



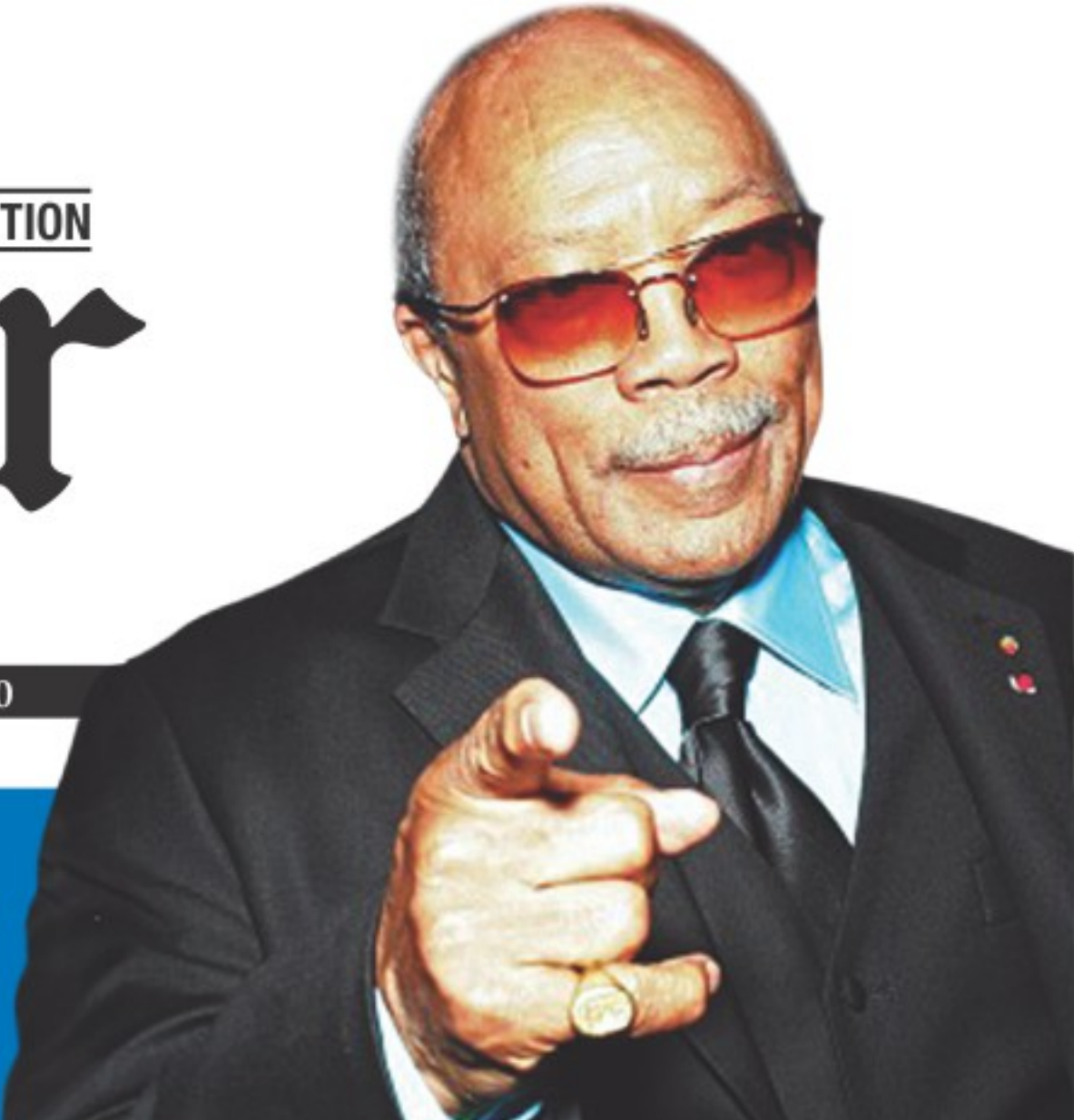
# The Daily Star

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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE



## PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Star reads the life and work of late sculptor-painter Abdur Razzaque

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## ROYALTY CLAIM

Music producer Quincy Jones sues Michael Jackson's estate

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HASINA PHONES KHALEDA

# Relief? Not so much

Two leaders talk for 37 minutes; fail to set date, agree on contents of dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina finally phoned her archrival Khaleda Zia yesterday, and invited the BNP chairperson to the Gono Bhaban tomorrow to talk about the next parliamentary election.

But uncertainty remains, as they couldn't agree on the date and the contents of their parley.

In reply to the prime minister's invite, Khaleda said she could hold talks only after the opposition's 60-hour shutdown ends on October 29 evening.

At that, Hasina urged the BNP chief to call off the hartal. Khaleda, the leader of the opposition, said it was not

possible to withdraw the hartal now.

During the 37-minute conversation, the prime minister told Khaleda that they could discuss the all-party polls-time government she (Hasina) proposed in her address to the nation on October 18.

