



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

A Weekly Publication of The Daily Star
theSTAR
 stories behind the news

**DEVYANI ROW**

US energy secretary cancels
 his crucial trip to India

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AZAD INSPIRES AAMIR

The superstar wants to make a film
 on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

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No opposition!

MPs-elect from 6 other parties want to join AL-led cabinet; president invites Hasina to form govt

SHAKHAWAT LITON and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

With the Awami League poised to form a new government on Sunday, all the six other political parties having representation in the 10th parliament also want to be in Sheikh Hasina's cabinet.

None of them is willing to sit on the opposition benches.

Senior leaders of the six parties -- Jatiya Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Workers Party, Tarikat Federation, Jatiya Party (Manju) and BNF -- yesterday spoke of joining the new cabinet.

Some of them expressed such desires immediately after being sworn in as MPs, and others while talking to The Daily Star.

If all these six parties indeed join the cabinet, the new parliament will see a most brute treasury bench since the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991.

President Abdul Hamid has already decided to appoint

Hasina as prime minister, Cabinet Secretary M Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier in the day, a total of 284 MPs took the oath of office to form the 10th parliament, though the ninth parliament still exists.

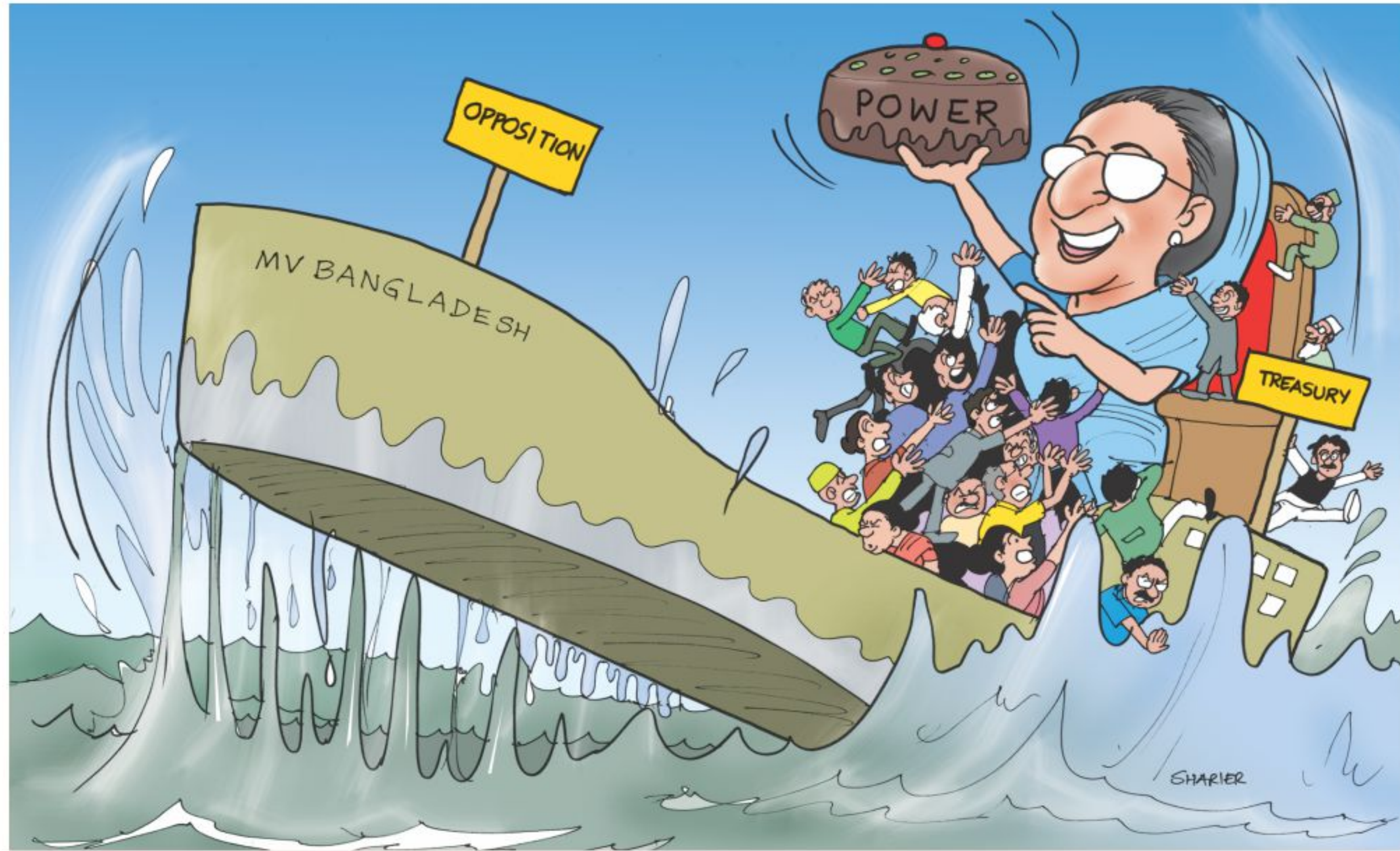
In doing so, they ignored the constitutional provision that bars them from assuming office before the expiry of the current parliament, whose tenure ends on January 25, some legal experts said.

But the government and some other legal experts dismiss such an interpretation.

