

Govt is ready to hold fair, violence-free polls: Kamal

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Online Desk: Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal today said that the government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is ready to hold free, fair and violence-free elections. “We are ready to hold a free, fair and violence-free election under our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,” he said at a media briefing after a meeting with the visiting United States (US) pre-election observation mission at his ministry conference room.

Kamal said, “Our elections will be held according to the constitution. I think their (BNP) representatives will participate in the election. There is no scope to change the government without elections. Our commitment is to hold a free, fair and violence-free election.” He said the UN delegation wanted to know about security of candidates who wants to participate in the national elections. “We have assured them that our well-trained and capable law enforcers will be able to give enough security to candidates,” he added.

Kamal said, “I told them (observation team), our media people are completely free. They publish any news at any time. We do not suppress anyone’s voice.” “We have more than three thousand daily newspapers. Moreover, there is the social media. Various types of news are circulated there. Everyone knows that rule of law has been established in the country. The Election Commission will arrange a beautiful election,” he said.

The visiting US delegation includes the International Republican Institute’s (IRI’s) programme manager David Hoogsta, Bonnie Glick, Jamil Jaffer and Johanna Kao and representatives from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Maria Chin Abdullah and Manpreet Singh Anand. Additional Inspector General of Police (Addl-IGP) and Special Branch Chief Md Monirul Islam, Addl-IGP Md Kamrul Ahsan, Additional Secretary Tipu Sultan and officials concerned were present during the briefing. “The American pre-assessment team asked about our roles, responsibilities, activities and the Home Ministry’s coordination with the Election Commission. We informed them about the roles of the law enforcers and the government about the coordination of the EC (during polls),” the minister said. Replying to a question, he said that no discussion was held about who will come or not to observe the elections, adding, “Our elections will be held according to the constitution.”

Kamal, also a veteran freedom fighter, said that their (US team) main focus is to ensure holding an election in a fair and free manner. The minister said he has informed everything they wanted to know. The US delegation reached Dhaka on Saturday and will stay in Bangladesh until Oct 13 to assess the pre-election situation. They have already held meetings with Awami League (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jatiya Party.