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People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781 Vol. XI No. 20 DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 12, 2001 MAGH 20, 1407 BS ZELKAD 7, 1421 HIJRI 16 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: TK. 10.00

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Portfolios allocated

Khaleda leaves for Saudi Arabia after a quiet first day at office

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has put speculations to rest by allocating portfolios to the ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers who were sworn in on Wednesday evening.

It was learnt that the list of portfolios of the 27 cabinet ministers and that of Khaleda Zia was sent by special messenger to Cabinet Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan late Wednesday night. It was later circulated and intimated to the ministers and ministries concerned.

The list of portfolios of the state and deputy ministers was, however, sent to the cabinet secretary yesterday morning.

The prime minister has kept the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources and

the Ministry of Establishment under her.

She has also retained the charge of the Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Division, Armed Forces Division (AFD), Ministry of CHT Affairs and Primary and Mass Education Division.

Prof. AQM Badruddoza, who was the founder secretary general of the BNP, has been given the vital portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

M Saifur Rahman, who has served as finance minister twice before, has again been given the charge of the Ministry of Finance along with that of the Ministry of Planning.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has been given the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.

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Who's who in new govt

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday allocated portfolios among the ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers.

The portfolios of ministers:

Khaleda Zia: Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Division, Ministries of Establishment, Defence, Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Armed Forces Division, Primary and Mass Education.

Prof AQ M Badruddoza Chowdhury: Foreign Affairs, M Saifur Rahman: Finance and Planning, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan: LGRD and Cooperatives.

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Vajpayee greets Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee congratulated Khaleda Zia on her assumption of office as Prime Minister and wished her success in attaining further progress and prosperity of the country.

In an eloquent message to his new counterpart in Bangladesh, Vajpayee said the two neighbouring

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By-election to six JS seats on Nov 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has fixed November 12 for by-election in six parliamentary seats vacated by BNP leaders who won more than one seat in the October 1 general election.

The last date for submission of nomination papers is October 21; the scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on October 22; and the deadline for withdrawal of candidature is October 27.

The by-election will take place in Feni-1, Bogra-7, Laxmipur-2 and Khulna-2 constituencies vacated by Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia who won all the five seats she had contended for, and in Moulvibazar-3 and Manikganj-2 constituencies vacated by Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman and Minister without portfolio Harun-ur-Rashid Monno respectively.

In the eighth parliament, Khaleda retains Bogra-6, Saifur Sylhet-1 and Monno Manikganj-3 constituencies.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina who won four seats and its Presidium Member Abdur Razzak who won two seats are yet to vacate

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Afghan Taliban fighters sit on their tanks while positioning the two barrel anti-aircraft gun towards the sky in the Afghan capital of Kabul yesterday. The American planes bombed Kabul yesterday for the first time in day light since the attacks started on October 7.

Heaviest bombing so far

Taliban claim hundreds of civilians killed

AFP, Islamabad

US forces engaged yesterday in the heaviest bombing so far of their air campaign on Afghanistan to punish the planners of terror attacks that struck at the heart of the United States exactly one month ago.

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban claimed the US attacks targeted civilians and killed "large numbers" of non-combatants, including more than 200 in a single failed attack on an alleged training camp.

The Taliban Ambassador in Islamabad, Abdul Salam Zaef, said: "The people of Afghanistan, who have been severely affected by 20 years of war, drought, sanctions and poverty, are now facing American air raids."

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said he could not confirm or deny civilian casualties but insisted: "We target only military facilities and targets. We take great

care to avoid civilian casualties."

Only four civilian deaths have been independently confirmed - those of four Afghans in Kabul working for a UN mine clearance programme - and journalists are forbidden from travelling around the country.

The Taliban claim more than 300 civilians had been killed in all by Thursday.

In an emotional ceremony, hundreds of rescue workers stood in silent prayer by the rubble of the World Trade Centre, levelled by last month's suicide attacks, as New York marked a sombre one-month anniversary.

The brief moment of silence was held at 8:48am (1248 GMT), the time when a hijacked passenger aircraft was rammed into Tower One on September 11. A second

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia places wreath at the National Memorial at Savar (above), at the Central Shaheed Minar (left) and at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city on her first day at office yesterday.

First session of 8th JS on Oct 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Shahabuddin Ahmad yesterday summoned the first session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad at 10:00 a.m. on October 28.

The president will deliver his speech on the opening day of the first session.

The main opposition Awami League has decided to abstain from attending the parliament. It has also rejected the October 1 election results on allegation of 'crude rigging'.

The Ershad-led Islamic Jatiya Oikya Front is going to the parliament to play their part as the opposition in the House. Anwar Hossain Manju, leader of a faction of the Jatiya Party and Abdul Kader Siddiqui of Bangladesh Krishok Janata League, who won one seat each, will also attend the first session of the parliament.

The presidential address will follow an obituary reference and election of the new Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the parliament on the opening day, parliament secretariat sources said. Leader of the House Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will also deliver her speech before the House on the opening day.

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News analysis

A motley council of ministers

NAZMUL ASHRAF

The new Council of Ministers of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is tinged with many colours and characteristics, reflecting the crosscurrent in the BNP's present day politics.

