

More world leaders hail Prof Yunus

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Bank have been awarded the Nobel Prize. Prof Yunus is one of the great micro-finance innovators and his inspiration led to the bank's creation and success. Bangladesh stands as a beacon for those people in poorer countries trying to raise money to run a new business or pay for healthcare.

"Giving small loans to families and businesses plays an important role in tackling the scourge of poverty, hunger and illiteracy around the world. The UK has just announced £40 million over the next seven years to support savings and loan services for the poor in Bangladesh as a way of helping change peoples lives," the UK minister said.

Dutch royalty and media have reacted promptly with enormous greetings to the news of Dr Muhammad Yunus being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dutch Crown Princess Maxima called it a "fantastic news" as reported in the radio, television, print and web-based media invariably reported that Dr Yunus was already well known in the Netherlands, particularly due to his recent visit in May 2006 to receive the prestigious Roosevelt Freedom of Want Award from Crown Princess Maxima in presence of Queen Beatrix. The crown princess herself has promoted micro-credit for a number of years.

Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Ms Agnes Van Ardenne in an interview broadcasted on all national radio channels, underlined the special importance of this year's

Peace Prize. The link between alleviation of poverty and world peace has now been acknowledged for the first time in the history of Nobel Prize, Ms VanArdenne pointed out.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands Ms Ismat Jahhan has also been receiving numerous congratulatory messages from various individuals and groups who had come to know about Dr Yunus' works.

Bangladeshis living in Canberra organised a function to celebrate the winning of Nobel Peace Prize by Prof Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank on the premises of Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra, Australia, on Sunday, according to a message received here yesterday.

Addressing the function, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia M Humayun Kabir said the award of Nobel Peace Prize to Prof Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank has amply demonstrated that the people of Bangladesh are capable of successfully fighting the challenge of poverty through homegrown strategy.

They are also ready to contribute constructively to the process of globalisation from below, he said.

The high commissioner said the award proved the enormous creative power of poor people to transform the social and economical landscape of Bangladesh peacefully and in a progressive manner.

He said they therefore deserve to be warmly saluted for their contribution. "The recognition that they have received from the Nobel Committee,

along with Prof Yunus, whose creative ideas and leadership have made such a dramatic achievement possible," he added.

Humayun Kabir also asserted that such recognition had also underscored the commanding role played in Bangladesh by women in all spheres of social and economic transformation.

President of the Bangladesh Australia Association Canberra inc Abdul Quader also shared his experience with the activities of Grameen Bank in different context.

Officers and staff of Bangladesh High Commission and Bangladeshis living in the Maldives capital of Male gathered at the chancery on Sunday to celebrate the winning of Nobel Peace Prize by Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Speakers congratulated Yunus on his achievement and mentioned that the whole nation and the world at large have been awaiting such an announcement for many years.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the Maldives Mijarul Quayes recalled Prof Yunus' contribution to redefine the idea of banking and the credit worthiness of millions of disadvantaged people, especially women.

He said this award has also redefined the meaning of peace at the global level and appropriately linked the issue of equity and social justice to global peace.

PM seeks concession

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"Such oil price hike is creating excessive pressure on Bangladesh's rising economic growth and foreign exchange reserve," the prime minister told the leader of the oil-rich Arabian nation.

Khaleda said continuous supply of fuel oils is very urgent for maintaining development and production in various sectors in Bangladesh.

She noted that Saudi Arabia always stood beside Bangladesh as a brotherly Muslim country in times of urgent need.

She told the king that the role of Bangladesh in repaying loans is better comparative to any other country in the world and Bangladesh will uphold the tradition in case of the Saudi credit.

The king listened to the prime minister with deep interest and assured her of all necessary steps to strengthen the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

The prime minister informed the king about liberal and attractive foreign investment policy in Bangladesh and requested him to encourage the Saudi businessmen and industrialists to invest in Bangladesh.

She expressed gratitude to King Abdullah for recruiting a huge number of Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia and mentioned that these working forces have been contributing to economic development of the two countries.

