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Speaker Abdul Hamid administers oath to 196 members of parliament at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday morning.

196 alliance MPs sworn in Khaleda renews pledge to fight terrorism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outgoing Speaker Abdul Hamid administered oath to 196 members of the eighth parliament, including BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, at a simple ceremony at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday morning.

Of the MPs who took oath, 174 belong to the BNP, 16 to the Jamaat-e-Islami, four to the Jatiya Party (Nazim-Firoz) and two to the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ).

Before conducting oath of the MPs elected from the BNP-led four-party alliance, Hamid himself took oath as a member of the new parliament elected from the Kishoreganj-5 constituency on the Awami League ticket.

After the oath-taking ceremony, a meeting of the BNP MPs at the confer-

ence room of the parliament unanimously elected Khaleda as the leader of the BNP Parliamentary Party. The decision was later sent to President Shahabuddin Ahmad.

Emerging from the meeting, Khaleda, due to be sworn in as the country's new prime minister this evening, said freeing the society from terrorism and corruption would be her top priority. "People voted us (to fight) against repression, terrorism and corruption in the past five years. We are committed to build a self-reliant country free from terrorism and corruption," she told waiting reporters.

The leader of the majority party reiterated her call to the Awami League chief to join the parliament and work together for the nation.

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The challenge ahead

Economists, business community put accent on reforms, industry-targeted measures

INAM AHMED

As a new government takes charge today, the economists and the business community in the country feel that it should immediately initiate a number of key reform measures and industry-targeted steps to steer the economy onto the path of growth.

The measures range from quicker disposal of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to steps towards attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), from stock market revitalisation to adjustment of weekly holiday, from curbing expen-

diture to generating revenues. And much of the measures must be taken within the next three to 12 months, because it is historically proven that benefits of late reforms never reach the government. Rather, early reforms bear fruits at a

later stage, which a government can also exploit politically.

"In macro economy, the major task would be to stimulate investment by maintaining the macro-economic stability marked by low

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Khaleda takes oath as PM today

REZAUL KARIM

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who has emerged with tremendous personal popularity, will be sworn in today as the country's prime minister for a second term. President Shahabuddin Ahmad will administer the oath at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban at 7:00pm.

It will be a momentous occasion for her, her party and the four-party alliance. People have given her overwhelming support in the October 1 general election.

Khaleda has guided the BNP-led four-party alliance to a landslide victory in the election to eighth Jatiya Sangsad. With results of 298 constituencies made available, the alliance commands more than two-thirds majority in the parliament with 214 seats.

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AL's 6-hr siege programme today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League will observe a six-hour 'siege' programme across the country from 6 am today.

Party General Secretary Zillur Rahman in a statement yesterday urged people to make the programme a success. He called for suspension of movement of all modes of transport during the programme hours.

Earlier, AL had announced different programmes demanding cancellation of results of the October 1 'rigged' election and holding of fresh election and in protest against 'attacks' by BNP-Jamaat men in different areas of the country.

The programmes began on October 5 and end today.

Party leaders hinted that fresh programmes might be announced today.

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Despair in Palestine-Israel negotiations
Column: The Horizon this Week
Arshad-uz Zaman

Focus 5

Global impact in the wake of terrorist attacks in the US

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 10		5-37 pm
Oct 11	5-53 am	

Prayer Timings

Oct 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-10	4-25
Maghrib	5-43	5-50
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

4 staff of UN-related office killed in US air strikes

AP, Kabul

Four Afghan workers for a UN-affiliated mine-clearing agency were killed in an American air assault, the United Nations said yesterday, the first independent confirmation of civilian deaths since the US-led airstrikes began.

The United Nations appealed for the protection of civilians in Afghanistan as airstrikes continued for the first time into the daylight hours. The Taliban stronghold of Kandahar was hit at mid-morning, but it was not clear whether the planes striking it were American.

The Taliban, meanwhile, said Osama bin Laden was alive, well and in Afghanistan. The Afghan rulers' refusal to give bin Laden, chief suspect in the September 11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon triggered the US-led raids that began Sunday.

Yesterday morning's attacks followed a second night of US

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A bulldozer clears the rubble of a UN-affiliated office in Kabul, damaged yesterday during the second night of Anglo-American raids on Afghanistan in retaliation for the September 11 attacks in the United States.

Caretaker govt's last day in office today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With the swearing in of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia as the new prime minister today, the caretaker government will cease to function.

The oath-taking ceremony will be held at the Darbar Hall at Bangabhaban at 7:00pm.

The caretaker government headed by Justice Latifur Rahman, which enters its 56th day in office today, has conducted the October 1 election, widely considered as free and fair.

Some 700 guests have been invited to attend the ceremony. The invitees include immediate-past prime minister Sheikh Hasina, outgoing Speaker Abdul Hamid,

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AL to boycott JS, publish 'white paper' on polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has stuck to its previous position to boycott the parliament.

AL President Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed her party's decision at a crowded news conference in the city yesterday. She also said the MPs-elect of her party would not take oath as lawmakers.

She further said the AL will publish a 'white paper' on the 'rigging' that took place on October 1 polls. However, she did not specify when the white paper would be published.

The party will also go ahead with the ongoing agitation programme to press its demand for holding of a fresh voting altogether, it was announced at the hour-long press conference, held at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

Replying to newsmen's query about the party's latest position on joining the parliament and taking oath by its MPs-elect, the AL chief said, "There is no need for joining the parliament. They've (four-party alliance) got two-thirds majority. They will have a free run no matter we join it or not."

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Sheikh Hasina