



Don't worry about plots ahead of polls: PM

UNB, Tungipara

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked people not to worry about national and international conspiracies being hatched ahead of the upcoming general election.

"...We have nothing to worry about as people always stand by us with their votes," she said.

The PM was speaking at a views-exchange meeting with Tungipara upazila Awami League, its associate and friendly organisations, and local public representatives at the upazila AL office.

The 12th parliamentary election is likely to be held in the first week of January next year.

Hasina, also the ruling AL president, said there had been several attempts on her life and that she has reached today's position confronting bullets and bombs.

"Allah has given task to every person and protects him or her till the work is accomplished. Allah is above and the leaders and activists of my party are on the ground to save me. People belonging to my party always protect me whenever I am attacked."

Pointing at the grenade attack

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A dove flies over the debris of houses destroyed in Israeli strikes, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday as Palestinian children look on. Israeli forces are preparing for a ground assault on the Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Police 'storm' Annie's house, arrest him in dead of night

The BNP leader alleges cops hit him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie was arrested at his home in Dhanmondi early yesterday.

The BNP alleged that police acted like robbers when they broke into the flat around 2:00am and took Annie, the party's publicity secretary, to the police station.

When police took him to a court hours later, Annie said police hit him, shoved him around and mentally tortured him after taking him to the police station.

"I am neither a thief, nor a robber. Why would they break into my house, and drag me down the stairs in the middle of the night?" Annie asked, breaking down in tears.

Contacted, Parvez Islam, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station,

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COMMUNAL VIOLENCE Responsibility to fall on law enforcers

Says CEC about nat'l polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies will have to take the responsibility if there is any communal violence before, during, or after the next national election, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said yesterday.

He made the comment when Bangladesh Hindu, Buddha, and Christian Oikya Parishad leaders demanded strict measures to prevent violence centring the polls during a meeting.

The EC has some control over law enforcers up to 15 days after elections, the CEC told reporters after the meeting at his office in Agargaon.

"We'll keep an eye on that. It is the responsibility of the law enforcement agencies to maintain communal harmony before and after elections. If that doesn't happen, they will have to bear the responsibility."

The CEC said the parishad leaders said communal violence took place during the past polls. They fear that such violence may reoccur.

"We have taken this into consideration ... We take the matter very seriously. We have also said the law enforcers will look into that," said Habibul.

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Israel forms unity govt as fighting rages

Airstrikes keep pounding Gaza; Israel deploys military around Gaza, Hamas say it's still fighting in Israel

AGENCIES

Israel formed an emergency unity government yesterday as it pounded Gaza to root out Hamas and deployed forces north of the densely populated Palestinian enclave, where the militants said they were still fighting after their cross-border assault.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to form a war cabinet with former defence minister and centrist opposition party leader Benny Gantz and focus entirely on the conflict, a joint statement from Gantz's National Unity party said.

US President Joe Biden condemned the surprise weekend attack on populated areas of southern Israel by hundreds of Hamas gunmen as "sheer evil."

Israel's death toll rose to 1,200 with over 2,700 wounded, its military said, from the militants' hours-long rampage after breaching the border fence enclosing Gaza on Saturday.

The group's armed wing, the Al Qassam Brigades, said it was still

Israel says 1,200 killed in Hamas raid

Retaliatory strikes kill more than 1100 in Gaza

Gaza's sole power plant out of fuel, shuts down

More than 260,000 people displaced in Gaza: UN

fighting inside Israel yesterday. Israel deployed tanks and armoured vehicles just north of Gaza where the clashes were reported, but had no immediate comment on the Hamas claim.

Retaliatory strikes on the blockaded enclave have killed 1,100 people and wounded 5,339, with some 535 residential buildings destroyed leaving around 250,000 homeless, Gaza's Hamas authorities

said. Most of the displaced were in UN-designated shelters, others huddling in shattered streets.

The UN said the Israeli offensive has forced Over 260,000 people to flee their homes in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has vowed swift punishment for the deadliest Palestinian militant attack in its 75 year history, which left corpses strewn around a music festival and a kibbutz community.

The military said dozens of its fighter jets struck more than 200 targets in a neighbourhood of Gaza City overnight that it said had been used by Hamas to launch its attacks.

"We started the offensive from the air, later on, we will also come from the ground," Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told soldiers near the fence on Tuesday.

Israel has put Gaza under "total siege" to stop food and fuel from reaching the enclave of 2.3 million people, many poor and dependent on aid. Hamas media yesterday said electricity went out after the only power station stopped working.

Two dozen ancient earthworks detected in the Amazon



CNN ONLINE

From deep in the Amazon rainforest, two dozen previously unknown pre-Columbian earthworks have been brought to light -- and more than 10,000 such constructs may still be waiting to be discovered, according to new research.

Across the Amazon basin, rainforests spread their leafy boughs over millions of kilometres. In the ground far below the treetops are ancient, long-hidden remnants of human habitation. They are preserved as ditches, paths and wells, sometimes forming geometric patterns. Known as earthworks, they were shaped by indigenous peoples who lived in the area around 500 to 1,500 years ago.

Earthworks have been linked to ceremonial and defensive uses, and they offer a glimpse of what ancient settlements may have looked like.

Many Amazonian earthworks that predate the arrival of European colonisers are revealed in deforested areas. But researchers suspected that there were even more such sites that are all but invisible today, concealed under dense foliage.

Locally made 375cc bikes now allowed on roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is now allowing locally produced motorcycles up to 375cc for the roads.

The Road Transport and Highways Division yesterday issued a circular allowing registration of the bikes.

"From now, motorcycles up to 375cc can be registered," Sitangshu Shekhar Biswas, director (engineering) of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) told The Daily Star tonight.

Currently, bikes up to 165cc are allowed on the roads.

The move came at a time when a growing number of motorcycles is considered one of the major reasons behind the rise in road crashes and deaths.

The move comes after the home ministry on September 7 this year made a decision in this regard.

The circular will come into effect immediately.



Keeping your feet dry is tricky if you are on Station Road in Fatullah, Narayanganj. The street used by hundreds of students and many others every day has often remained flooded over the last four months because of what locals say are clogged drains in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DHAKA-M'SINGH HIGHWAY

Six killed as bus ploughs through crowd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bus ploughed through a group of people, who were getting on another bus, killing six in Trishal on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday.

Five of the six were identified as garment workers Shimul Ahmed, 20, Faruq Hossain, 35, Jesmin Akhter, 28, Bakhtiar Hossain, 34, and businessman Altaf Hossain, 60, police said.

Quoting locals, Mohammad Mainuddin, officer-in-charge of Trishal Police Station, said after a tyre of a bus heading for Dhaka from Sherpur deflated in Chelerghat area on the highway, its passengers got off and were getting on another bus parked beside the highway.

Around 8:30am, another bus appeared and ploughed into the passengers, leaving three dead on the spot and injuring 11 others.

On information, police and fire service members rescued the injured persons and rushed them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Three among the injured died on the way, said the OC. Police recovered the bodies and seized the bus but its driver managed to flee the scene, the OC added.

The garment workers were heading towards their factory in Bhaluka when the accident occurred, police said.