the turnout 'adequate', and has announced that the government will implement the ruling AL's electoral pledges.

Hasina looks all set to be sworn in as the Prime Minister again. She will touch the record made by her archrival Khaleda of being the prime minister thrice since restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991. But her government will be less representative. The election of MPs without any vote has denied more than half of the country's 9.19 crore voters their voting rights. So, Hasina's new government will have representation of only 20 percent of the total voters. So the representation of people is very poor compared to the one enjoyed by the present government, which was formed through the 2008 parliamentary election. More shadow cabinet?

In the last parliamentary election held in December 2008, the AL alone won 230 seats. This time it alone has already won 232 seats with 127 going uncontested. The AL may win almost of eight other seats which will go re-polling on January 16. The size of the treasury bench will be bigger if 13 independent candidates, most of whom belong to the AL and 11 candidates of Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, two allies of AL-led alliance, remain in the AL-led alliance. So, the parliament looks all set to be a one-sided affair.

Will the brute majority be able to work for the welfare of the people? The previous records do not encourage us to be hopeful. Since the country's independence, brute majority has always



PHOTO: DARSHAN CHAKMA

than 87 percent voters cast their votes in the 2008 election with not a single MP elected unopposed. How will her new government be a government by the people, of the people, and for the people? How will her new government claim that it has people's mandate to govern the country?

In the parliamentary democracy, the role of the opposition is very crucial. But the new parliament will have the weakest opposition. A fraction of Jatiya Party-led by Raushan Ershad is supposed to be the main opposition in the new parliament. Those who will act as opposition MPs were elected on the ruling AL's favour. So, it is now clear that the opposition bench will remain loyal to the new government. Will the opposition be able to act as a destroyed balance of power, allowing the cabinet to become a parliamentary dictatorship.

The coming days will be riskier for Hasina, who is leading a brute majority government that is the product of a one-sided, abnormal election, which in no way can be called a general election in which more than half of the country's electorates were denied their right to cast their vote to elect their representatives.

After the January 5 election, Bangladesh stands at an extraordinary crossroads. It has never witnessed such a situation. In view of many foreign newspapers, the feuding politics can lead Bangladesh to the brink.

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