Khaleda said Bangladesh is capable of supplying skilled workers to implement various development projects in Saudi Arabia.

She urged the king to recruit physicians, engineers, health workers and nurses and other professionals as well as skilled and semi-skilled construction workers from Bangladesh.

The prime minister said Bangladeshi workers are disciplined, religious and respectful to Saudi laws.

Thanking the king for inviting her to Saudi Arabia, the prime minister mentioned the excellent relations between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, saying Bangladesh gives special importance to the mutual good relations in commerce, manpower recruitment and other affairs.

She informed the king about common stance of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia on various international matters as members of the UN, NAM and OIC.

Khaleda renewed her invitation to Abdullah to visit Bangladesh, saying that the 14 crore people of the country have been waiting to welcome the new Saudi King.

The king expressed his interest in visiting Bangladesh in the future at a mutually convenient time.

The prime minister took off with the monarch and other members of the royal family and said Magreb prayers together. Latter, she participated in the banquet with the Saudi king and other members of the royal family.

Lawmaker

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According to the allegation statement, a number of BNP loyalist goons hijacked a microbus carrying the Bangla daily newspaper Jugantor from Dhaka-Barisal highway early morning on October 12. They drove away with the vehicle after beating up the diver and helper. Later, they burnt hundreds of copies of the newspaper.

The incident occurred after the newspaper ran a report the previous day, October 11, on BNP lawmaker Jahruddin Swapan.

The case was lodged before the magistrate court as Gournadi Police Station refused to register the case earlier that day.

Magistrate Abdullah Al Mamun received the case and ordered the officer-in-charge of Gournadi Police Station to investigate into the case immediately and take necessary actions.

Two more Huji

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Mizan of Habiganj Sadar upazila.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam passed the order when CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf, also the investigation officer (IO) of the Ramna blast case, sought a ten-day remand.

Earlier, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) with the help of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) produced the two, also close accomplices of Mufi Abdul Hannan, operations commander of the banned Islamist outfit Huji, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka.

In the forwarding report placed before the court, the IO said that the two Huji men were earlier arrested and remanded for their alleged involvement with the bomb attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in 2004. During interrogations, they admitted that they also blasted bombs at the Ramna Batamul. So, they need to be quizzed to find out vital clues to the blasts, the IO added.

Earlier, Hannan, his brother Mohibullah alias Mofizur Rahman, also a Huji member, and his accomplice Azahar alias Mamun were also shown arrested in the Ramna Batamul blast case and were interrogated on remand.

Ten people died and several others were injured on April 14, 2001 when bombs went off at the Pahela Baishakh celebrations at the Ramna Batamul.

On June 14, 2001, one of the arrestees, Maulana Akbar Hussain, gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate and disclosed names of Mufi Hannan and others involved with the blasts.

LPG production

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at Kailashitia Gas Field in Golapganj upazila. An official of Sylhet Gas Fields Company Limited (SGFL), which supplies NGL to the RPGGL for producing LPG, petrol and other fuel, said the liquid gas supply had recently come down to less than one third.

The RPGGL was getting only 30,000 litres of NGL whereas its demand is about one lakh litres.

Officials blamed the shutdown on irregular maintenance by Molecular Turbo Expander Plant (MSTE) of the SGFL.

However, authorities have decided to run some emergency maintenance work from 25 October, keeping the plant shutdown for at least one week. During the shutdown production in five wells at Kailashitia gas field will remain stopped.

Truck bomb

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truck rammed into an army camp on the Jaffna peninsula, killing 40 troops.

Until Monday's attack the worst suicide bombing was against the central bank building in Colombo, killing 91 and wounding 1,400.

Monday's blast came as Sri Lanka's key international backers moved to salvage a 2002 truce and arrange talks later this month.

Top Japanese envoy Yasushi Akashi Monday met with President Mahinda Rajapakse and former chief peace negotiator Nimal Siri-pala de Silva.

