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RAIN, SWELLING RIVERS

Thousands marooned

STAR REPORT

Incessant downpour for the last few days coupled with high tide of rivers left several thousand people marooned in different districts across the country.

A large number of mud houses, croplands, roads and embankments also went under water at different places in the country due to the heavy rain.

The ferry services on different river routes were also disrupted due to strong current, leaving hundreds of vehicles stuck on both sides of different ferry ghats that caused immense sufferings for the passengers.

Highest 81 mm rainfall was recorded at Kutubdia in Cox's Bazar in the last 24 hours ended at 6:00am, according to the Met office.

A special bulletin of the Met office yesterday said the land depression over West Bengal and adjoining areas persists.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient persists and deep convection is taking place over the Bay, the bulletin said, adding that squally weather might affect North Bay, adjoining costal areas of Bangladesh and the maritime ports.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla had been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal no. 3.

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A sudden erosion of its banks by the mighty Padma damaged the pontoons at Mawa ferry terminal suspending ferry services yesterday resulting in a queue of vehicles that went for miles. While repairs were being made, bus passengers, *inset*, suffered the delays.

PHOTO: STAR



US may need to revoke Bangladesh trade status Says Congressman Miller

BLOOMBERG

US President Barack Obama should revoke Bangladesh's beneficial trade status if the country doesn't comply with American benchmarks to improve labour and safety standards, a House law-maker said.

Concerns over labour standards had prompted the US to consider taking steps to raise tariffs on some Bangladeshi goods

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POLLS IN 4 CITY CORPORATIONS

Battle of two alliances

Allies of govt, opposition face off after a long time

SHAKHAWAT LITON and WASIM BIN HABIB

After quite a while the two archrival political alliances lock horns in the polls to four divisional city corporations even though the elections are supposed to be non-partisan in nature.

The current five-member Election Commission has a lot to prove as this is the first time it is going to hold such an election since it was formed in February last year.

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance and the Awami League-led 14-party ruling alliance have a lot riding on the polls as the elections scheduled for June 15 would give them some idea about their position on the ground. Political mileage would be gained though each victory ahead of the general elections.

The camps have already extended full support to the mayoral candidates.

The high-ups of the camps have directed their grassroots to ensure victory by working together.

After around two decades, the Awami League and BNP will have a face-off in Rajshahi and Khulna city corporation mayoral elections.

Records say that the first mayoral polls to the two city corporations were held in 1994, when a BNP-led government was in office, and the BNP-backed mayoral candidates won.

In the second elections to Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations held in April, 2002, the Awami League did not support any candidate as the party was reeling from the shock of defeat in the 2001 parliamentary elections.

BNP-backed mayoral candidates won again.

However, the BNP did not support anyone in the last polls to the two city corporations held in August 2008 in

protest against the state of emergency declared by the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker regime.

Awami League-backed mayoral candidates swept to victory and also won in the mayoral elections to Barisal and Sylhet city corporations held at that time.

Awami League and BNP-backed candidates went head to head for the first time in Barisal and Sylhet city corporations polls in 2003. Awami League supported mayoral candidate had won the Sylhet battle while pro-BNP mayoral candidate won in Barisal.

Now, the voters in the four city corporations would determine whether the Awami League alliance supported mayoral candidates, who had won in 2008, would go back to office or the BNP-backed candidates would have the last laugh.

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MORE ON PAGE 5

US lauds Dhaka's anti-terror efforts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US has highly appreciated Bangladesh's role in combating terrorism, but observed that its judiciary moved slowly in processing terrorism and other criminal cases in general.

In the Bangladesh part of its Country Reports on Terrorism 2012, the US State Department said, "The government of Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to combating domestic and transnational terrorist groups, and its counterterrorism efforts made it harder for transnational terrorists to operate in or establish safe havens in Bangladesh."

"In addition, Bangladesh and India improved and expanded counterterrorism cooperation."

Published yesterday, the report also noted that South Asia had remained a front line in the battle against terrorism.

It said Bangladesh's criminal justice system was in the process of fully implementing

the Antiterrorism Act of 2009; however, the judiciary moved slowly in processing terrorism and other criminal cases.

"Bangladesh cooperated with the United States to further strengthen control of its borders and land, sea, and air ports of entry," said the report.

The US observed that Bangladesh's foreign and domestic policies were heavily influenced by the region's major powers, particularly India.

"In past years, the Indo-Bangladesh relationship provided openings for transnational threats, but the current government has demonstrated its interest in regional cooperation on counterterrorism. Bangladesh was active in the full range of international fora."

The report said the US supported programmes for Bangladeshi civilians, law enforcement, and military counterparts to build their capacity to monitor, detect, and

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Russians find mammoth carcass with liquid blood

AP, Moscow

A perfectly preserved woolly mammoth carcass with liquid blood has been found on a remote Arctic island, fueling hopes of cloning the Ice Age animal, Russian scientists said on Thursday.

The carcass was in such good shape because its lower part was stuck in pure ice, said Semyon Grigoryev, the head of the Mammoth Museum, who led the expedition into the Lyakhovsky Islands off the Siberian coast.

"The blood is very dark, it was found in ice cavities

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The Woolly Mammoth, related to the elephant, lived on Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean until 4,000 years ago. Scientists are hoping to use well-preserved DNA from a frozen woolly mammoth carcass to bring the species back to life.

IMAGE: MAIL ONLINE

Double murder in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two youths were killed inside a flat at West Shewrapara of the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

Anharul Islam Razib, 28, who got his MBA a few months ago, and Khairul Bashar, 28, an employee of a firm, were found dead inside their flat on the first floor of a four-storey building, said landlord Saidur Rahman.

Seven youths, including the duo, had leased the flat eight months ago, he added.

Karim, one of the flat mates, said he had gone to work in the morning, but found them dead returning home around 2:00pm for lunch.

They bore injuries in their heads, said Maruf Ahmed, inspector of Sher-e Bangla Nagar Police Station.

The law enforcers could not immediately ascertain the motive behind the murders, but said the criminals took away three computer monitors from the flat.

Three people -- two flat mates and their house help -- have been detained in this connection. Police said one of the flat mates was missing while two others had been outside Dhaka for a few days.

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Place proposal at Sangsad

14-party asks BNP on polls-time govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday expressed hope that a resolution over a poll-time government would be devised through talks in parliament with the main opposition BNP.

It has urged BNP to place its proposal and stay in the House for discussion on the election-time government system, for which the country has been witnessing political impasse.

BNP has long been demanding restoration of caretaker

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Six killed as truck hits 3-wheeler

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least six people were killed and 10 others injured as a truck hit a locally made three-wheeler near Patgodam Bridge in Mymensingh town yesterday evening.

Two of the victims were identified as Abdur Rahim, 50, and Azaharul Islam, 30. The identities of other victims could not be known immediately.

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Govt campaigning against Tarique

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government had launched a smear campaign against Tarique Rahman that he violated the conditions of a bond he signed during the last caretaker government regime's rule to go abroad, the BNP said yesterday.

It said the government had done so to divert people's attention from the opposition agitation demanding restoration of the non-party election-time caretaker government system.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday made the comments on behalf of his

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