



Airports getting ready for more flyers, planes

Govt spending Tk 32,605cr on 8 airfields to meet growing demand

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government is spending around Tk 32,605 crore to upgrade the eight commercial airports in the country and these facilities may start delivering dividends from as soon as this October.

The amount being spent is more than the cost of the Padma Bridge. The work involves constructing a third terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), laying the country's longest runway in Cox's Bazar, expanding and strengthening the runways at six airports, increasing the cargo handling capacities, and improving basic amenities.

These should result in improved service and capacity for domestic and international air traffic and passengers.

The country's airports, including the HSIA, have been struggling to provide the service the flyers expect. They have been complaining about sub-par ground handling and other services.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman told The Daily Star that the eight airports were being upgraded under 15 projects.

The biggest project by far is the third terminal at HSIA being built for Tk 21,399 crore. Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) is funding 70 percent of the cost.

Adding 1,700 feet to the Cox's Bazar Airport's 9,000 feet runway for Tk 1,568 crore is another major project. Once complete, the airport will be able to handle aircraft like the Boeing 777s.

Mafidur said at least seven of the projects, including the third terminal air traffic management system at the HSIA, development of Cox's Bazar Airport, reinforcement of the runway and taxiways of Sylhet airport, and capacity building of CAAB are set to be complete by the year-end.

Aviation expert ATM Nazrul Islam said improved capacity and infrastructure facilities at the airports are necessary to tackle the growing air traffic.

He said in 1991, the number of passengers on domestic routes was around three lakh which has now increased to 25 lakh. For international routes, the number has increased from 11 lakh to 86 lakh.

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However CAAB should also plan to install approach light systems and instrument landing systems to facilitate landings at night and during poor visibility in some airports.

THIRD TERMINAL AT HSIA

- ✓ Area: 2.30 lakh square meters
- ✓ Project cost Tk 21,399 crore
- ✓ 70% work completed
- ✓ Opening expected in October

COX'S BAZAR AIRPORT

- ✓ Existing 9,000ft runway to be extended by another 1,700ft
- ✓ Project cost Tk 1,568 crore
- ✓ Expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

SHAH AMANAT INT'L AIRPORT

- ✓ Runway and taxiway enhancement
- ✓ 80% work completed
- ✓ Project cost Tk 540.52 crore



OSMANI INT'L AIRPORT

- ✓ Improvement of load-bearing capacity of runway and taxiways

- ✓ Improving passenger and cargo handling capacity

- ✓ Project cost Tk 2,309 crore

- ✓ Work yet to begin due to faulty design

SAIDPUR AIRPORT

- ✓ Revamping terminal building to increase its capacity

- ✓ A new cargo building, an operations building, taxiways, and a control tower

- ✓ Project is nearing completion

OTHER AIRPORTS

- ✓ Runway of Barishal airport being extended at a cost of Tk 370 crore

- ✓ Rajshahi airport terminal building being expanded at a cost of Tk 76 crore

- ✓ Jashore airport terminal building also being expanded



Accept our demands, avoid chaos before polls

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government will have to accept the demands of the opposition parties if it wants to avoid violence and conflict ahead of the next general election.

He made the remark during a press briefing at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office after a meeting with the liaison committee of Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote.

"If the government wants to avoid conflict and move forward, then the first thing it needs to do is to meet the demands of the opposition parties."

The BNP leader said their party has long been urging the government to step down and take steps for talks on the polls-time caretaker government to ensure a credible national election in the country.

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader asked if

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'The House in decline'

Some lawmakers say during JS discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The standard of the Jatiya Sangsad is declining continuously and its character is changing also. If the House is to be made the centre for all activities, the people's sorrows and sufferings have to be discussed there.

Lawmakers from the Jatiya Party, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) said this in parliament yesterday while taking part in the discussion on a proposal.

Workers Party and the JSD are components of the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday placed the proposal in the House, which is now in a special session on the occasion of its golden jubilee.

Taking part in the discussion, the MPs also said it is necessary to assess how much

the Jatiya Sangsad has been able to hold the government accountable.

However, AL lawmakers highly lauded the PM for advancing the country towards development and prosperity.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers Party, said, "Father of the Nation Bangabandhu had said that we will form such a parliament which might be a learning lesson for others. But unfortunately, we are seeing that the standard of our parliament has been declining continuously over the last few years."

Citing a study on a national parliament, Menon said it showed that in a one-hour speech in parliament, people's issues are discussed for three minutes while the rest of the time is spent on talking about the lawmaker himself, his party and the leader of his party.

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BANDARBAN SHOOTOUT

All 8 victims from Bawm community

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

All eight people, killed in a "shootout" between two armed groups in Bandarban's Rowangchhari on Thursday night, belong to the Bawm community.

Six of them were from Zurvarawng village, one from Raunin Para and another from Pangkhyang Para, a leader of Bawm Social Council (BSC), seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bandarban police, on the other hand, said they were yet to identify the dead.

Abdul Mannan, officer-in-charge of Rowangchhari Police Station, said the United People's Democratic Front (Democratic) and Kuki-Chin National Army, the military wing of Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), were engaged in the gunfight on Thursday night to establish supremacy in the hills of Khamtang Para and nearby areas.

On information, police recovered the eight bullet-ridden bodies near the Ruma-Rowangchhari link road around 12:30pm on Friday.

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BANGABAZAR FIRE

Traders want support to get back on their feet



DIPAN NANDY

Bangabazar shop owners are looking forward to today's meeting between their association and the city corporation in which decisions will be made about how the shop owners will run their businesses in a makeshift arrangement before Eid.

The meeting will also decide on compensation for the thousands of traders who lost everything in the April 4 fire.

The traders want to start over and want to know what assistance the government will provide.

"We had expected a brisk business ahead of the Eid. But the fire ruined everything," said trader Rakib Uddin.

Like Rakib, around 3,000 traders

want to start the business on the ground where the three-storey Bangabazar Shopping Complex stood.

Representatives of Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association are to sit with Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh.

Dhaka district administration is making a list of affected traders. A long queue of shop owners was seen at the information centre of the administration yesterday.

Names of the shops and shop owners, details of the NID cards and trade licences, and business cards were being recorded at the centre.

Those who lost their trade licences to the fire brought their NID and business cards.

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