



Hasina springs cabinet surprises

Some big names left out as new faces win berth in 37-member council of ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a surprise move, Sheikh Hasina has dropped 30 of her old colleagues, including some heavyweights, to form her new council of ministers that is set to take oath of office this evening.

There will be 15 new ministers in the upcoming council of ministers comprising 37 members, the smallest in recent decades if no other members are inducted.

Hasina will herself take oath today as prime minister for a record fourth straight term, making her the longest serving PM yet in Bangladesh's history.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday invited Hasina, also the Awami League chief, to form the new government

Gazi, Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon.

The other ministers who were shown the door are Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed, Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim, Environment Minister Md Shahab Uddin, Chattogram Hill Tracks Minister Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury and Expatriate Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad.

State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam, a technocrat minister who resigned from the cabinet in November, was also dropped.



Illegal shops stand dangerously close to the rail tracks for around half a kilometer in Narayanganj city's Shaheed Suhrawardy area, posing risk to the locals. The only way people there alert each other about a train passing is by word of mouth, which, if not done in time, can result in accidents.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Nobody can say election was rigged

Hasina tells rally at Suhrawardy Udyan

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no one can question the 12th parliamentary election as it was held in a free, fair, and neutral manner.

"Nobody can say ballots were cast at night instead of daytime or votes were rigged during this election. This is because the election was held in a very transparent, free, and neutral manner," she said.

Addressing a rally at the Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka, the premier said her government never interfered in the Election Commission's activities, rather it assisted the commission.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, thanked the administration, law enforcement agencies and the armed forces for assisting the EC in holding the election in a free and fair manner.

She said nobody can hinder the country's advancement as her party is assuming power again following a landslide victory in the January 7 polls.

The AL organised the rally, with the party president in the chair, to mark the historic homecoming day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after the Liberation War.

The PM said many wanted to stop this election, but failed.

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MPs swear in, ALPP elects Hasina leader of the House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers elect of the January 7 national election took oath at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered the swearing in around 11:00am after she herself took the oath.

Awami League MPs elect took oath first, then the independents, and lawmakers of Jatiyo Party.

The constitution mandates MP elects swear in within three days of the publication of the election results.

The gazette notification on the election results was published on Tuesday. Two hundred and ninety eight were declared elected members of parliament.

Immediately after taking the oath, the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) held an hour-long meeting around noon at the Jatiya Sangsad with party president Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Hasina was unanimously elected the

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Polls lacked participation

Say Australia, Canada; Japan terms election peaceful but cites some irregularities

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Canada has expressed its disappointment over the January 7 parliamentary polls, saying the electoral process had fallen short of the principles of democracy and the freedom upon which Bangladesh was founded.

On the other hand, Australia expressed concern over the violence and arrests of the opposition, while regretting that the election took place in an environment where not all stakeholders could participate meaningfully and substantially.

Japan, meanwhile, said the election was held peacefully though there were some instances of irregularities.

Global Affairs Canada in a statement yesterday called on the relevant authorities to work transparently with all political parties to move forward towards democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in line with the interests of the people of Bangladesh.

"Canada commends and supports the democratic aspirations of Bangladeshi citizens and condemns the acts of intimidation and violence that took place ahead of and during the election. We extend our sympathy to all of those who have been affected by the violence that has occurred," it said.

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after AL's win in Sunday's election. Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain unveiled the names of the 37 council of ministers. Other than prime minister, there will be 25 ministers and 11 state ministers.

"I have called them to inform about their appointment and congratulated them," he said.

The president will administer the oath at Bangabhaban at 7:00pm.

The portfolios will be distributed later.

The 30 ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers dropped from the 48-member outgoing council of ministers include Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Planning Minister MA Mannan, Textile and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir

Among the 30 shown the door are 15 ministers, 13 state ministers and two deputy ministers.

The 25-member cabinet will have 15 new faces, including two state ministers and a deputy minister from the outgoing council of ministers who will now become full minister. The cabinet will also include two technocrats.

Of the 37 members in the new council of ministers, 14 are first timers – seven ministers and seven state ministers.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain, State Minister for Religious Affairs Faridul Haque Khan and Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury will now become minister.

Seven of the 11 state ministers in the new council of ministers are newcomers. The

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Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury swears in the newly elected Awami League MPs of the 12th parliament at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Bail in 9 cases not enough for Fakhrul's release

He is yet to secure bail in 2 more cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir bail in nine cases filed over violence centring the October 28 BNP rally in Dhaka.

However, Fakhrul will remain incarcerated as he is yet to secure bail in two other cases for which he has been in jail since October 29, said Sheikh Shakil Ahmed Ripon, one of his lawyers.

Yesterday, Sultan Sohag Uddin, additional chief metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka, granted bail to Fakhrul after hearing the bail petitions in nine cases,

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JP seeks role of opposition again

GM Quader says polls 'not held in proper manner'; party activists stage demo in the capital for resignation of Quader, Chunnu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader has said his party wants to play the role of an opposition party in the 12th parliament.

"We had been on the opposition bench and this time too we want to sit on the opposition bench," he told reporters after taking oath as an MP at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Earlier in the day, several hundred JP leaders and activists staged protests in front of the party chairman's Banani office demanding resignation of Quader and Mujibur Haque Chunnu, secretary general of the party.

Quader said, "We want to play a people-oriented role and raise public interest issues before parliament."

Asked about the JP's poor showing in Sunday's polls, he said, "The election was not held in a proper manner. In some cases, the

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