

UNN- CEC-Press Hope to make Sunday's election credible at home and abroad: CEC at Meet the Press

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Online Desk: Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal on Saturday expressed hope that the 12th parliamentary election will be credible nationally and internationally.

“Credibility is a relative matter. But we from our part would try making the election a widely credible one. We are optimistic that the election would be credible at home and abroad,” he said while addressing a pre-election briefing in the city.

The Election Commission arranged ‘Press the Meet: The 12th parliamentary election 2024’ at Bangabandhu International Conference for local and international journalists and election observers.

In reply to a question, the CEC said the commission may face a challenge in the peaceful arrangement of this election as a major political block is strongly campaigning against the vote.

“This time there are some challenges ahead because several incidents have already occurred. A major political party together with alliance parties is formidably campaigning against the election,” he said.

Habibul Awal, however, said the commission would be able to conduct this election with participation of the people amid opposition resistance.

“A crisis may be seen to some extent in the case of holding the election in a peaceful manner as one group is opposing the election, boycotting it and openly declaring to resist it. We don’t deny this reality,” he said.

But the Election Commission has taken preparations, he said asserting that “We will be able to arrange this election with participation of the people and voters despite having opposition and resistance.”

Pointing at all the opposition political parties who are campaigning against the election Habibul Awal said, “You may peacefully campaign against the election to form public opinion not to go to polling stations but it will be an offense if you physically resist the election preventing voters from going to the polling stations.”

He again said the commission will have to face a challenge if the opposition political parties resort to arson and physical force to resist the election.

When his attention was drawn that many election experts thought it wouldn’t be an actual election, rather a selection amid the boycott of BNP and 15 other parties, the CEC said it is not EC’s job to involve in any political debate and it has a mandate just to hold the election. “The debate will remain in the political landscape and it is the politicians who may solve it one day,” he said.

Habibul Awal asked the candidates to put their polling agents in every polling booth for the sake of holding this election in a fair manner.

Answering a question about the possible voter turnout, he said it was difficult right now to predict the percentage of voter turnout.

But he said if the voter turnout is less than even one percent, it would be legally correct, though it may face a legitimacy crisis.

The CEC said the EC has one minor duty to encourage the voters to come up to the polling station to cast votes. "I think it is a minor duty," he said, adding that voters are always very interested to come out due to the persuasion of the candidates.

In reply to a question, the CEC said, "Had BNP participated in the election, the election would have been more competitive, more inclusive and more festive. This is a reality."

Earlier, an audio-visual presentation was screened over the preparation to hold the 12th national election.

Four election commissioners, foreign secretary and EC secretary were present.