

EC invites 38 countries, groups to observe upcoming national polls

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Online Desk: The Election Commission has invited election management bodies from 38 countries and organisations to observe the upcoming 12th national polls in Bangladesh.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath said that formal invitations have been extended to all countries and organisations that expressed their interest in election monitoring following the announcement of the election schedule, reports bdnews24.com.

The general election is scheduled to take place on Jan 7, 2024.

According to the election schedule announced on Nov 15, the deadline for nomination submission is Nov 30, while the final date for a candidate to withdraw is Dec 17. The commission will scrutinise the nomination papers from Dec 1 to Dec 4.

Electoral symbols will be allocated on Dec 18. Election campaigns will be allowed from Dec 18 to Jan 5. The voting for all 300 seats will be held on paper ballots.

The EC will bear the expenses of the invited observers. However, the EC will not cover the cost of foreign observers and journalists. Those interested will have to travel at their own expense.

The countries invited by the EC are India, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Australia, Canada, France, Georgia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Russia, South Korea, Egypt, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Senegal, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Tunisia, Brunei, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, and Singapore.

In addition, the secretaries general of the SAARC and OIC, along with the heads of FEMBoSA and A-WEB, have also been invited.

So far, 44 observers and journalists from 12 countries and organisations have applied to monitor the election.

Ashok said that the deadline for foreign applications has been extended to Dec 7.