



The Local Government elections are likely to be held on or after January 20, 2018, Chairman Elections Commission (EC) Chief Mahinda Deshapriya said today.

"The elections cannot be held in December this year because of the GCE ordinary level examination. The Commissioner of Examination has asked us not to hold elections on the available date of December 9, 2017" the EC Chief said during the signing of an MOU with the Asian Network on Free and Fair Elections last afternoon.

"It is not possible to hold elections on December 30 or 31st because state institutions carry out their audits before the turn of the year no one will be able to take leave. The only other available date would be mid January and we cannot hold the polls on that day as well because of Thai Pongal. Therefore the next available date would be January 20 next year," he said.

The EC said the Municipal Council, Urban Council and Pradeshiya Sasha Ordinances would have to be amended to make provisions for the 40/60 ratio under the proposed mixed system.

"Therefore Parliament has not put the ball on our court to go ahead with the elections," he said.

Meanwhile, he said the Elections Commission would have to issue notice declaring elections to three provincial councils -- Uva, North Central and Sabaragamuwa on October 2, 2017 if the proposed 20th Amendment is not duly passed by then.

"If the election is declared in October it has to be held in December 6 this year. However the views of the examination commissioner will have to be sought as the Ordinary level exam will also be held around that time," the EC said. *(Yohan Perera)*