Akashi was also expected to meet top LTTE leaders during his six-day visit, although a sit-down exchange with the Tiger's reclusive commander Velupillai Prabhakaran was unlikely, Japanese officials said.

Norway, the main peace broker in Sri Lanka, was planning to send special envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer on Tuesday to work out details for the October 28-29 talks in Switzerland.

The Tigers have said they will confirm whether they are participating in the talks when they meet Hanssen-Bauer in the rebel-held town of Kilinochchi on Thursday.

US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher was also expected to meet Thursday with government ministers and civil leaders.

More than 2,300 people have been killed in spiralling violence since December, according to official figures.

Both sides have accused each other of sporadic attacks since major clashes last week, including shelling and airstrikes. The navy also said it had sunk a Tiger trawler loaded with arms Sunday.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the three-decades-old conflict for a Tamil homeland on the Sinhalese-majority island.

Abbas, brother

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was filed on "political motivation." The case was not recorded in the daily cause-list on Sunday as the scheduled date of the hearing petition was yesterday, which was brought forward on the plea of the defence lawyers.

YESTERDAY'S MURDER CASE

Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman of South Shahjahanpur filed the murder case accusing six for killing his friend Sohag Sarkar, labour secretary of No.34 Ward AL at Shahjahanpur on September 28.

The accused are Mirza Abbas, Mirza Khokan, Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal leaders Majnu, Habibur Rashid alias Habib, Sohag and Nayan.

Taking the complaint into cognizance, Metropolitan Magistrate Mizanur Rahman recorded statement of the complainant and directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit a report after an investigation into the incident.

In his complaint, Mustafiz mentioned that Sohag had protested tearing of the poster of the senior AL leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury by BNP activists. This enraged Mirza Abbas, who ordered his goons to eliminate Sohag.

On September 28, Khokan and the JCD and Jubo Dal leaders called Sohag out of his home and brutally hacked him to death in broad daylight after taking him to Shahjahanpur railway colony, the complainant alleged.

He also alleged that when he went to police station to file a case, police refused to take it due to pressure from Mirza Abbas.

CONSTABLE ABU NASER

MURDER CASE

On July 17 this year, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdullah

Mahmud Hassan submitted the petition along with a home ministry letter that recommended withdrawal of the Constable Abu Naser murder case describing it as a "politically motivated" case.

The petition sought withdrawal of the charge against Abbas, Khokan, former JCD president Shahab Uddin Laltu, Yusuf bin Jaill and Abu Iqbal.

However, the trial of the case against another accused Sumon will continue.

According to the prosecution, a procession of 150 people led by the then Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas clashed with an AL procession during the then opposition BNP-enforced hartal on February 13, 2001 near Rajarbagh Police Lines.

At one point, the BNP demonstrators fired shots at the police barracks. Constable Abu Naser, 27, was bullet-hit on the third floor of barracks and died on the spot. Constable Partha Roy was also wounded severely during the firing.

Subedar Jamal Uddin filed a murder case with Motijheel Police Station the same day.

The investigation officer (IO) pressed charges against Mirza Abbas and five others on July 11, 2001.

The home ministry in a letter on June 19 this year informed the district magistrate of Dhaka that it had decided to withdraw charges against Mirza Abbas and four others as those were "politically motivated."

The ministry also asked the district magistrate to hand over the matter to the metropolitan public prosecutor (PP), who will arrange withdrawal of the case with permission from an appropriate court.

Israeli president

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indict the married father of five on charges of rape, sexual harassment and wire-tapping.

"There is sufficient evidence indicating that in several cases... the president carried out acts of rape, forced sexual acts, sexual acts without consent and sexual harassment," police said.

"There is sufficient evidence indicating violation of the law banning wire-tapping by the president," they added after a meeting with investigators and Attorney General Menachem Mazuz.

Katsav, who has rejected calls to resign while the investigation continues, reiterated repeated denials of the allegations and vowed to clear his name.

