

Lavish rally in Sylhet

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about Tk 1 crore or 1.5 crore at the most.

Banners, festoons and billboards cost about Tk 50 lakh while daises, posters and announcements through loudspeakers needed about the same amount, he said, adding that additional costs could come to another Tk 50 lakh.

The MP aspirants are spending their own money for billboards and signboards, he added.

"Aspirants for party nomination in different constituencies have hung most of the banners and signboards using their own portraits along with those of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia,"

said city BNP vice-president Nasim Hossain.

They have been asked to arrange transport for people from their own areas on the day of the rally, which is why the party expenditure is lesser this time, he added.

Media sub-committee convener Rezaul Hasan Lodi, also city BNP organising secretary, said about 100 arches were erected by the party's district and city units and the components of BNP-led 18-party alliance.

Other organisations associated with the alliance have built another one thousand arches outside the city at their own expense, he added. Lodi could not specify the amount of money

spent for the purpose.

Alongside former lawmakers of BNP, a good number of new aspirants have put up billboards and signboards on different roads, especially those that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's motorcade would take to reach the venue and back.

The aspirants include former foreign secretary S h a m s h e r M o b i n Chowdhury, businessperson Khandaq Abdul Muktadir and Shamsuzzaman Zaman.

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia will address the rally in the city's Alia Madrasa ground this afternoon to drum up support for the party's demand that the upcoming elections be held

under a neutral caretaker government.

She was slated to arrive in the city late last night.

City and district unit BNP leaders said over five lakh people from different areas of Sylhet division are expected to join the rally.

Some of the signboards put up in the city demand to know the whereabouts of district BNP president and central organising secretary Ilias Ali, who has remained missing since April 17 last year.

SM Rokon Uddin, additional commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said security measures have been beefed up in the city and around the venue of the rally.

Sing for talents

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Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad graced the occasion as chief guest. Jim McCabe, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, and Salehuddin Ahmed, managing editor of The Daily Star, spoke at the event at the Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

In his speech, the minister said, "The Standard Chartered-The Daily Star Celebrating Life is a unique competition. I would like to congratulate the award winners and the organisers of this creative and commendable event. The theme of this year's competition, 'Empowerment of Women', is best suited to the present context, as Bangladesh has done very well on women and children issues. I would like to urge all the winners

to represent Bangladesh positively through their creative work."

This year's lifetime achievement awards went to three eminent personalities - actor Anwar Hossain (posthumous), photographer Anwar Hossain and musician Gazi Mazharul Anwar - for their outstanding contributions to the respective fields. A visual presentation showcasing the life and work of the three were screened at the event. Sadia Khalid compiled the audio-visuals.

Gazi Mazharul Anwar, who wrote the song "Joy Bangla Bangla Joy," urged the cultural minister to ward off all the "evil cultures" from the society.

Award winners in photography category are Shabbir Ferdous (first), Mahfuzul Hasan Bhuiyan (second) and Ismail

Ferdous (third); while in lyrics category the winners are Rayhana Parvin (first), Hasan Najmul (second) and Tapan Bagchi (third).

Probal Rashid, Ibrahim Khalil, Noor Ahmed Gelal, M Yousuf Tushar, Nasir Uddin and Tarek Ahmed received awards for their photographs in honourable mention category. Awards for lyrics in honourable mention category went to Shah Alam Sony, Bilal Hossain Nuri, Mohammad Shahidullah, OR Sihab, Khurshid Alam Babu, Rafiq Muazzim and Rabiul Hussain. Fazle Hasan Shishir received award for his film in honourable mention category.

The award ceremony over, the packed hall awaited for the performance of classical music by four noted Bangladeshi artistes - Rezwan Ali Lablu, Priyanka Gope, Sheuli Bhattacharjee

and Nishit Dey, along with riveting dance presentations by the artistes of Shadhon.

Violinist Sheuli Bhattacharjee led a 13-member troupe named "Sporsho Classical Orchestra" to perform a superb recital set on raga "Yaman," pertaining to "that Kalyan".

Vocalist Rezwan Ali Lablu performed a "kheyali" set on raga "Shahana Kanada". The artiste also presented a "bandish"-based on raga "Kirwani" at the event. Another vocalist Priyanka Gope rendered a "kheyali" based on raga "Jog" while promising sitarist Nishit Dey presented raga "Charkeshi".

The event was coordinated by Star Showbiz Editor Rafi Hossain. Channel i was the media partner of the event.

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Once the compiling was done, the three judges collectively finalised the verdict, a top official of the tribunal said.

