

JS elections, referendum readiness fully prepared : EC Anwarul

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Online Desk : Election Commissioner Md Anwarul Islam Sarker has confirmed that all preparations by the Election Commission (EC) for the 13th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) elections and the February 12 referendum have been completed, reports BSS. “Now there is no preparation left except for voters to go to the polling stations and exercise their right to vote,” he told BSS in an interview. While ballot papers have not yet reached some constituencies, the Commissioner assured that the distribution would be completed within the next few days. Currently, 116 constituencies have received their ballots, with the remaining expected by February 7. Some delays occurred due to last-minute court orders reinstating candidates, requiring partial reprinting, EC Secretariat Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed explained.

On security, Commissioner Sarker highlighted the unprecedented deployment of law enforcement personnel to ensure peaceful voting. The army will remain deployed for seven days before and after the polls, Ansar members for eight days, while police forces and partial army units are already in place. Additionally, 1,050 executive magistrates will operate mobile courts from February 8 to 14, supported by judicial magistrates during the same period.

The EC confirmed that 12,77,11,793 voters are registered for the JS elections and referendum, including 6,48,25,361 men, 6,28,85,200 women, and 1,232 transgender voters. Jhalakati-1 has the smallest electorate with 228,431 voters, while Gazipur-2 has the largest at 843,333. A total of 2,034 candidates are contesting across 300 constituencies. Voting in Sherpur-3 has been canceled following the death of a Jamaat-e-Islami candidate. Fifty-one political parties are participating, with BNP fielding the most candidates at 288. More than 250 independents are also contesting, while nine registered parties have not fielded any candidates.

Voting will take place in 42,779 polling stations nationwide, comprising 247,482 individual booths. Dhaka-12 has the highest number of candidates at 15, while Pirojpur-1 has the lowest with just two. About 800,000 officials will oversee election duties, supported by 900,000 law enforcement personnel. Observers will also play a key role, with 55,454 domestic observers from 81 organizations and approximately 500 foreign monitors. Postal voting has been registered by 1,533,684 voters, including 772,546 expatriates and 761,138 domestic voters. Of these, 480,416 expatriates have already completed voting.