

Don't indulge in constitutional process disrupting ideas: Sheikh Hasina

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Online Desk: Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina today urged the pro-democratic and rule of law believing political parties and institutions not to indulge in and fuel any peculiar ideas that disrupt the country's constitutional process.

"The 12th National Parliamentary Election will be held on January 7. My request to political parties and institutions that believe in democracy and the rule of law, do not indulge and fuel any idiosyncratic/peculiar ideas that disrupt the constitutional process in the country," she said.

The AL chief made this call while delivering a televised address on the occasion of national parliamentary election as she highlighted her party's goals to turn the country into "smart Bangladesh" by 2041.

"We expect a free, fair and neutral election," she said, referring to the first ever Election Commission (EC) in Bangladesh that was formed by enacting law.

Sheikh Hasina said the election commission has been given financial independence, while administration and law enforcement agencies are vested under the EC.

She said, "The election commission is conducting the election fully independently. Our government is giving all kinds of support to the election commission for conducting fair and peaceful elections."

Since winning the national election in 2008, Awami League has been in power for three consecutive terms from 2009 to 2023, and this third tenure of this government is going to end through the national election slated for January 7, she said.

After the brutal killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, Awami League first assumed power in 1996, and handed over power on July 15, 2001 peacefully for the first time in the history of Bangladesh completing its tenure, she added.

The Awami League president said, "Today I've come to you to seek your vote for boat, the electoral symbol of Awami League."

She added: "We want to make this development sustainable, to improve your living standard, to make our beloved motherland, Bangladesh, a hunger-poverty-free developed Smart Sonar Bangla."

Sheikh Hasina said that her party has declared a manifesto to build "Smart Bangladesh" from 2024 following the success they have achieved in running the country with the election manifesto in 2008, 2014 and 2018 with the ideals and spirit of the War of Liberation.

Awami League unveiled the election manifesto on December 27 for this national election.

Among the issues that have been mentioned in this manifesto for the socio-economic development of the people, the Awami League president highlighted some of these on which they've given special priority.

These are:

1. To protect and promote the practice of democratic systems at all levels.
2. Making every effort to keep prices within the purchasing power of all.
3. Ensuring employability education and youth employment.

4. Building smart Bangladesh based on modern technology.
5. Mechanization of integrated agricultural systems with the aim of increasing production and taking measures to preserve the products.
6. Establishment of agricultural products and food processing industries.
7. To create employment opportunities by developing infrastructure and industries up to the village level.
8. To increase efficiency and capacity of the bank, insurance and financial sector.
9. Making health services affordable to low-income people.
10. To ensure individual and social security by including all in the universal pension system.
11. Making law enforcement agencies efficient in the use of modern technology and ensuring their accountability.
12. Elimination of communalism as well as all forms of terrorism and militancy.

Sheikh Hasina said for three consecutive terms from 2009 to 2023, the Awami League government has kept the nation moving forward on the path of building a democratic country based on equality and justice through public welfare oriented and well-coordinated plan by maintaining democratic trends and stability.

She added that a sustainable foundation for building a developed Bangladesh has already been established.

Mentioning that Bangladesh has achieved the status of a developing country, she said Bangladesh's progress as a developing country will begin from 2026.

She went on saying, "It is the Awami League, if it is in power, only can realize the opportunities effectively and deal with the challenges to build Bangladesh as a developing nation."

By making Bangladesh as a developing nation, she said, "We've formulated a vision plan to build a developed and prosperous Smart Bangladesh by 2041."

"The vast potential young society will be the main craftsman of building Smart Bangladesh. The power of youth is the progress of Bangladesh," she added.

On the occasion of the 12th National Parliamentary Election, chiefs or representatives of 17 parties so far delivered speeches over the state-run Bangladesh Television.

Sheikh Hasina, in her televised address, said that Awami League as the party of the mass people whenever comes to power, ensures economic and social development of the people of the country.

"People's food, safety, medicare, housing, education, employment and massive infrastructure development is ensured," she said.

The Awami League president thanked the people of the country as they have given the Awami League an opportunity to serve them by voting for the boat.