"The president was surprised and shocked by the police recommendations," a statement from his office said. "He repeats that he is a victim of a plot and that sooner or later the allegations against him will be proven false."

The attorney general is expected to decide within two to three weeks

whether to file an indictment against the president and public radio reported that Katsav was weighing his options.

Katsav's attorney Zion Amir predicted that Mazuz would not file formal charges against his client.

"This is not the first time police have recommended the indictment of senior figures, including prime ministers, and those recommendations have all been rejected," he said.

But "if Mazuz opts for an indictment, I think the president will have no other choice but to resign," Amir added.

The Iranian-born president could face between three and 16 years in prison if convicted, Israeli radio reported.

The charges are the most serious faced by an Israeli leader, although several other top figures, including former prime minister Ariel Sharon, have faced probes into allegations of corruption.

Pak bowlers

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opening match against Sri Lanka, after returning positive results for the performance-enhancing steroid.

The tests were carried out by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) before the Champions Trophy began and both cricketers face bans of up to two years.

"They have tested positive for using nandrolone, which is a performance enhancing anabolic steroid," Saleem Altaf, director of cricket operations of the PCB, told Reuters.

Following confirmation of the second test (B sample), PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf said an investigation would be set up to look into the matter and possible actions against the pair.

"The players took it (the nandrolone) unfortunately," Ashraf said. "They might have had no idea about the drug."

"It is the first time our players have tested positive so we'll take action accordingly."

Shoaib and Asif's recall is the biggest doping issue to cloud cricket since Australia spinner Shane Warne was sent home before the World Cup in 2003 and banned for one year for testing positive for a diuretic.

Nobel hero seeks new Bangladesh

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freedom fighter AK Khondoker.

A good number of foreigners including ambassadors, diplomats, representatives of donor agencies, officials of the international bodies and NGOs's also attended the reception to show their respect to the microcredit guru.

Yunus, in his emotion-choked 45-minute-long speech gave the credit of winning the Nobel Peace Prize to all the citizens of Bangladesh and particularly the 67 lakh borrowers of Grameen Bank, most of who are poor village women.

"It's not a pride that Yunus received the Nobel Prize but it's our pride that an institution of Bangladesh won the Prize amid all kinds of weakness, uncertainty and social backwardness," he said.

He has found a different Bangladesh since his winning the most prestigious prize in the world.

"We all are Nobel Prize winners and from now on we must act worthy of the prize," he said sharing his feelings with the people.

Dr Yunus said Bangladesh has suddenly risen after winning the Nobel Prize. People suddenly feel empowered to perform any task. It has come like a lamp of Aladin's. "We have to identify the path to use the newly found power.

"The Bangladesh before and after winning the Nobel Peace Prize is completely different. I have seen tremendous patriotism, emotion, happiness and dedication for the country among the people in the last couple of days."

He said the height of every citizen of Bangladesh has gone up to 10 feet and no-one can down them below. "The size of the people also expanded and they will have to buy new clothes now," he joked.

For the first time people can look into the world keeping their heads high and they can do everything to remain at that height, he observed.

"They (people) are no longer small as they left behind all petty things. They are ready for any great job," he added.

Muhammad Yunus also recalled the memories of old days when he had initiated the concept of

Grameen Bank at Jobra village near Chittagong University.

"We did not bring any consultant from abroad or foreign donation for initiating such a noble thing. It was the local people and students of Chittagong University who extended their hands for doing something for the poor villagers."

Since then, there is hardly any country left in the world that is yet to introduce a microcredit system for poverty alleviation, Yunus observed.

He told the gathering that the government of West Bengal has invited him to accord him a grand reception there. The people of West Bengal are also eagerly waiting for the reception, he told.

There was no formal memorandum or citations in his honour but every one was so enthusiastic and cheerful that no-one even felt the need of a citation. There was no mention of organisers and it was only said that the reception was given by the people.

Yunus took the microphone at 2:14pm and continued until 3:00pm. While delivering his speech he smiled almost all the time and shared with the audience the stories and experiences after winning the prize.

