

Hold talks

FROM PAGE 1
He was addressing the 13th national conference of Bangladesh Manabdhikar Bastabayan Sangstha, a rights body, on the Supreme Court premises.
Public opinion should be mobilised for a dialogue between the two leaders, barrister Rafiq said.
"We all want a free and fair election. But it would not be acceptable to the people if the government holds the election while staying in power. So, the two top leaders must find out a system to hold an acceptable election."
"The election will be acceptable if held under a government formed through discussion between the two major parties," he added.

Former BNP leader Nazmul Huda in his keynote paper said the two top leaders must come to the discussion table. Otherwise, there would be no way to resolve the present political crisis.
He said power of the prime minister might be shifted to the Election Commission after dissolving the current parliament so that the EC can hold a free and fair election.

The Election Commission has to be reconstituted through a consensus among the two leaders within seven days and election has to be held within 90 days of dissolving parliament," he proposed.
Supreme Court Bar Association President Zainul Abedin said there is no alternative to holding a dialogue between the government and the opposition. It is possible to avoid confrontation if the caretaker system is restored, he added.

Nayeemul Islam Khan, editor of daily Amader Orthoneeti, proposed a sit-in at the Central Shahid Minar demanding a dialogue between the two top leaders.
Asaf-ud-Daula, president of Manabdhikar, presided over the conference, which was addressed by Sigma Huda, secretary general of the organisation, among others.

Quake hits

FROM PAGE 20
Sylhet, Comilla, Gazipur and Brahmanbaria around 10:55pm, said officials of meteorological department.
No casualty was reported till filing of this report at 1:00am today.
The epicentre of the quake was in Monibao of Myanmar, some 430km southeast of Dhaka.
The officials, however, could not give details.

Nepali army ordered to ditch cars to cut pollution

BBC ONLINE

Nepal's senior army officers have been ordered to ditch their cars at least once a week when coming to office - to reduce air pollution and traffic jams.
From now on, every Friday they must walk, cycle or use public transport to go to work in the capital Kathmandu.
Army chief Gen Rana set an example by riding a mountain bike from his official residence to the office.

The capital lies in a bowl-shaped valley and suffers from high levels of dust pollution.
The army move was welcomed by environmentalists, who also urged the government and NGOs to follow the suit.
Gen Rana asked all army officers - from lieutenants to generals - based within Kathmandu valley to refrain from using private vehicles on Fridays.
He said the move would also help promote healthy lifestyle.

A known cycling enthusiast himself, Gen Rana on Friday donned cycling gear and pedalled about 3km (two miles) from his residence to the army HQ, passing through dusty and busy roads.
The army chief - who looked quite comfortable - was joined by a number of senior army officers along the way.

Referendum

FROM PAGE 20
But the opposition says the document is divisive and has accused Morsi of pushing through a text that favours his Islamist allies while ignoring the rights of Christians, who make up about 10 percent of the population, as well as women.
In another development, Egyptian Vice President Mahmud Mekki announced his resignation yesterday, reports AFP.

In a statement obtained by AFP, Mekki said he was stepping down because "political work does not suit my professional character as a judge."
He said he had initially submitted his resignation on November 7, but delayed it until now because of a series of events, including the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and a decision by President Mohamed Morsi last month to bolster his own powers.

As polling opened yesterday, a coalition of Egyptian rights groups reported a number of irregularities.
They said some polling stations had opened late, that Islamists urging a "yes" vote had illegally campaigned at some stations, and reported some voter registration irregularities, including the listing of one dead person.
The first round of voting last week resulted in a 57 percent vote in favour of the constitution, according to unofficial figures.

Analysts expect another "yes" yesterday because the vote covers rural and other areas seen as having more Islamist sympathisers. Islamists may also be able to count on many Egyptians who are simply exhausted by two years of upheaval.
If the basic law is passed, a parliamentary election will

be held in about two months.
After the first round of voting, the opposition said a litany of alleged abuses meant the first stage of the referendum should be rerun.
But the committee overseeing the two-stage vote said their investigations showed no major irregularities in voting on December 15, which covered about half of Egypt's 51 million voters.
There was no indication on Saturday that the alleged abuses were any worse than those claimed during the first round.
"I'm voting 'no' because Egypt can't be ruled by one faction," said Karim Nahas, 35, a stockbroker, heading to a polling station in Giza, a province included in this round of voting which covers parts of greater Cairo.
At another polling station, voters said they were more interested in ending Egypt's long period of political instability than in the Islamist aspects of the charter.
Polling stations opened at 8:00am and close at 7:00pm though voting could be extended as it was last week. Queues formed at some polling stations around the country.
Unofficial tallies are likely to emerge within hours of the close, but the referendum committee may not declare an official result for the two rounds until Monday, after hearing appeals.
Even if the charter is approved, the opposition say it is a recipe for trouble since it has not received broad consensus backing from the population. They say the result may go in Morsi's favour but it will not be the result of a fair vote.