The Tribunal-1 on Tuesday sentenced S a l a u d d i n Q u a d e r Chowdhury to death for committing crimes against humanity and genocide during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

Soon after the verdict, his wife Farhat Quader Chowdhury claimed to journalists that she had already got "the copy of the judgment", saying it had been retrieved from the computer of the law secretary and that it had been written by the law ministry.

"We also collected footage of CCTV cameras installed in the tribunal."

The three judges of International Crimes Tribunal-1 had separately written parts of the verdict and two computer operators

also talked to classmates and roommates of some of the network members, including Hizb ut-Tahrir activists who even openly shared jihadi views with fellows.

It was then picked up by various blogs and Facebook pages early Tuesday.

Also yesterday, law enforcers seized documents and computers from the office of SQ Chowdhury's counsel Fakhrul Islam.

The lawyer told The Daily Star that detectives accompanied by the Rab and police raided his office at Kakrabi in the capital around 2:30pm.

BNP's Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi last night in a press conference condemned the raid, saying it was a bid to cover up the government's misdeeds.

During the verdict pronouncement, the accused himself made similar claims.

Also, at least two anonymously operated websites - justiceconcern.org and tribunaleaks.be -- posted the document, saying it was the copy of original verdict. It was then picked up by various blogs and Facebook pages early Tuesday.

Mezbah Uddin, a fourth-year Buet student, was arrested on April 17 in connection with the murder. He was one of the network members and had communications with radical Islamist leader Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, detectives say.

Tonmoy, a civil engineering student, was stabbed by a masked gang in Gaibandha on August 10.

The next day from hospital, he told The Daily Star that the attack was in

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The judges are Justice SH Md Nurul Huda Jaigirdar, Justice KM Kamrul Kader, Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah, Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam, Justice Mohammad Ullah, Justice Muhammamad Khurshid Alam Sarkar, Justice AKM Shahidul Huq, Justice Shahidul Karim, Justice Md Jahangir Hossain

According to sources, the Awami League-led government has so far appointed 10 judges to the Appellate Division and 63 judges to the High Court Division of the SC.

The head of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, Kristian Berg Harpviken, follows the work of the peace prize committee closely and has since 2009 published his own shortlist of possible winners -- though he has yet to correctly pick the laureate.

Topping his list this year is Malala, the Pakistani teen who survived a shot to the head last year by the Taliban for championing girls' education.

Meanwhile, district Jibon Dal has called a daylong hartal in Baraigram today, protesting at the murder.

launched the attack on the duo.

KM Jakir, mayor of Bonpara municipality and former office secretary of Natore district unit AL, denied the allegations.

Meanwhile, district Jibon

Dal has called a daylong

hartial for three to four days

to follow the siege.

In the final stage of the agitation, a non-cooperation movement would be launched, added the leader.

BNP Chairperson

Malala

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also inaugurate the electricity import from India at the Bangladesh-India Power Transmission Centre.

Manmohan will join the programmes through video conference, Power Secretary Monowar Islam told journalists yesterday.

Environmentalists and different socio-political organisations have long been opposing the government's plan to set up the

plant at Bagerhat's Rampal,

14 kilometres away from the Sundarbans, arguing that it

would spell disaster for the world's largest mangrove forest.

Originally, Hasina was scheduled to lay the foundation stone for the Rampal plant on October 22 and Manmohan was supposed to join through video conference.

But, the power secretary said, as the Indian premier

Radicals campaigning from Buet cocoon

FROM PAGE 1

and Discussions, said it is an utter lie that the Taliban or Laskar-e-Taiba has no place in the modern world and the world will be a place for free thinkers. In fact, Taliban are now stronger than ever, it added. The network often targets progressive and pro-liberation people.

Some of the signboards put up in the city demand to know the whereabouts of district BNP president and central organising secretary Ilias Ali, who has remained missing since April 17 last year.

SM Rokon Uddin, additional commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said security measures have been beefed up in the city and around the venue of the rally.

After several students, including Arif Raihan Dwip and Tonmoy Ahmed Moon, reportedly hurled abuse at the imam of the university mosque for supplying food at the April 5 rally of Hefajat-e-Islam, an April 7 post on Facebook group Buetian said, "You have beaten the imam, so you deserve punishment."

Buetian is a forum of current and former students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

On April 9, Dwip, a mechanical engineering student, was stabbed at a university dormitory. The Facebook account, which wrote the threat post, was deactivated the same day.

Later, a post at the network's Facebook page, Islamic Notes and Discussions, boasted about the brutal murder: "A deplorable beast like Rajib has been killed."