She also said that as much as she has achieved in this long journey, all of it is the contribution of the people of the country and this would not have been possible without their support.

"If I've made any mistakes along the way, my request to you will be to look at the matter with the eyes of forgiveness," she said.

"If I can form the government again, I will get a chance to correct the mistakes. Give me an opportunity to serve you by voting for the 'Boat' in the January 7 election," she added.

She requested the people to keep confidence in her as they are her family.

"Let's all make this Bangladesh a Smart Golden Bangla and fulfill the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said that Bangladesh doesn't want war and it wants peace. "We want an end to the war in Palestine and Ukraine. We want an end to the ongoing genocide in Palestine. Bangladesh is always with the people of Palestine."

Briefly describing the overall development of the country in the last 15 years, the Awami League chief said that the growth was 7.25 percent, per capita income increased 5 times, budget size increased 12 times and annual development program (ADP) increased 13 times, GDP size increased 12 times, foreign exchange reserve increased 36 times, export earnings increased 5 times, annual remittance increased 6 times, foreign investment increased 5 times, wages of workers increased 9 times, foreign exchange reserve increased 36 times while export earnings increased 5 times.

She also mentioned that Poverty rate reduced from 41.51 percent to 18.7 percent, while the extreme poverty rate reduced by 5 times, and drinking water coverage increased from 55 percent to 98.8 percent.

Besides, sanitary latrines increased from 43.28 percent to 97.32 percent, while infant mortality decreased from 84 per thousand to 21, maternal mortality decreased from 360 per lakh to 156, and the average human lifespan is 72.8 years.

Sheikh Hasina said that power generation capacity increased 8 times in the last 15 years while electricity consumption rate increased from 28 percent to 100 percent, literacy rate increased to 76.8 percent while 22 times enhancement took place in technical education. The grain production increased 4 times, she added.

"We have built Padma Bridge with our own funding. We launched metro rail in Dhaka, constructed elevated expressway, and inaugurated subway construction. We set up the country's first nuclear power plant at Rooppur," she continued.

She mentioned that the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport has been inaugurated.

She said, "We've constructed South Asia's first underground road – 'Bangabandhu Tunnel' in Chittagong. Dhaka-Cox's Bazar rail route was established by constructing an eye-catching railway station in Cox's Bazar, and launched Bangabandhu Satellite-I."

In any economic index, she said, the economy of Bangladesh has excelled in 2023 with a multifold growth compared to 2009. In 2009, the GDP was only 102 billion US dollars.

In 2023, the GDP will increase to more than 450 billion US dollars.

Sheikh Hasina said that there is a huge gap between Bangladesh 15 years ago and today's Bangladesh, as people's quality of life has improved and people today dream of a better life.

She said that her party wants to make this development sustainable, to improve quality of life and make Bangladesh a hunger-poverty-free developed Smart Sonar Bangla. "Today, I have come to you to seek your vote for the boat," she added.

Chiefs or representatives of 17 parties who so far delivered televised addressed at the state broadcaster, Bangladesh Television were Ganafront Chairman Md Zakir Hossain, Bangladesh Congress Secretary General Advocate Md Yarul Islam, Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktiyote Chief Abu Layes Munna, Sammyabadi Dal of Bangladesh General Secretary Dilip Barua, Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF) President SM Abul Kalam Azad, Islami Oikkyajote General Secretary Mufti Foyjullah, Bangladesh Islami Front Chairman MA Matin, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon Organizing Secretary Mufti Sultan Mohiuddin, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Secretary General Zafar Ahmmad Joy, Bangladesh Peoples Party Chairman Sheikh Salauddin Salu, Jatiya Party-JP Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation Vice-Chairman Syed Abu Daud Masnabi Haider, Bangladesh Supreme Party Chairman Syed Shahjada Saifuddin Ahmad Maizbhandari, Islami Front Bangladesh Senior Joint Secretary General Khaja Md Arifur Rahman, Jasod (JSD) General Secretary Shirin Akhter, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh Secretary General Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, and

Bangladesh Workers Party Pollitt Bureau Member Nur Ahmad Bakul.