Hours after taking their oaths, ruling party lawmakers at a meeting elected Hasina as the leader of the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP).

The president has already invited Hasina to form the government and will administer the oath of office to the prime minister and other ministers and state

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No tolerance for violence

PM warns of lawful action

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said those who provoke violence and announce violent programmes as well as those who are seen taking part in them will be brought to book.

She cautioned that her new government would not tolerate any further agitation that jeopardises lives and property, adding that it would go tough against any move to create anarchy.

Hasina, prime minister of the poll-time cabinet, made the remarks during the maiden meeting of the Awami League

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Recess for 2 days

Nonstop blockade resumes Sunday; some long route bus services resume

STAR REPORT

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance last night suspended its ongoing countrywide blockade of roads, rail and waterways for today and tomorrow in consideration of what it termed as people's sufferings.

BNP chairperson's adviser Osman Faruk made the announcement through a video message.

The non-stop blockade, which started on New Year's Day, will resume on Sunday, he added.

The opposition combine will organise its earlier scheduled Doa Mahfil (prayers) today for the salvation of the departed souls of its leaders and activists, who died on January 5. The alliance will also stage protest rallies across the country tomorrow.

Inter-district buses operated on a limited scale from Wednesday night, braving arson attacks during blockades, which put the sector in dire straits,

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Khaleda loses state facilities after 23 years

RASHIDUL HASAN and PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who had been elected either prime minister or leader of the opposition since restoration of democracy in 1991, is going to enjoy neither of the status this time.

She is losing all the state facilities for the first time in more than two decades, as Sheikh Hasina is all set to become the prime minister for two successive terms with a new cabinet taking charge on Sunday and Jatiya Party Presidium Member Raushan Ershad is set to play the role of leader of the opposition.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Dubious distinction for Bangladesh

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Bangladesh set an unenviable record yesterday by constituting a new parliament, keeping the existing one in force. It means the country has now two MPs for almost every single seat.

This bizarre record follows the other unprecedented event of uncontested election of 153 MPs, more than half of the total seats in the House for direct election, in the just concluded polls. And all the credit for this goes to the Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina that has led the country to set the record which will in no way strengthen democracy and brighten the country's image.

None can find such a record in the countries practising parliamentary democracy. Countries like the UK, birthplace of the Westminster style of

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A Hindu woman with an infant on her back in front of the devastation at Karnai village of Dinajpur yesterday. The village witnessed one of the worst incidents of violence against the minorities after the January 5 elections.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt fails to protect Hindus

Says HR boss

STAR REPORT

Hindus across the country are still living in fear as alleged BNP-Jamaat men unleashed fresh attacks in five districts, burning homes, temples, and vandalising idols on Wednesday night and yesterday.

The minorities continue to receive threats as well. Mizanur Rahman, chairman of National Human Rights Commission, while visiting Malopara of Abhaynagar in Jessore yesterday, said the government had failed to protect the Hindus and urged it to rehabilitate the affected.

At least 19 BNP-Jamaat men were arrested yesterday, 14 in Dinajpur, three in Bagerhat and two in Mymensingh. Apart from them, 774 reportedly BNP-Jamaat men were sued in Rangpur in connection with atrocities on Hindus.

On Wednesday night, criminals set fire to two temples in

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JUDICIAL COMMISSION'S SUGGESTIONS

Violence revisits as no step taken

M RAHMAN

Around three years ago, a judicial commission that probed the 2001 post-polls violence had made some recommendations to stop the recurrence of such atrocities, but the suggestions went totally unheeded.

"Had the government implemented our recommendations, the recent attacks on the minorities could have been prevented," said Mohammad Shahabuddin, chief of the three-member judicial commission who is now serving as a commissioner at the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The judicial commission recommended setting up an investigation committee or commission in each district to bring to book the perpetrators who killed 355 people and committed 3,270 other offences between October 2001 and December 2002.

It also suggested forming a monitoring cell in the home ministry to coordinate the activities of the district investigation committees and providing legal assistance to the victims.

After this year's January 5 parliamentary polls, houses, business establishments and temples of the Hindu community were vandalised, torched and looted in

Shun violence, engage in talks

EU urges all parties; China, Korea also call for peace

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union has called on all political parties in Bangladesh to refrain from violence and engage in a dialogue to agree on a mutually acceptable way forward to hold "transparent, inclusive and credible elections".

In a statement yesterday, High Representative Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the EU, said the High Representative had taken note of the preliminary results and of reports of a "low turnout" for the 10th parliamentary polls held in Bangladesh on January 5.

In her statement, she strongly condemned the acts of violence, which occurred in the run-up to and during the

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The historic homecoming

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

There was a sadness that enveloped him in the midst of that cheering crowd.

As the truck carrying him and a whole phalanx of politicians and student leaders inched its way out of the old airport in

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24th Death Anniversary

DEATH: 10TH JANUARY 1990

We deeply mourn the death of our beloved mother Late "Masuda Begum" wife of late Mr. Abul Khair, founder of Abul Khair Group (Abul Co.). Today with due respect, we remember her works, ideals and memories and pray to Almighty for divine blessings for her.

We request all our relatives and well-wishers to pray for her eternal peace.

BELOVED SONS & DAUGHTERS.