The largest-ever Council, boasting as many as 60 members, has two top leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami, which acted against the country's War of Independence. Jamaat collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces in committing war crimes in 1971. It never apologised for the grotesque acts nor did it regret those for all these years. Nonetheless, the Islamic fundamentalist party has got a share of the state power for the first time thanks to its association with the BNP.

The BNP chief may have been appreciated for living up to her pre-election promise to share power with Jamaat, but her action has actually helped the fundamentalist party's dream come true.

Despite the BNP's getting absolute majority in the October 1 general election, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has formed a two-party coalition government. Two top Jamaat leaders have been inducted into the cabinet. Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, whose war crimes are widely known, are among the 27 cabinet ministers.

There was no place in the cabinet for top-ranking BNP leader and valiant freedom fighter Col. (retd.) Oli Ahmed although two of his wartime enemies found space in it.

And, that's too of a party having only 17 seats in the 300-strong parliament.

Reports have it that his conflict with the Jamaat had determined the fate of Oli, one of the founders of the BNP who held important cabinet portfolio in all previous BNP governments.

Mujahid is fortunate to become the only cabinet minister from technocrat quota. Several cabinet hopefuls from among the leading BNP MPs have been denied any cabinet position.

Against a 33-strong Council of Ministers in 1991, Khaleda has formed a 60-member one this time around, accommodating a large number of fresh faces on various considerations. More than half of the 60 ministers are newcomers. Eight of the 27 cabinet ministers are holding such positions for the first time while 23 of the 28 state ministers and all four deputy ministers have been drawn from same category.

The unusually large size of the government, contrary to the donors' suggestion to keep it small, is believed to have resulted from attempts to deal with multifarious problems in the BNP-led four-party alliance. Yet, the biggest alliance partner did not accommodate two smaller parties that have already ventilated their frustrations.

Having two-thirds member of parliament at its command, the BNP-led alliance has opted for such a large

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BJP hopeful, IOJ feels insulted

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) chairman is still hopeful that he would be made a minister next month while Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) feels insulted that it has been totally disregarded in forming the new government on Wednesday.

Leaders and workers of BJP and IOJ have become angry with BNP that the 60-member Council of Ministers formed by the BNP-led four-party alliance does not have any representation from both these

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Minorities flee as BNP 'gangsters' run amok

MORSHED ALI KHAN, from Bagerhat

A new breed of gangsters under the BNP banner has terrorised members of the Hindu community and Awami League supporters in the far-flung villages of Moreganj thana in the district.

Believed to be AL supporters, many Hindus in the area have already left home in fear.

Members of the Hindu community in the village of Ziodhara, about 20 kilometres off the Moreganj thana, were intimidated by the BNP supporters soon after the results of the

October 1 general election were announced, villagers and traders said.

With local AL leaders going into hiding after the election fearing backlash, they also deserted their homes in this shrimp-rich area.

Kamalesh Haldar, a trader at Deuatata, said the Hindus were passing their days in apprehension.

"We have not experienced such a situation since 1971. Any moment they (hoodlums) can attack us," said Kamalesh.

Other villagers said the terrorists

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Khaleda, her ministers pay homage to martyrs

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia paid homage to the heroes of Liberation War in 1971 placing wreath at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday morning.

Bugle was played while Khaleda Zia stood in solemn silence for one minute to pay respect to the memories of the martyrs at 11 am.

Cabinet members and other ministers accompanied her.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami and secretary general Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid, who are accused of controversial role in the liberation war, also paid homage to the heroic sons of the soil who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence.

Both Nizami and Mujahid took oath on Wednesday as cabinet ministers of Khaleda Zia's government.

Chiefs of the three services and other high civil and military officials

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Two killed in attack on AL activists

UNB, Sherpur

Two Awami League activists were killed in an attack by rivals at Baromaisa bazar in Nakhla upazila on Wednesday night.

Police and witnesses said Awami League activist Mofazzal Hossain alias Rangu, 55, had an altercation with BNP supporter Saiful Islam at Baromaisa bazar in the morning over the October 1 election results.

In the evening, a group of armed men led by Saiful swooped on AL supporters, leaving Mongu, Abul

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Four jt secys transferred

UNB, Dhaka

Four joint secretaries and the vice principal of an academy were transferred on the first day of Khaleda Zia's new government yesterday.

Joint Secretary of Housing and Public Works Mohammad Mizanur Rahman was transferred to Planning and Development Academy as its Vice Principal, Joint Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Shikder Mohammad Shahjahan to Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation as director, Joint Secretary of Local Government Department Mohammad Iqbal Hossain Khan to Bangladesh Betar as director (Admin) and Joint Secretary Energy and Mineral Resources Khandaker Abu

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New govt won't last long, says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday termed the one-day old government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia a 'repressive one' and asserted that the new government would not last long.

She urged the people to unitedly resist violence against AL leaders and workers unleashed by 'BNP-Jamaat terrorists' across the country.

Hasina was making a brief speech in front of the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday afternoon. She rushed there to see the body of a slain leader of her party's youth front.

The body of Md Liton Bhutto, vice president of Ward 14 unit of Jubo League, who was allegedly chopped and shot dead by armed BNP cadres in the small hours of yesterday in the city's Sheorapara area, was kept on the road and his namaj-e-janaza was held there.

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