

Oath in a day or two

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers-elect are likely to take oath on Saturday or Sunday as the Election Commission (EC) published results of Monday's polls in official gazettes yesterday.

According to the constitution, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, elected speaker of the last parliament, will administer the oath taking by Sunday.

The MPs-elect will have to take oath within three days of the publication of the results in official gazettes, says the constitution.

The BNP, which suffered a huge defeat Monday, included this provision in the constitution in 2004. The party has yet to decide whether its lawmakers-elect will take oath or not.

The MPs-elect will have to abide by the constitutional

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Rigging claim binned

CEC says people never make any mistake in giving verdict if environment is right; hopes poll standard be upheld in future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda has termed the ninth parliamentary election credible, saying no-one should disrespect the people's verdict as reflected in the polls.

"People are a very important factor. None of us should disregard or ignore their desire or verdict. We should show respect to it," the CEC said in his first post-polls briefing at the EC Secretariat yesterday. He said this when asked to comment on the BNP chief's reaction to polls results.

Congratulating the voters, especially the young and women, for exercising their franchise en masse, the CEC said, "People never make any mistake to give their verdict if we can create the opportunity and ensure they will return to their destinations unhindered after casting



the matter for future."

He said an aged leader of the country made the comment and he does not want to say anything about it. Referring to the observer groups' reports, he however said the election has been appreciated at home and abroad.

Huda, who was appointed CEC in February 2007 after declaration of the state of emergency, also said they are by and large satisfied that they have presented the nation with a credible election.

"Overall, we're very happy that the election was held peacefully and in a disciplined manner," he said, adding a few incidents might take place in such a huge election which is usual.

He also said the Election Commission's future target should be to establish such an opportunity and create such a

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Young MPs-elect to rule AL cabinet

Prominent old guards may be sidelined in charter for change

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina may pick younger, educated and deft leaders in the party as cabinet colleagues to implement her party's electoral pledges at the earliest.

Party sources said the AL chief might opt for a small cabinet comprised of 25-30 members including a few renowned professionals as technocrat ministers for finance and law, among others.

A few leaders from among the allies may also be given the cabinet portfolio, according to sources of parties in the alliance.

As of yesterday, however, Hasina did not say much about her cabinet to be formed within next week.

Meanwhile, a few senior party leaders anonymously expressed their views on the formation of the new cabinet.

Most of them have suggested not picking tendentious persons, especially those who earlier failed to show competence and quality, to avert further controversy. They said party men with clean image at home and abroad would be given priority for cabinet posts.

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No impact of 'no' vote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly introduced option of casting 'no' vote failed to exert any impact on Monday's national election as only .55 percent voters went for the alternative ignoring the candidates.

Having been advised by the dignitaries of the NGOs and civil society members, the Election Commission (EC) provided voters with the option of casting 'no' vote amid strong opposition and uproar from the political parties.

As per the provision of the Representation of the People Order (RPO), if voters think none of the contestants are worthy of their votes in a constituency they can seal the ballot with a 'no' and a fresh election will be held in that

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25 small parties get 2pc votes in total

148 independent candidates bag around 3pc

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Twenty-five small political parties that fielded 716 candidates in the December 29 parliamentary election bagged only 2.38 percent of the total votes.

However, the 148 independent candidates in the polls got 2.95 percent of the total votes while four of them won parliamentary seats.

But no candidate of the 25 parties won any seat. Moreover, as per the preliminary calculation of the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat, most of them have lost their security deposits for poor performance in the polls.

However, despite poor performance in the election, all political parties, registered with the EC, are entitled to receive donations, a set of electoral rolls in a CD and broadcast facilities in

Businesses greet Hasina on victory

Support AL's charter for change

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of the country's chamber bodies and trade associations yesterday congratulated Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina on the grand alliance's historic victory in the national elections.

In a joint statement, they said the private sector and business community fully support the Awami League initiated "charter for change" and its election manifesto for establishing a "digital Bangladesh" and a society free from corruption, terrorism, hunger and poverty.

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Fate of 3 MPs-elect hangs in the balance

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Supreme Court's (SC) verdict and Bangladesh Bank's (BB) probe report will decide the fate of three MPs-elect as two of them contested Monday's national election following an interim SC order and the other is an alleged loan defaulter.

The lawmakers-elect might lose membership of parliament if the court verdict and probe report go against them, electoral experts said referring to electoral laws.

One of them -- AKM Maidul Islam -- was elected on Jatiya Party (JP) nomination from Kurigram-3 constituency. He had reportedly concealed information about defaulted bank loan, and against whom Sonali Bank complained to the Election Commission (EC) seeking justice.

The other two -- Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Shafiqul Azam Khan -- were elected on Awami League (AL) ticket from Chandpur-1 and Jhenidah-3 respectively as the interim SC order entitled them to contest the election.

The EC on Wednesday asked the BB to probe the allegation against Maidul that he concealed information about defaulted loan in his nomination paper for contesting the

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Dec 29 polls free, fair

Says president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said the December 29 elections were free and fair.

"I am thanking the almighty Allah and congratulating the countrymen for holding the 9th parliamentary election on December 29 freely and fairly," the president said.

"Soon an elected government will take the reins of the country, I wish them all the best," he said.

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UN assures AL of help in trying war criminals

UNB, Dhaka

UN secretary general's special envoy Ian Martin yesterday assured Awami League President Sheikh Hasina of all possible support in bringing the war criminals to justice.

The envoy gave the assurance when he called on the AL chief at Sudha Sadan.

"He gave the assurance as Sheikh Hasina sought UN support to bring the war criminals under trial," former ambassador Mohammad Zamir told reporters.

Bringing the war criminals to justice is one of the main points of the AL manifesto given before the general election in which the party got over two-thirds majority.

After the meeting, Ian

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BNP wants AL to form govt

To watch its performance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said yesterday they want Awami League to form government and run the country so that they can observe its performance.

"A so-called elected government" is better than an unelected government, he observed.

Talking to reporters after visiting the grave of president Ziaur Rahman, who founded BNP, Delwar said, "We as well as the people will watch and monitor whether and how Awami League fulfils the pledges it made before the (parliamentary) election... People across the globe will also see," Delwar said.

Delwar went there to offer special prayers on the occasion of 30th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, an associate body of BNP. A few party and JCD leaders accompanied him.

The BNP secretary general reiterated the party view that the December 29 election was stage-managed and farcical.

He criticised foreign poll observers including those from USA and UK, saying how they could describe the election as free and fair since they did not see voting in many of the polling centres.

Turning to the AL, Delwar said "History of this party is not

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BNP now alleges 'digital rigging'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday alleged that 'digital' vote rigging in Monday's national election led to its stunning defeat.

It was 'absolutely impossible' to cast 87 percent of total votes (EC estimate) in the stipulated time for casting vote, said Rizvi Ahmed, office secretary of the party.

"In every polling booth across the country, the number of votes cast was shown to be 398.5 on an average in the stipulated time (8:00am to 4:pm). So, it was nothing but a magical trick," he said at a press briefing at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Explaining this, Rizvi said, "It needs about two to three minutes to cast a vote but the estimate of total votes cast

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