"You know I have been holding talks with different political parties. I invite you to the Gono Bhaban to discuss the upcoming election and have dinner with me ... Give me a list of people who will accompany you. You may bring along as many people as you want," Hasina told Khaleda over the phone.

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TIMELY POLLS MUST: ASHRAF -- PAGE 5

# 3-day hartal on

Khaleda declines to entertain Hasina's request over phone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rejecting the prime minister's request to call off the hartal, the BNP-Jamaat-led 18-party opposition alliance enforced a 60-hour nationwide strike from this morning, worrying people about security and economic activities.

The shutdown aimed at forcing Sheikh Hasina's government to install a non-partisan election-time government raised fear of violence as ruling and opposition parties prepare for a face off on the streets.

Business leaders also requested opposition parties not to enforce hartal, calling it a destructive weapon that hinders the country's economic growth.

"The two major political parties give priority to the issue of retaining power or assuming power over economic advancement of the country. We are just killing our potentials," said Fazlul Hoque, former chief of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association.

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## PHONE CALL GOOD, HARTAL BAD

Eminent civil society members, while talking to Pankaj Karmakar and Prabir Barua Chowdhury, said the telephone conversation between the prime minister and the opposition leader had brightened the possibility of talks.



RAFIQUE-UL HUQ

The noted lawyer considers it as a winning situation for the Awami League as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself had rang up the opposition chief before the latter made any call.

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AKBAR ALI KHAN

Welcoming the initiative of the prime minister, the former adviser to a caretaker government said the phone conversation between the chiefs of the ruling and the opposition parties is a

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SULTANA KAMAL

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, said the conversation was positive.

She, however, expressed her frustration as the opposition chief disagreed about

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Why hartal not withdrawn?

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The nation's expectation that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would make a telephone call to Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia has come to pass. We would have been happier if the call had come sooner, but that it has finally come is a move we certainly welcome.

The PM's act of inviting Khaleda Zia to talks and dinner at the Gono Bhaban tomorrow is a gesture that can truly be regarded as a breakthrough, given the culture of animosity and hostility that over the years has taken hold of national politics.

An important component of the PM's conversation with

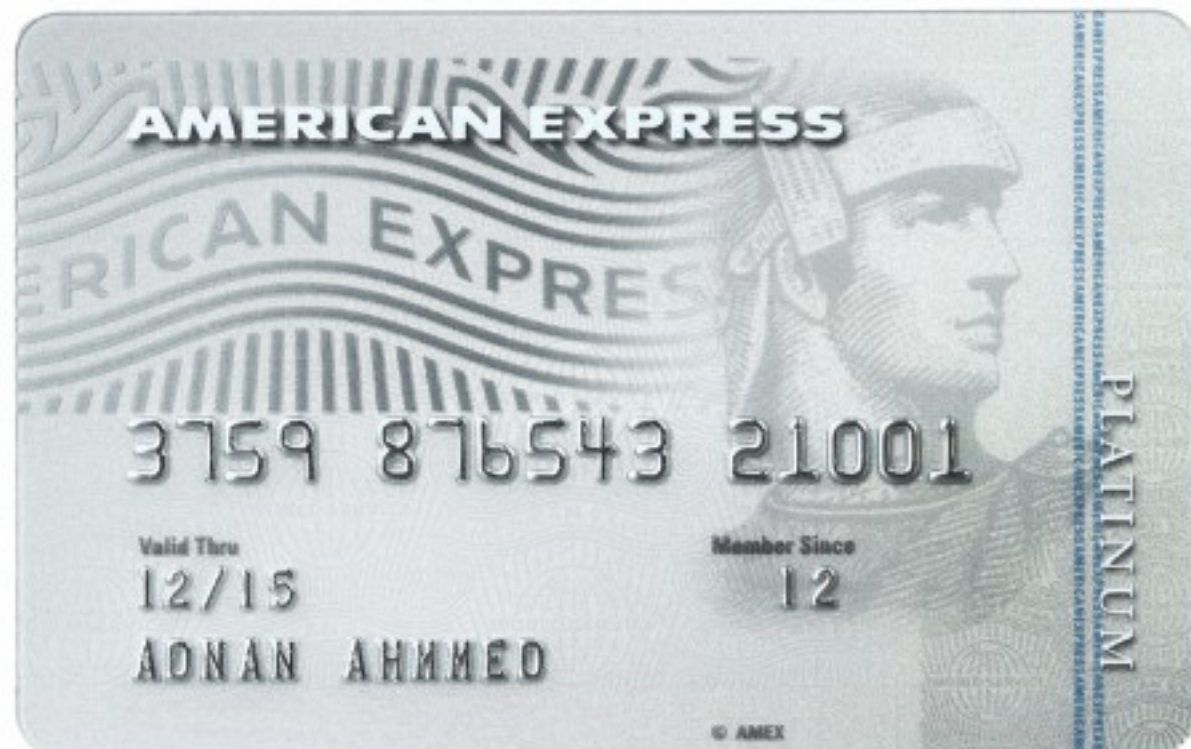
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