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OPERATING HSIA 3RD TERMINAL

# Japanese firm tipped to get the job

RASHIDUL HASAN

A Japanese company is likely to get the job of operating the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), which includes ground and cargo handling.

However, administrative, security, immigration, and customs services will be provided by officials and employees of the government agencies concerned.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has recently appointed Japanese consulting firm Nippon Koei to determine how an operating company would run the airport, how profits and expenditures would be shared, and who would be responsible for what, sources at CAAB said.

Several domestic and foreign companies have shown interest in operating the third terminal.

The Japanese company has already submitted a proposal for this and a meeting was recently held at the Prime Minister's Office to discuss the proposal.

Sources at the civil aviation ministry said the government is positive about the proposal.

The government in January approved in principle that the third terminal would be operated and maintained under Public-Private Partnership.

CAAB said it runs all airports in the country, including

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The roads in the capital are devoid of the rush of vehicles as many city-dwellers have already left the capital to celebrate Eid outside Dhaka. The photo of the nearly empty Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## PM'S JAPAN VISIT It'll elevate Dhaka-Tokyo ties to 'new stage'

Says Japanese envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori has said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to Japan should be one of the historic moments in the two countries' bilateral relationship.

"This visit is taking place after two postponements. That's why I myself have big expectations. I do expect that we will have very meaningful and tangible results," he told UNB in an interview at his residence.

He said the bilateral relationship should be elevated to a new stage through widening scopes for collaboration and cooperation.

The envoy said in terms of economic relations

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## CHARITY DISTRIBUTION 85 killed in Yemen stampede Hundreds hurt; three detained

AFP, Sanaa

At least 85 people were killed and hundreds injured in a crush at a Ramadan cash handout in Yemen early yesterday, as the impoverished country suffered one of its worst tragedies just as optimism was growing over its bitter civil war.

Three people were detained over the incident in Sanaa, Yemen's rebel-held capital, after large crowds gathered at a school to receive gifts of 5,000 rial (about \$8) for the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Harrowing footage screened by the Iran-backed Huthi rebels' Al Masirah TV showed a tightly packed crowd screaming and shoving, unable to move, while others attempted to haul stricken people out of the crush.

Other shots showed dead bodies on the ground as the panic continued. Piles of abandoned sandals, clothing and a crutch littered the scene.

At least "85 were killed and more than 322 were injured", a Huthi security official told AFP on condition of anonymity, adding that around 50 were in a serious condition.

"Women and children were among the dead," the official said. A health official confirmed the toll.

The incident comes just ahead of Eid al-Fitr, and punctures a buoyant mood over the war in the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country, following peace talks and an exchange of nearly 1,000 prisoners last week.

Eyewitnesses said gunfire sparked a stampede after crowds gathered at the school, in Sanaa's historic Bab Al-Yemen district, to receive the handouts from a businessman. AFP could not verify the reports of gunfire.

The head of the Huthis' Supreme Revolutionary Committee, Mohamed Ali al-Huthi, blamed "overcrowding", saying that people were packed in a narrow street leading to the school's back entrance.

Once the gates opened, the crowd streamed into a tight staircase leading to the courtyard where the distribution was taking place.

"People flocked in a huge way, the gate opened, and with the large numbers, the stampede happened."

The Huthis' political chief Mahdi al-Mashat said a committee had been formed to investigate, and a Huthi security official said three people had been detained on suspicion of involvement and an investigation was underway.

## STAY ON CONVICTION Indian court rejects Rahul Gandhi's plea

AFP, Ahmedabad

An Indian court yesterday rejected a plea by top opposition figure Rahul Gandhi for a stay on a defamation conviction that prompted his expulsion from parliament last month.

Gandhi, 52, who was sentenced to two years imprisonment for remarks he made in 2019 seen as insulting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and those sharing his surname, had been looking to overturn the conviction before national elections due next year.

Modi's government is widely accused of using defamation law to silence critics.

The case in the premier's home state of Gujarat is one of several lodged in recent years against Gandhi, who is Modi's chief opponent and the foremost member of the opposition Congress party.

The judge in yesterday's hearing rejected Gandhi's plea for a stay, Congress member

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### STAR REPORT

Eight people, including four of a family, were killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a CNG-run three-wheeler in Munshiganj and Dinaipur yesterday.

Four people, including two children, were killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a CNG-run three-wheeler in Dinaipur's Chirirbandar upazila yesterday morning.

The dead are Uttam Roy, 40, and his wife Pallavi Roy, 32, and their two children. Names of the children, aged between 10 and 12, could not be known immediately, said Bazlur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Chirirbandar Police Station.