Traffic goes

FROM PAGE 1
Traffic sergeants who were on duty in Farmgate said the unbearable traffic congestion in the area was caused by the mass rally of the ruling alliance in front of the Baitul Mukarram mosque.
Other areas also witnessed severe traffic jam as the party leaders and activists before and after the rally marched through them in processions.
Hundreds of leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associate bodies from different parts of the capital brought out processions with banners, festoon and placards to join the rally. And as the rally ended, they again paraded through Noor Hossain Square, Paltan intersection, the Jatiya Press Club and Matsya Bhaban up to Suhrawardy Udyan.
Commuters who shuttle between long distances suffered most as vehicular movement was suspended on roads leading to the rally venue, Paltan.
Police diverted traffic from Paltan, Gulistan, Bijoy Nagar, Zero Point (in front of GPO) and Dainik Bangla. That increased traffic pressure on the roads in their adjacent areas, resulting in long tailbacks.
Vehicles could not move on both sides of these roads during the rally and processions that continued for more than three hours.
The situation did not come back to normal even after the post-rally procession dispersed. Hundreds of people were seen waiting at Shabbagh, Banglamotor and Farmgate intersections for transports in the evening.
Many of them blamed the rally and processions for their sufferings and said such type of political programmes should have taken place outside the capital where traffic movement is less.
"I don't understand why the government is so foolish that its own party was causing sufferings to people in the name of holding rally and procession," said Rafiq, a CNG driver, who remained stuck at Shabbagh intersection for over 45 minutes.
Home-goers found the situation more painful after their long hours at offices and work.
"For not getting any

transport, I came to Farmgate on foot from Gulistan. But the situation is same here -- I have been waiting for around 45 minutes at Farmgate," Reza Chowdhury, an employee of a private company, said. He was to go to Mahakhali.
Ataur, a businessman waiting at Khamarbari intersection, said most of the passenger buses kept their doors closed as those were already overloaded.
"When I tried to get into a Mirpur-bound bus forcibly, the helper almost pushed me back, saying the bus was a sitting service," said Khijir Hayat, a service holder, at Khamarbari.
Traffic congestion at Banglamotor intersection was so bad that motorcyclist Milton could not find that little space he required to escape jam.
"Usually other days I could manage to slide through little spaces between vehicles. But today the situation is horrific -- vehicles have not even left that little spaces vacant," Milton, who works in a pipe line manufacturing company, said with utter frustration.

2 deals penned
FROM PAGE 1
Yingluck Shinawatra at the Prime Minister's Office here.
The MoU on "Establishment of Bilateral Consultations" has been inked for strengthening the friendly relations between the two countries and resolving any obstacle, or misunderstanding which might arise, officials said.
The deal on agricultural cooperation is aimed at expanding cooperation in the areas of agriculture for proper utilisation of potentials and preparing joint programmes in this regard.
Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand Surapong Towichakchikul signed the MoU on Establishment of Bilateral Consultations.
The MoU on agricultural cooperation was penned by Agriculture Secretary Monzur Hossain and Permanent Secretary on Agriculture of Thailand Chavalit Chookajorn.
The two prime ministers were present.

30 hurt
FROM PAGE 20
The fire originated from an electric short circuit at Sagar Garments in Uttara around 8:25am, fire officials said.
However, factory authorities managed to douse the flames before two firefighting units reached the factory.
According to locals, at least five workers were injured when trying to rush out of the factory located on the 8th floor of the building.
Meanwhile, another fire broke out at NewAge Apparels Ltd around 8:00am. Locals said around five workers sustained minor injuries in an attempt to vacate the building.
Factory workers extinguished the fire by themselves, Ali Ahmed Khan, deputy director of Industrial Police told The Daily Star.
The fire started near the sewing machines and destroyed around 15 T-shirts, though the cause of its origin has not been determined yet, police said.
Factory authorities said that the workers did not start to operate the machines at the time of the incident.
They claimed it to be a case of sabotage though they have not been able to accuse anybody yet, Ali Ahmed said.
The factory resumed its operations in the afternoon, he said.