He even told the gathering that when he heard the news of winning the prize he was in Lungi and genji, popular informal clothing of Bangladeshi males. It was very difficult for him to come out of the house changing dress as a large number of people had already started rushing to his room.

He said many people including prominent economist Wahid Uddin Mahmud burst into tears hearing the news while many others started offering prayers.

Greetings were also coming from every corner of the world like Latin America, Africa and Europe. Especially the expatriate Bangladeshis were very much emotion-choked while expressing greetings and happiness, he said.

"We can do" was the only writing in the large banner behind the podium decorated with a full size photograph of Dr Yunus and the Grameen Bank's logo.

Prominent economist Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud spoke on behalf of the organisers and expressed his admiration to Prof Yunus. He paid tributes to Grameen Bank for its contribution to poverty alleviation.

"We all received the Nobel Prize because after the liberation of the country, this is by far the greatest joy and enthusiasm the nation ever enjoyed" Mahmud said. "We have proved that we can do it."

His (Yunus) theory has proved that the poor are more efficient in managing loans from the banks, Mahmud observed. "Microcredit has emerged as the most powerful development idea considering women empowerment and changing the fate of the marginalised section."

Referring to the United Nations declaration of World Microcredit Year, Mahmud said there is hardly any example in the world that the UN observed a year considering the idea of an individual.

Considering his contribution towards the world, Yunus should have been given the Nobel Peace Prize much earlier, Mahmud noted. The audience responded to this remark with a huge applause.

Another Bengali, Amartya Sen, received the Nobel Prize for introducing new theories in the field of economics and Yunus was the pioneer in application of theories of economics, Mahmud added.

Prominent singer Fakir Alamgir rendered a song composed in honour of Nobel laureate Yunus. The artiste handed over a Bangladesh flag to Yunus at the end of his song with the crowd cheering aloud while Yunus waved the flag for a few minutes.

Different socio-cultural organisations and professional bodies including Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka University, Dhaka University Teachers Association and City Bank handed over floral bouquets to Yunus.

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The outlaws are distributing leaflets at different places in several districts calling upon people to come under their banners to uproot the present capitalist society and build a "socialist people's state".

The PBCP-Janajuddho recently distributed leaflets in Bamundi, Kazipur and Khoksa areas in Meherpur district and Sahebnagar, Bhogalbandi and Alamdanga of Chuadanga.

Earlier in August, the outlaws distributed leaflets in Alukdia, Kalpara and Kodalia village in sadar upazila of Jhenidah district, Amla, Chitolia and Mirpur in Kushtia and some areas of Narail.

These areas held several meetings in these areas escaping the eyes of law enforcers.

At these meetings, the outlawed parties advised their cadres to join hands with leaders of different political parties, mainly the ruling alliance, so that they can get their (leaders) help when needed, specially to evade 'crossfire' after arrest.

This correspondent saw several cadres of outlawed parties who are working with political parties, particularly the ruling alliance.

Taizal Hossain, a top terror of Kushtia and an accused in at least 20 cases including that for murders, is working with Jamaat in Mirpur upazila in the district. He is under the control of local Jamaat leader Abdul Gafur.

Another top cadre of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) - Akbar alias killer Akbar -- is working with the BNP in Bheramara upazila in Kushtia. A relative of the local ruling party lawmaker controls his activities.

Many other cadres such as Ainal of Uzgaram, Rahman, Arif and Masud of Hatabdaldpur, Niza, and Sabbir of Jhodia in Sadar upazila of Kushtia are working for the AL. All were cadres of the GB. A local AL leader and a teacher of Islamic University (IU) are reportedly controlling these elements.

FDI posts huge

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went to the developed countries, 36 per cent (\$334 billion) to the developing nations, and only 1.1 per cent to the LDCs.

The largest recipient of FDI was the United Kingdom, followed by the USA and China.

In Bangladesh, the telecommunications sector received the highest chunk of the FDI--33 per cent (\$278.8 million), followed by the manufacturing sector with 26 per cent (\$219.4 million). The energy and power sector received 25 per cent (\$208.3 million) of the FDI during the year.