The network closely watches university freshers to know who would be easy to recruit and conducts welfare activities like blood donation programmes to win them over.

They [the radicals] put things in a way that nothing would, at first, seem illogical to you," one of the students whom the network had tried to recruit told these correspondents.

"They [radicals] explained scientific theories in the light of Islam. They said the Jews despite being low in number are leading in the realm of science and technology. Muslims, on the other hand, have no voice despite their huge number, and that they need to be educated and organised.

"Some of the discussions were career oriented."

The student added, "At a study circle, I was given a book written by [controversial Islamist thinker] Maududi. Only then could I get their true motive."

In the next step, newcomers are invited to discussions

on the books they were asked to read. The students, likely to be recruited, also have to pass through several brainstorming sessions.

Wishing anonymity, a fourth-year student told The Daily Star he was often invited to the network's programmes. He could figure out its motive after attending a study circle.

Anyone whose loyalty is proved beyond doubt throughout four stages -- "supporters", "associates", "workers" and "members" -- can take part in jihadi campaigns on Facebook and blogs, according to a document obtained by this newspaper.

The document, titled "monthly plan", was found in the room of a Shibir activist in Buet. Meant for the network's Suhrawardy Hall unit, it has sections like manpower, recruitment, invitation, meeting, trainings and student welfare.

A post at Let's Pray Salaat, a Facebook page run by the network's Suhrawardy Hall unit, it has sections like manpower, recruitment, invitation, meeting, trainings and student welfare.

In June 2009, the Rapid Action Battalion arrested Emranul Haque, a Buet graduate working as the IT chief of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Asked about possible remedies, Monirul Islam said, "There are two approaches -- hard and soft -- to de-radicalise such Islamists. Unless they reach the point of no return, they are given psychological counselling so that they can come back to normal life. This is a part of the soft approach.

"Unless there is place for the soft approach or enhanced cultural activities, law enforcers cannot solve the problem only by taking the hard line, which means arresting them."

He further said, "In Buet, most student life is limited to classes, prayers and computers, since there is little scope for cultural practices on the campus."

The Daily Star sought the comments of Mufti Abdullah Al Maruf, deputy director of Islamic Foundation, about the network's interpretation of Islam.

"Some anti-liberation quarters are trying to deceive innocent students into choosing the path of militancy by presenting a distorted version of Islam," he said.

"There are hundreds of holy Quran verses through which we understand that Islam is a religion of peace. A verse says, 'You solve problems through negotiation'."

In no way does Islam encourage militancy, Mufti Abdullah added.

watts of electricity a day to Bangladesh for 35 years from a substation at Baharampur in West Bengal. A 125-kilometre transmission line, 40km of it in Bangladesh, connects the two substations.

India began the test supply with 50MW electricity on September 27. From today, it will go up to 250MW every day and reach 500MW in end-November.

would not be able to join the function through video conference that day, the unveiling of the foundation stone would be done today.

Our Correspondent from Kushtia adds: The inauguration of 500MW electricity import will take place at the newly-built Bheramara substation of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

Under a 2010 agreement, India will export 500 mega-

watts of electricity a day to Bangladesh for 35 years from a substation at Baharampur in West Bengal. A 125-kilometre transmission line, 40km of it in Bangladesh, connects the two substations.

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party leaders.

During a grand rally at the capital's Shapla Chhata on May 4, the BNP chairperson had asked some top party leaders and chief of Jatiyatabadi Chhhatra Dal and Jibon Dal whether they could continue a sit-in at the meeting venue. As the JCD and Jibon Dal chiefs were unwilling, she dropped the plan, said party sources.

The following day, she called upon her party leaders and activists to side with the Hefajat men during their "Dhaka Chhato" programme. Again, she did not get much of a response, said a top leader in the BNP-led alliance.

BNP insiders, however, believe the government's grip on police and administration would slacken after October 25, as it would be the end of the government's tenure.

That is why it would be easier for the opposition to wage the movement, as the law enforcers might not take a hard-line against the opposition activists.

Jibon Dal man shot dead

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Jibon Dal, the youth body of the opposition BNP.

Injured Babul Hossain, joint organising secretary of the organisation's Nagar union unit, was admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital.

Quoting locals, police said the assailants first hacked Bashir and Babul with sharp weapons and

then shot Bashir while the

two were taking tea at a stall at Merigachha Bazar.

Bashir and Babul were rushed to Natore Sadar Hospital where doctors declared Bashir dead.