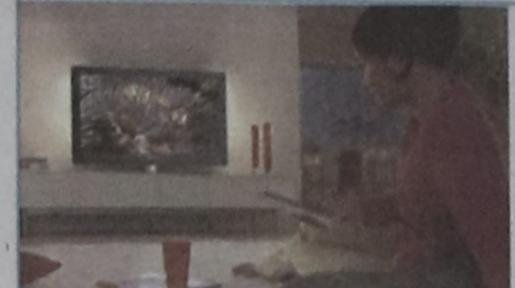


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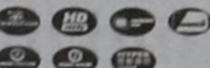
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LABOUR RECRUITMENT

Experts put proposed Gulf, Saudi steps under microscope

PORIMOL PALMA

Labour migration experts and recruiting agencies in Bangladesh laud Gulf countries' move to scrap sponsorship system but have reservations about Saudi Arabia's move to form companies to hire, supply and manage foreign workers, saying this will create another tier in the existing system to intensify labour exploitation.

They however prefer Saudi Arabia's National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) proposal for formation of a government commission to look after the affairs of foreign workers, and introduction of a mandatory insurance scheme

employers and foreign workers.

Under sponsorship system, employers retain passports of foreign workers and can take advantage of it to deport them if any disputes arise, notes a study by

There is no provision to prevent tries. the sponsors from illegally realising money from the employees for renewal or transfer of residency permits and even for allowing them to go back home on vacation.

reached a broad-based consensus at a conference in Abu Dhabi in January to repeal the much debated 'sponsorship system',

চামেলীবাগ ইউনিউ ৭ ৩৬নং ওয়ার্ড

Breakthrough brings

European Union, Japan, India,

Brazil, Australia and China had

in negotiations," the diplomatic

source said. A spokesman for the

World Trade Organisation head

Pascal Lamy confirmed "very

encouraging signs" from the talks.

European Trade Commissoner

Peter Mandelson left the WTO

headquarters saying "there has

been progress made" but cau-

tioned that it was "not a final deal."

Whatever the leading seven

leaders have agreed -- no details

have been given so far -- will now

be proposed to a wider group of 35

ministers from other nations that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

"There has been a breakthrough

finally found common ground.

hope of WTO deal

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in association with Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jaica) yesterday brings

Despair turned to hope at WTO

talks on yesterday as an apparent

breakthough in deadlocked negoti-

ations raised the possibility of a

new global free-trade pact being

agreed after seven years of stale-

Ministers from 35 leading econ-

omies have been meeting here all

week to discuss reductions in

subsidies and import tariffs with

the aim of mapping out a new deal

to bring down barriers to interna-

nearly fruitless talks and gathering

partners the United States, the

gloom, a source told AFP that key

After more than four days of

out a procession in DCC Ward-36 as part of a campaign to keep the city clean.

AFP, Geneva

Brown suffers

by-polls blow

British Prime Minister Gordon

Brown suffered another serious

blow to his leadership Friday after

his governing Labour Party lost one

of its safest seats in a by-election in

The Scottish National Party

(SNP) reversed a majority of 13,500

in Glasgow East to snatch Labour's

25th safest seat in Britain, prompt-

ing more questions about how long

Brown can remain in Downing

The premier insisted he was

"getting on with the job" following

the result and would focus on

steering Britain through tough

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

another

his native Scotland.

economic times.

AFP, London

to protect the rights of both and look for alternatives, reported Arab News.

The proposed steps by the Gulf countries are significant for Bangladesh because most of the \$7 billion annual remittance come from around 30 lakh Bangladeshis working in the Middle East coun-

"In case of any dispute between the two parties, the employee normally resorts to the labour offices, which in turn fail to solve the problems in most cases. Then The Gulf labour ministers the cases reach labour courts where they take years awaiting a final verdict," said Dr Muflih Al Qah'tani, deputy president of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4





People wade through knee-deep water at Kalmakanda Union in Netrakona where flooding worsened yesterday and, right, rain aggravates flood situation snapping communication on Bhajandanga-Sadirpur-Guchha Gram road in Faridpur suburbs. Around 300 families of Alibad in Faridpur had to take refuge on an embankment due to flooding in the area.

Saarc summit to focus on 4 core issues

UNB, Dhaka

The forthcoming Saarc summit in Colombo will focus on four core issues of the present times such as food and energy security, climate change, and trade.

A senior foreign ministry official told UNB that the South Asian leaders, who will meet in the Sri Lankan capital between August 2 and August 3, would discuss how to make the dormant regional food bank operational as some member-states have not yet ratified it.

It was earlier decided that a Saarc food bank would be set up with an initial reserve of 241,000 tonnes of food grains to meet exigencies in any of the membercountries.

The official, requesting anonymity, said the summit leaders would also concentrate on how to meet the growing demand for energy for sustainable SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Russian FM says

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey

Lavrov, who had a meeting with

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed

Chowdhury Thursday evening in

Singapore, said Russia views

Bangladesh as a close friend and is

keen to expand cooperation with

sidelines of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)

Regional Forum currently being

foreign minister for the very warm

reception that was accorded to him

Iftekhar thanked the Russian

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

They held the meeting on the

UNB, Singapore

held in Singapore.

