officials, Mansur said: "I am not saying that Titas officials are not involved here. But we do not have any proof and nobody filed any complaints against any Titas officials."

He alleged that police at times refused to take cases against those involved in setting up the lines. "People came out of jail even if some were arrested."

The Petrobangla chief, however, warned of taking stern action against those involved and vowed to bring the situation under control. "We will use the existing laws that allow the magistrates to punish the wrongdoers."

Meanwhile, police, with the help of Titas office in Manikganj, yesterday arrested three people in Dhamrai for their alleged involvement in installing illegal gas distribution lines.

They were sent to jail, said Titas Gas Spokesperson M Shahjahan, adding that their officials disconnected 200 feet of illegal lines there.



A pipe, exposed to the elements, illegally connects a house to the gas mains at Dorikandi village of Sonargaon. A shop at the village store and sell equipment for illegal gas connections. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



# PM inciting terrorism

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the state-sponsored terrorism has spread across the country as the PM defended "terrorist acts of her party men" by making such comments.

Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, a component of the BNP-led 19-party alliance, organised the discussion "in memory of Jubo Jagpa leader Masud Rayhan and all other martyrs for saving independence and democracy."

Pointing to Hasina's recent comments in parliament that Chhatra League men have also the right to self-defence, Fakhru said the ruling party men were inspired by Hasina's such speech to attack the opposition leaders.

He said the premier has to be accountable for such remarks someday.

In the face of the ruling alliance's

repeated allegation that the opposition combine is involved in terrorism, Fakhru said BNP does not believe in terrorism and his party is not involved in any terrorist activities either. "People know who are involved in terrorism," he further said.

The BNP leader said the BNP's decision of boycotting the January 5 polls was right as it has been proved that no fair election is possible under the Awami League government.

He said the AL leaders and activists call Hasina the daughter of democracy. "But through the holding of the January 5 election, she [Hasina] has destroyed democracy."

The BNP leader said the economic structure in the rural areas has collapsed as the government is creating obstacles to Grameen Bank activi-

ties.

Echoing Khaleda Zia's Tuesday's claim, Fakhru said around 300 opposition men died at the hands of law enforcers and the ruling party's armed cadres.

He said there was still the time to stop repression and killing of the opposition men. "Otherwise country's democracy will be in danger."

Meanwhile, the BNP chairperson's adviser Khandaker Mahbub Hossain yesterday alleged that by holding the "January 5 farcical polls" in the country, the government has ruined democracy.

The government is trying to hold on to power by using the law enforcers, but it is not possible, said Mahbub while addressing a discussion of Somnilito Peshajibi Parishad, a pro-BNP platform, at the Jatiya Press Club.

# Verdict uncertain

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The case filed in 1995 during the then BNP-led government has never got the pace for disposal. The trial began in 1999 when the Awami League-led government was in power.

But it suddenly got pace in July last year after Ershad had refused to extend support to the AL-nominated mayoral candidate in the Gazipur City Corporation election.

At that stage, both the prosecution and the defence placed their arguments. Hearing of the case resumed in November and on completion of hearing on January 22, the court fixed February 10 for delivering the verdict.

Ershad on November 11 declared that he would not contest the 10th parliamentary election in the absence of all political parties. He, however, changed his mind, but after submission of nomination papers, he announced to quit the

election on December 3.

Sources in the Jatiya Party claimed that Ershad was not allowed to quit the electoral race. He was confined to a hospital and was elected as an MP against his will. He was compelled to swear in as MP and was also appointed as the special envoy to the prime minister, they said.

Against this backdrop, the court on January 22 fixed the day for delivering the verdict. Ershad on the next day issued a press statement thanking the prime minister for appointing him as her special envoy.

Things took a new turn as the Dhaka district judge on January 29 transferred Judge Begum Hosne Ara Aktar of the Manzoor murder case to another court replacing Judge Khondker Hasan Md Firoz.

Judge Firoz was transferred to the court, which has been dealing with the

Manzoor murder case.

Asked, Md Akbar Hossain, administrative officer of the Court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka told The Daily Star on Thursday five judges including Hosne Ara and Firoz had been transferred.

"They have been transferred only in public interest and for the convenience of trial proceedings," he said citing the reasons written on the transfer order.

Maj Gen Abul Manzoor was killed at Chittagong Cantonment on June 1, 1981, just two days into the assassination of the then president Ziaur Rahman.

Manzoor, who was the commander of Sector-8 during the Liberation War, was believed to have carried out an abortive Chittagong coup in which Zia was killed.

The other accused in the case are Maj (ret'd) Kazi Emdadul Haque, Lt Col (ret'd) Mostafa Kamaluddin Bhuiyan, Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdul Latif and Lt Col (ret'd) Shamsur Rahman Shamsher.