



Polls will be held no matter what: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has categorically said that the next general election will be held no matter what and that the people will exercise their voting rights freely, defying the move by the BNP to foil the election.

She was addressing a grand rally, organised by Dhaka city (north) Awami League, at a field in the Civil Aviation Authority's residential area in Kawla yesterday.

The rally was initially scheduled for October 7, marking



the soft opening of the third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, but it was deferred due to inclement weather.

Hasina, also the AL president, said if a party of looters, corrupt people, killers, and thieves like the BNP come to power, it will destroy the country.

"Don't let them destroy the country. Only the symbol of 'boat' can advance the country. I urge you to cast your votes for 'boat' in the next general election."

The PM said the BNP is in a dilemma over participation in the parliamentary polls.

"Who will be the prime minister from their party? Will it be that corrupt absconding suspect or that embezzler of orphans' money? Who will be their leader in the election? That's why they are trying to foil the polls."

Hasina said the BNP knows very well that votes will be cast for "boat" if the election is held, the AL will come to power, and the country's development will be expedited further.

She said that the BNP previously wanted to foil elections and snatch away the people's voting rights. "I request the people to stay alert so that they [BNP] cannot do this."

The PM said that she will be in power if the people vote for "boat", the AL's electoral symbol, otherwise, she won't. "But I will continue my work for the welfare of the people."

Seeking votes for her party, Hasina said, "If you want development, vote for 'boat'. Or if you want destruction, go for BNP-Jamaat."

She said the BNP seeks support from foreigners, but this would not yield any results.

"People are the biggest power. I believe in the power of the people, I have confidence in the people."

Hasina said that Bangladesh witnessed massive development because the people voted for the AL in 2008, 2014, and 2018 general elections.

In this regard, she referred to different mega projects, including the Padma Bridge, metro rail, elevated expressway, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, third terminal of the Dhaka airport, and tunnel under the Karnaphuli in Chattogram.

"Also, a circular elevated expressway, underground train, and other big development projects will be underway in Dhaka to ease the suffering of the people," she said.

Calling upon the people to find out the hoarders and black marketers, the PM said that the government will take stern action against those so that people don't endure suffering.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, presidium members Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Shajahan Khan and Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam, among others, also spoke at the rally.



Thousands of Awami League supporters gathered for a grand rally at a ground inside the Civil Aviation Authority's residential area in the capital's Kawla area yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

43pc youths hesitant to exercise freedom of expression

Shows study by Citizen's Platform for SDG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 43 percent of the young people in Bangladesh are hesitant or nervous in exercising their freedom of expression, a study by Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, revealed yesterday.

The survey, upon which the study was based, also showed that 41.4 percent of the respondents demanded the abolition of the Digital Security Act or laws like it, along with other administrative measures that obstruct the freedom of expression.

Revealed during a conference at Krishibid Institute Bangladesh in the capital, the study, titled "Youth Perspective in the Current National Context", said over one third of the country's youth faced criticism while exercising this freedom.

The programme was organised with the support of Plan International. Around 5,075 people, aged between

18 and 35, were surveyed to learn their perspective on the country's development as well their voting records and political participation.

Presenting the study, Towfiqul Islam Khan, senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said 69.4 percent

of the country's young population believes corruption and nepotism are the main obstacles to the country's development.

"Additionally, 46.5 percent [of the respondents] said a lack of transparency and accountability are other reasons the country is falling behind."

In terms of solutions, around 60.4 percent of them suggested the introduction of a registration system for the unemployed young people to get employment, while 48 percent recommended a loan facility with a low interest rate for young entrepreneurs.

The study also found that around

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

CAFE ATTACK HC set to deliver verdict on Oct 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict on October 30 on the Holey Artisan Bakery attack case.

On October 11, the bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman fixed October 30 for delivering the verdict after concluding the hearing of the death reference and appeals in the case, said Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed and defence lawyer Ariful Islam.

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), death penalties ordered by the lower court are examined by the HC before the punishment is confirmed.

During the hearing, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin prayed to the HC to confirm the death penalty for the convicts while the defence lawyer urged the court to commute the punishment of the convicted accused.

On July 1, 2016, five militants with firearms, machetes and grenades stormed the upscale eatery

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Scientists discover sixth basic taste our tongue can detect



INDEPENDENT ONLINE

Scientists have found that the tongue responds to ammonium chloride as a sixth basic taste, in addition to detecting sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami flavours.

Research published on Thursday in the journal Nature Communications suggests that protein receptors on the tongue that help detect the sour taste also respond to ammonium chloride – a popular ingredient in some Scandinavian candies.

"If you live in a Scandinavian country, you will be familiar with and may like this taste," neuroscientist and study co-author Emily Liman from the University of Southern California said.

While scientists have known that the tongue responds in some ways to ammonium chloride, the specific protein receptors on the tongue that react to it have remained elusive despite decades of extensive research.

Restaurateur accused of prostituting female staffers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Allegations have surfaced against a Cox's Bazar restaurant owner for forcing his female staffers into prostitution.

The incident came to light when two of the employees filed two separate complaints in this connection with Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, a group of workers yesterday staged a protest at the district headquarters demanding the punishment of Nasiruddin Bachchu, owner of Shalik restaurant.

According to the workers and the complaints, Bachchu hired 21 women from indigenous communities to work at his restaurant in the Kolatoli area.

When appointing them, he imposed a condition

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Bumper-to-bumper traffic on the ground and on the flyover in Kuril Biswa Road area yesterday afternoon. The tailback went up to the 300 Feet Road as well. Many city dwellers were stuck in jams for hours in the capital due to multiple political events.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BID TO NORMALISE TIES Saudi pauses talks with Israel: source

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia has suspended talks on potentially normalising ties with Israel, a source told AFP yesterday, amid the war raging between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Hamas launched a large-scale attack on Israel on October 7 which killed 1,300 people, sparking a retaliatory bombing campaign that has killed at least 2,215 in the Gaza Strip ahead of a potential Israeli ground invasion of the territory.

"Saudi Arabia has decided to pause discussion on possible normalisation and has informed US officials," a source familiar with the discussions told AFP.

The news came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was about to meet with his Saudi counterpart on Saturday, the latest stop on a six-nation tour of the region.

The Gulf kingdom, home to the holiest sites in Islam, has never recognised Israel and did not join the 2020 US-brokered Abraham Accords that saw its Gulf neighbours Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates as well as Morocco establish formal ties with Israel.

US President Joe Biden's administration has been pushing hard in recent months for Saudi Arabia to take the same step.

Under de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, son of the ageing King Salman, Riyadh had laid out conditions for normalisation including security guarantees from Washington and help developing a civilian nuclear programme.

In an interview with Fox News last month, Prince Mohammed said "every day we get closer" to a deal, though he also insisted the Palestinian issue was "very important" for Riyadh.