Change lies
FROM PAGE 1
"The country's politics could not have gone so bad if they [Hasina and Khaleda] showed respect for each other."
Tariqul was addressing a discussion organised by Rajshahi University Nationalist Ex-Students' Union at the Jatiya Press Club.
The BNP leader also urged the government to fulfil their demand for restoring the caretaker government system to strengthen democracy, ensure independence of the country and save it from chaos.
"We as well as the nation will accept the results if you win the next election by holding it under a non-party neutral government," said the former minister.
He said the premier and her ministers were claiming themselves as popular. "So why are you afraid of going to the election under a neutral administration?" he said.

Connectivity under focus

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programmes and the level of defense cooperation between the two countries.
The prime ministers welcomed the ongoing cooperation under various regional bodies and expressed their resolve to further enhance their partnership and cooperation in the context of Bimstec, ARF and ACD.
The leaders supported the formation of the Asean Community by 2015 as an important step towards greater integration and prosperity in Southeast Asia.
The Thai side said they would give favourable consideration to Bangladesh joining the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC).
The two leaders acknowledged the important role of Bimstec in strengthening closer ties in South and South-East Asia. They reiterated their firm commitment to promote closer engagement for mutual benefits of the Bimstec member countries.
The premiers highlighted the importance of the Bimstec FTA and urged for an early completion of the negotiations on the Agreement on Trade in Goods.
The two leaders would carefully consider each other's candidatures for non-permanent positions in the UN Security Council and the membership of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).
The leaders thanked each other for supporting their respective candidatures to the Postal Operations Council (POC) of the Universal Postal Union and the Council of Administration (CA) for 2013-2016.
Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra invited Sheikh Hasina to visit Thailand at a mutually convenient time.
Hasina accepted the invitation. It was agreed that the dates of the trip would be finalised through diplomatic channels.

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Gangnam Style

FROM PAGE 20
million to 10 million times a day on average.
It overtook the previous record holder - Justin Bieber's music video Baby - on November 24.
Globalised Gangnam
One industry watcher said the fact so many people continued to post their own versions of Gangnam Style had played a huge part in the clip's success.
"I've seen a statistic which reckons the one song will have generated something like \$8m (£5m) by the end of the year from money that comes directly from YouTube through advertising plus download sales, its uses in adverts and TV programmes," Chris Cooke, business editor of the CMU music news site, told the BBC.
"It shows that YouTube - which is a free-to-use as a promotional platform for the music labels - can lead to substantial income.

"Should every artist be trying to think of a funny video that will go viral and be mimicked? I don't know whether it's a template that can be copied, but it certainly shows how quickly an eye-catching clip can spread thanks to social networks and YouTube."
Sir Martin Sorrell - chief executive of advertising giant WPP - paid tribute to the achievement by making a link between Psy and one of the west's most influential economists.
"Another great example of Theodore Levitt's 'globalisation' and the power of K-pop," he told the BBC.
Scott Mills, the BBC Radio 1 DJ who championed the song on his show, said he was amazed by the phenomenon that the song had become.
"The thing that interests you in the video is the fact that you don't understand the lyrics.

"The first time I saw it was on The Ellen DeGeneres Show in America and I just thought it was a bit of fun, but I didn't expect it to be as big as it was."
"Psy came into my Radio 1 show and The Guinness World Records presented him with a plaque for the most 'liked' YouTube video of all time and the amazing thing is he is just a guy, he hasn't tried to do any of this."
D C Han, a South Korean hair stylist who worked in Gangnam before starting a business in London, added that he was proud to see the song become such a massive hit.
"I was amazed" he told the BBC.
"K-Pop is getting stronger and stronger, everywhere in Asia they are listening to it - China, Hong Kong, Taiwan. Maybe even in Japan but they might not admit it."

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During that time, six other ferries, with vehicles and passengers loaded, did not leave the pontoon fearing they too would get stranded mid-river, he said.
Around 2,000 vehicles were in a queue overnight to cross the river, he added.
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