Quoting locals and eyewitnesses, the OC said a Phulbari-bound bus of Keya Paribahan collided head-on with a Dinaipur-bound CNG-run three-wheeler in Shibpur area on Dinaipur-Phulbari highway around 10:30am.

The two children died on the spot, said the OC, adding that four other injured, including the three-wheeler driver, were taken to Dinaipur M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital.

The parents died at the hospital.

Meanwhile, at least four people were killed and 19 others hurt as a bus hit a stationary truck in Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila yesterday.

The accident took place on Dhaka-Mawa



highway around 9:00am, said Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman Al Mamun, superintendent of Munshiganj police.

Three of the dead are Hajera Begum, 50, Saiful Islam, 30, and Arif, 23. The other could not be identified immediately.

Hajera and Saiful died on the spot while the rest breathed their last on the way to hospitals.

Four of the injured were referred to Dhaka for treatment.

The Shariatpur-bound bus of Padma Travels hit the truck that had broken down on the fast lane, said Molla Zakir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Hasrana Highway Police Station.

Traffic on the highway was disrupted for around an hour following the accident, said SP Mamun.

In most years, there is an increase in road accidents and casualties during Eid vacations, when a large number of people from the capital travel to their home districts.

According to data from the Road Safety Foundation, at least 376 people died and 1,500 were injured in road accidents over 14 days during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays in 2022.

According to another road safety organisation, Jatri Kalyan Samity, the numbers were 418 people dead and 844 injured in the 15 days.



**THE FLYING RAINBOW**  
An Indian Pitta resting on a fallen tree branch in Dhaka. Native to the Indian subcontinent, the Indian Pitta gets its name from the Telugu word "pitta", meaning "small bird". It is sometimes also referred to as "aaru mani kuruvi", meaning "6'o clock bird", as its calls can be heard at both 6:00am and 6:00pm. Though very colourful, this bird is very shy and remains hidden in the undergrowth of trees, and hunts for food, mainly insects, on the forest floor. Solitary in nature, an Indian Pitta will only associate with others of its kind during breeding season or migration!

PHOTO: ADNAN HOSSAIN

## New 'pristine' coral reef found in Galapagos

CNN ONLINE

A scientific expedition has discovered a previously unknown coral reef with abundant marine life off Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, the country's environment ministry said.

"A deepwater scientific expedition has found the first totally pristine coral reef, approximately two kilometres (1.2 miles) long, at 400 metres (deep), on the summit of a submarine mountain," Environment Minister Jose Davalos said on Twitter.

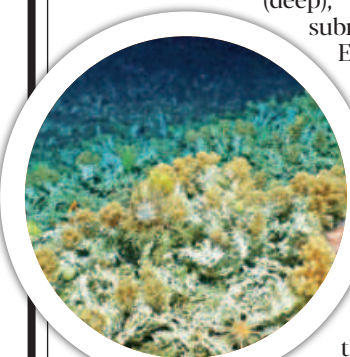
"Galapagos surprises us again."

Scientists had believed that the only Galapagos reef to survive El Nino weather in 1982 and 1983 was one called the Wellington reef, along the coast of Darwin Island, but the new discovery shows other coral has persisted, the ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The reef has more than 50 percent living coral.

"This is very important at a global level because many deepwater systems are degraded," said Stuart Banks, senior marine researcher at the Charles Darwin Foundation, who participated in the expedition. The coral is several thousand years old at least, he added.

The South American country last year expanded the Galapagos marine reserve by 60,000 square kilometres (23,166 square miles), an extension of the 138,000 square kilometres already in place, to protect endangered migratory species between the Galapagos and the Cocos Island in Costa Rica.



## FIRST TEST FLIGHT SpaceX Starship, world's biggest rocket, explodes

AFP, Starbase

SpaceX's Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, exploded yesterday during the first test flight of the spacecraft designed to send astronauts to the Moon, Mars and beyond.

The gigantic rocket successfully blasted off at 8:33am Central Time (1333 GMT) from Starbase, the private SpaceX spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas.

The Starship capsule had been scheduled to separate from the first-stage rocket booster three minutes into the uncrewed flight but separation failed to occur and the rocket blew up.

Despite the failure to complete the full flight test, SpaceX declared it a success.

"With a test like this, success comes from what we learn ...," SpaceX tweeted.

Starship consists of a 164-foot tall spacecraft designed to carry crew and cargo that sits atop a 230-foot tall first-stage Super Heavy booster rocket.

The US space agency Nasa has picked the Starship spacecraft to ferry astronauts to the Moon in late 2025 -- a mission known as Artemis III -- for the first time since the Apollo programme ended in 1972.