Wife of witness Moscow keen to expand ties to Aug 17 blasts with Dhaka in Satkhira

found dead UNB, Satkhira

> The wife of lone witness to August 17, 2005 serial bomb blasts here was found dead at Bakal checkpost under Sadar upazila on Thursday

The body of Hajera Bibi, 40, wife of Raushan Ali of Bakal Islampur village in local pourasava, was found hanging from a tree. On information, police recovered the body at about 11:00pm.

Hajera went missing on Thursday afternoon. Raushan, who witnessed the

August 17 bomb blasts here, alleged that outlawed JMB men strangled his wife and hanged the body from the tree.

Local journalists said police declined to talk to them about the killing.

Local sources said JMB member Nasiruddin, neighbour of Raushan, was arrested as per information given by him following the serial blasts. JMB members have been threatening his family members since the arrest of Nasiruddin.

Malaysia returnee beaten up by manpower agent

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A worker recently returned from Malaysia was seriously injured after being beaten allegedly by a manpower agent and his sons at Gopalpur upazila in Tangail yester-

Injured Mohammad Abdur Razzak, 31, son of farmer Rehan Ali of Baniajan village, was admitted to Gopalpur Upazila Health Complex.

Razzak said he went to Malaysia two years ago through Jilani Travels at Fakirerpool in Dhaka after paying manpower agent Abul Kalam Azad of Gopalpur Tk 220,000.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Serial bomb blasts rock Indian IT hub: 2 dead

AFP, Bangalore

India's high-technology capital Bangalore was rocked by a string of seven bomb blasts yesterday with at least two people killed and a dozen more wounded, police said.

Police said the southern city had been put on high alert, with bomb disposal teams and forensic experts rushed into action as authorities tried to determine who was responsible and IT companies closed early. "A woman and a man have died

and around a dozen others received shrapnel injuries in the blasts," Bangalore police commissioner Shankar Bidri told reporters.

Two blasts occurred close to police facilities while another bomb went of in an upmarket citycentre business district, he said, adding a fourth explosion targeted Koramangla district, which houses several computer software firms.

from the southern suburbs of the religiously mixed and cosmopolistate, police said.

amount of explosive used in the bombs was "equivalent to one or two hand grenades." "We suspect that timer devices

were used in two or three explosive devices, while the others could have been set off using mobile phones," Bidri said. "We are investigating the blasts.

Bomb disposal squads and forensic experts have reached the spot. Bangalore police is on high alert.

So far none of India's various Islamic guerrilla groups or outlawed Maoist insurgents have claimed responsibility for the attacks, Bidri added.

Indian Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta said the blasts

SYLHET MAYORAL POLLS

Internal feuds dog

AL, BNP candidates

The other blasts were reported occurred in a radius of 10 to 15 kilometres (six to nine miles) in Bangalore, the hub of India's tan city, the capital of Karnataka outsourcing and software industry and the Indian base of many global Police chief Bidri said the total technology firms.

> "Initial reports say that some of the blasts are low intensity using gelatin (gelignite explosive) sticks, Assistant police commissioner A Raghuveer told reporters, adding the blasts took place from about 2:00-2:45 pm.

"Such incidents will not deter the government from pursuing its policy of dealing with anti-national elements in a resolute manner," Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil was quoted as saying by the Press

Trust of India news agency. Bangalore is home to more than six million people and some 1,500 domestic and foreign firms including Infosys Technologies, the

Former Sylhet unit BNP presi-

dent MA Haque, who ran for mayor

in the 2003 election and lost, is

contesting the polls this time again.

Ilyas Ali faithful have streamed into

his campaign even though the two

Party leaders believe that

Haque, who had largely been inac-

tive in politics since his 2003 defeat,

and Ilyas, a former lawmaker and

now the convenor of district unit

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

have long been on the opposite

side in district BNP politics.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

POLICE-STUDENT CLASH 50 including UNO hurt in

Begumganj A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 50 people, including upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), policemen and teachers, were injured in a clash between police and students of Begumganj Agriculture Training Institute (BATI) over a rumour of death of a student of the institute on Thursday night.

Campus sources said the authorities yesterday declared the institute closed for an indefinite period and asked the students to vacate their dormitories.

Police said a student of BATI was injured after being hit by a speeding bus on Begumganj-Maijdee road at around 9:00pm. But a rumour spread on the campus that SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

July 26		
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



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IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

dogged by internal feuds.

also out on the hustings.

Mayor candidates from the BNP

and the Awami League in the Sylhet

City Corporation election are being

contesting the August 4 city corpo-

ration polls, is visibly divided along

two lines for two candidates while

two candidates from the Islami

Oikya Jote (IOJ), a partner of the

BNP-led four-party alliance, are

The BNP, which is not officially

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buses. The encroachers took control of the open space right under the noses of the law enforcers.

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