Mahmudur Rahman lauded the FDI growth, saying the FDI in manufacturing and telecommunications sectors helped Bangladesh achieve a remarkable growth in exports.

He identified the country's negative images for corruption, political unrest and recent labour unrest among the major challenges to future investment in Bangladesh.

He suggested using the advantage of global appreciation for Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus to encourage more FDI.

Asked about the differences between the figures in the investment report and the Bangladesh Bank statistics, UN Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessalines said the gap is due to the difference in timing between the two organisations.

Dessalines said Bangladesh should improve its governance situation, corruption and political unrest to woo more investment in future.

The World Investment Report has been published since 1991 and this year it focuses on FDI from developing and transition economies and its implications for development.

The World Investment Report 2006 said global foreign investment inflows rose substantially in 2005, spurred by cross-border mergers and acquisitions following increased corporate profits and recovery of stock markets.

M Ismail Hossain, professor of Jahangirnagar University, Kazi Ali Reza, officer-in-charge of UNIC, and Mamdood Hossain Alamgir, director of BMD, attended the launching ceremony.

Remanded Huji

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In the statement given before Magistrate Nur-e-Alam Siddiqui, Sharif Sahedul and Delwar Hossain Ripon admitted their involvement with the grenade attack on the British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in 2004.

They also confessed that they were involved with the bomb attacks on Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and former Awami League lawmaker Syeda Zebunnesa Haque.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Munshi Atiqur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday that the accused had admitted their complicity in four bomb attacks. He said the criminals also named two other men who were involved in the heinous acts.

The court sent them to Sylhet Central Jail.

On Sunday, following a remand prayer by the CID, a Sylhet court placed the two on a five-day remand. With this, the investigators were able to have them on remand for a total of 45 days.

Hasan issue to be settled Oct 23

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meetings with the leaders of our alliances after which we will sit again on October 23. We hope we may reach a decision."

Sources said the AL general secretary expressed his dissatisfaction at yesterday's meeting over the ruling BNP's "indifference" to clarify quickly its stance over the tricky issue of Justice KM Hasan.

Jaill, who repeatedly asked the ruling BNP at the previous meetings to resolve first the issue of Justice Hasan, sought its formal response yesterday.

But Bhuiyan, who has kept assuring Jaill of informing his party's view after consulting with the party and alliance high command, again told Jaill yesterday that the PM has not yet made any decision.

Bhuiyan told Jaill that the PM said the issue will be settled after her return from Saudi Arabia. Jaill expressed his frustration at this, saying, "What in that case is the outcome of the previous talks?" sources said.

Bhuiyan asked Jaill to take up the other reform issues, including that of the chief election commissioner (CEC), but Jaill declined to discuss anything before settling the issue of Justice Hasan.

Sources said Bhuiyan assured Jaill that he will inform him about BNP's final view over Justice Hasan on October 23.

However, both the leaders as usual claimed at the joint briefing that their discussion made progress and that they concurred with each

other on some issues.

But they declined to tell reporters precisely if they had reached any consensus about either the appointment of the next caretaker chief or the incumbent CEC--the two major issues in the opposition's reform proposals.

On expiry of the tenure of the present government on October 27, a non-party caretaker government will assume office to extend all-out cooperation to the Election Commission to conduct the next parliamentary elections.

As per the constitution, former Chief Justice KM Hasan is supposed to be the chief adviser to the interim government. But the AL-led 14-party opposition alliance has been opposing Justice Hasan as the caretaker chief as he is a founder-member of the ruling BNP and served as its international affairs secretary in the late 1970s.

The dialogue between the secretaries general of ruling BNP and main opposition AL began on October 5 to break the existing political impasse over the proposals of reforms in the caretaker government, Election Commission and electoral laws.

But the dialogue may well continue even after October 27 as both the parties have remained rigid on their stance over the issue of Justice Hasan.

The