

### Govt approves renewal of trade deal with India

**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**  
The government has approved renewing for two years the bilateral trade agreement between Bangladesh and India to be signed during Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's three-day visit to New Delhi beginning on March 20.  
The revised bilateral trade accord was first signed in 1980 and then renewed from time to time.  
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### Oriental Bank fined over suspicious transactions

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday fined Oriental Bank Tk 1 lakh as the bank management did not report some suspicious transactions at one of its branches to the central bank as demanded by law.  
Directing the accused bank to  
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### Petrobangla okays Total's Tullow takeover

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Petrobangla yesterday approved the takeover of Irish company Tullow's oil and gas exploration rights by the French oil giant Total in the offshore blocks 17 and 18.  
However, both the blocks are supposed to be handed over to Petrobangla in April.  
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## ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY Project shelved over nature of financing

**RAFIQ HASAN**  
The initiative to set up 20kilometre elevated expressway from Kemal Ataturk Avenue to Jatrabari in the capital has been shelved as Dhaka and Bangkok failed to agree on the nature of financing and some other pre-conditions.  
Thailand offered around Tk 1200crore commercial loan for the Tk 1800crore project while Bangladesh wants it as soft loan, sources said.  
The Thai government also tagged a condition for building the expressway with Thai contractor

that the Bangladesh government is unwilling to accept.  
"There has been no progress in the initiative to set up the elevated expressway in last one year," a communications ministry official said, adding that there is hardly any hope of progress in the near future as the Thai government has become reluctant on the subject.  
"We are still hopeful despite some setbacks in the initiative," said Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.  
The Thai Exim Bank offered commercial loan with high interest rate instead of soft loan, which is not acceptable to Bangladesh.  
The initiative also suffered following the government's decision to build Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover that would overlap some areas of the elevated expressway.  
The initiative for setting up the elevated expressway was taken during Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Sinwatra's visit to Bangladesh in 2002. The matter was also discussed during the reciprocal visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia next year.  
Thai Exim Bank offered to  
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## Eden in chaos as JCD leaders involved in murky business

**HASAN JAHD TUSHER and KAMRUL HASAN KHAN**  
Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of Eden University College unit have been taking money illegally from students seeking admission to honours first year classes in exchange for arranging their admissions and residential seats on the campus by influencing the college authorities.  
Sources said the leaders of ruling BNP's student wing have been carrying on the shady business in collusion with some teachers, officials and employees of the

*They make money out of hall seats, admission to college*  
college since the BNP-Jamaat alliance government came to power.  
Students who are on the waiting list or failed to qualify for admissions are usually their clients. Some of the qualified freshers also buy the illicit service to avail seats in the dormitories.  
On the night of March 7, JCD leaders captured about 15 rooms in different dormitories kicking out 20 student occupants of those rooms to sell the seats to some freshers in exchange for a handsome amount of money.  
Several hundred students began demonstrating on March 8 demand-  
ing reinstatement of the evicted students to their respective rooms.  
But the principal, Prof Feroza Begum, took a stand in favour of the JCD leaders terming the demonstrating students 'street girls'.  
And now after JCD's attack on the demonstrating students who were blockading the street in front of the college all through Monday night to press home their six-point demand, the principal said some students of the college were engaged in 'dating their boyfriends'  
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### Disaster written on the wall

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Some 954 people of 135 families, all of them stranded Pakistanis, are living amid high risk in two dilapidated Wapda buildings in Mirpur Section 11.  
Last year the authorities announced the building no 4 risky for living.  
A veranda on the first floor of the government-owned four-storey Wapda building no 2 collapsed in July 14 last year leaving seven people injured. After two days, a second floor veranda of the building no 4 fell down. No one, however, was hurt.  
Following the accident, the building no 4 was evacuated upon the order of the Deputy Commissioner (DC). Assuring them of taking necessary steps for rehabilitation, the DC ordered them not to enter the building for living.  
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Workers weaving a sari seen through a wide crack in the ceiling of a Wapda-deserted building in Mirpur in the city. The vulnerable building provides home to at least 79 stranded Pakistani families.

### CTG PORT Private sector should manage economic side

**Says US envoy**  
**UNB, Ctg**  
US Charge d' Affaires Judith Chammas yesterday said initiative should be taken to hand over the management of all government bodies relating to economy, including Chittagong seaport, to private sector for bringing transparency in their operations.  
"There is more scope for increasing investment in Chittagong and the US investors to be encouraged in this regard," she said while speaking before a launch hosted in her honour  
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### Maimed by Bangla Bhai, then killed in 'crossfire'

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**  
"All hopes of our family have been shattered when my father, the main bread-earner, was killed in crossfire after Bangla Bhai left him maimed. My grandfather dropped dead from the heartache of his son's death," said Aziz Master's son Shamim.  
He alleged both Bangla Bhai and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) equally contributed to the tragedy of their family. Shamim has to run a small grocery to feed the family.  
Abdul Aziz, son of former Hamirkutsa Union Parishad chairman Abdul Ahad Ali Sardar, was a teacher at Konabaria Government Primary School.  
A day after the 1991 Union

Parishad elections, in which Sardar was defeated to Mohammad Ali Khamaru, Mohammad's son Mahtab confined him in a house in Talgharia Bazar to extort election-eering costs.  
Aziz with the help of police rescued his father from the grip of Mahtab, who sources said was a top outlaw.  
In September 1998, Mahtab defected from outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party following a dispute with PBCP leader Fartul [now behind the bars]. Subsequently, outlaws killed Mahtab's brothers Mamtaz and Mostafa.  
To avenge Mamtaz's death, Mahtab and his group attacked  
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### Militants found teenagers easy to brainwash

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**  
Leaders of Islamist militant outfits used to recruit adolescent boys and train them up as die-hard cadres finding them easy to motivate.  
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Prayer Timing		
March 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-14	6-18
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

