
"There's been a little bit of movement and that's good. The fundamentals remain the same: Iran can never have a nuclear weapon."
US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** on US-Iran talks

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Debt clock ticks on Dhaka airport terminal

Tk 2,200cr first-year repayment to entirely consume CAAB's typical annual profit

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) stares into a financial squeeze as it prepares to begin hefty loan repayments next month for the Dhaka airport's third terminal -- a facility unlikely to generate revenue before early 2027.

Originally scheduled to begin repayments in 2023, CAAB secured a three-year deferral. Now, the bill has arrived.

Against a Japanese loan of approximately Tk 17,000 crore, CAAB must pay Tk 1,200 crore in June and another Tk 1,000 crore in December, according to SM Lablur Rahman, member (administration) at CAAB.

This Tk 2,200 crore first-year repayment will almost entirely consume the authority's typical annual profit. While the annual instalment will drop to around Tk 1,000 crore after two years and continue until 2056, the immediate financial strain is acute.

Officials warn that CAAB will have to dip into its savings to fund regular operations and development. There are concerns that this could interrupt crucial nationwide airport maintenance, safety upgrades, and the procurement of navigation and fire safety equipment.

CAAB will pay the loan instalments to the finance ministry which will then disburse the money to the Japanese authorities, said Lablur.

The financial bind highlights a broader issue: the mismatch between the pace of incurring foreign debt and the speed at which those projects become productive.

Despite being 99 percent complete, the terminal missed its 2024 operational target. The primary hurdle is an unresolved disagreement over management and revenue sharing between CAAB and a Japanese consortium comprising Japan Airport Terminal Company, Sumitomo Corporation, Nippon Koei, and Narita International Airport Corporation.

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THIRD TERMINAL

- Built by Aviation Dhaka Consortium
- Building cost Tk **21,300**cr
- Soft inauguration Oct 2023
- Floor space **230,000**sqm
- **115** check-in counters
- **66** departure, **59** arrival, three VIP desks

KEY ISSUES

TOTAL LOAN TK 17,000CR

Loan repayment starts next month, will continue till 2056

- CAAB has to pay Tk **1,200**cr in June, another Tk **1,000**cr in Dec
- CAAB, Japanese consortium yet to reach deal on management, revenue sharing
- 2024 launch target missed though **99**% work was done
- Deal signing, test run may take more than a year

RAMISA MURDER

'We want a safe place for our children'

Call for justice grows louder as protests continue for fourth day

STAR REPORT

Protests continued for the fourth consecutive day in Dhaka and elsewhere yesterday as the outcry for justice over the brutal rape and murder of eight-year-old Ramisa grew louder.

Students, local residents, and members of different social and cultural organisations formed human chains, held rallies, and blocked roads in the capital and other parts of the country, with many demanding capital punishment for the accused.

Meanwhile, Ramisa's father, Abdul Hannan Mollah, yesterday said he believed justice would be served, citing assurances from the prime minister.

"The prime minister told me he had come to our Pallabi home as the father of a daughter and as an elder brother. I have 100 percent faith in the love he showed, his tears, and his assurance that I will get justice for my daughter's murder. I believe we will get a fair and speedy trial," he told local reporters in front of the family graveyard at his ancestral home in Shialdi village of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan upazila.

Earlier in the day, he left Dhaka to attend Ramisa's khulkhani.

Ramisa, a Class-II student, was killed and beheaded. Her neighbour Sohel Rana was later arrested and charged with rape and murder. The accused has given a confessional statement before a magistrate.

The Dhaka Bar Association announced that it would not provide any legal assistance to the accused in the Ramisa murder case. The decision was made at a virtual meeting of the association's executive

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Govt to pull out of $5.5b IMF loan deal

Talks underway for new 3-4 year programme worth up to $6b

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has decided to exit the existing $5.5 billion loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and move toward negotiating a new arrangement instead.

The IMF also agreed to hold formal talks on the fresh loan after the decision was conveyed during a virtual meeting on Thursday evening between Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and IMF Deputy Managing Director Nigel Clarke.

Officials from both sides joined the meeting, including Finance Secretary Khairuzzaman Mozumder and Bangladesh Bank Governor Md Mostaqur Rahman.

According to finance ministry officials, the government is considering a fresh three- to four-year programme worth $5 billion to $6 billion.

A formal letter will be sent to the IMF within the next few days, a senior finance ministry official told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

He said an IMF mission is expected to visit Bangladesh in July or August to discuss the reform agenda and determine the final size of the programme.

Once Bangladesh formally exits the current arrangement, any undisbursed amount will be returned. Officials said the size of the new package would depend on Bangladesh's IMF quota and the facilities the government seeks to access.

"How much Bangladesh can draw will be known after calculations," one official said.

Officials said the government was confident the IMF would issue "comfort letters" -- written assurances that Bangladesh remains eligible for lending -- based on the spirit of the ongoing discussions.

The IMF was yet to respond to requests for comments on the matter via WhatsApp messages.

Finance ministry officials said the government had reservations about existing programme from the outset, partly because it was initiated under AL regime and because many conditions are difficult to implement under current economic conditions.

In January 2023, the IMF approved $4.5 billion for Bangladesh under three facilities: the Extended Credit Facility (ECF), Extended Fund Facility (EFF), and Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). The package was expanded by $800 million in May last year under the

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Rab man stabbed to death by 'drug trader' in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

A Rab member in plainclothes was killed after being stabbed in the chest, reportedly while trying to stop a suspected drug trader in Sylhet yesterday.

The suspect, Asadul Alam Bappy, was later arrested after allegedly taking a two-year-old child hostage while attempting to flee, police said.

Emon

The victim, Emon Acharya, hailed from Hathazari in Chattogram and served with Rab-9, said Manzurul Alam, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

The incident took place around noon in the Topkhana area when a team from Kotwali Police Station was chasing several suspected drug traders.

Citing police, the Prothom Alo reported that Emon was taking a walk through the area when he stepped forward and caught hold of Asadul after noticing the chase.

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TOTAL 94 VULNERABLE LOCATIONS

25 on Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur highway	**25** on Dhaka-CTG highway	**21** on Dhaka-Sylhet highway	**8** on CTG-Cox's Bazar highway	**7** on Dhaka-Aricha highway	**7** on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway	**1** on Dhaka-Barishal highway

REASONS FOR VULNERABILITY

Ongoing flyover, overpass, expressway construction sites	Damaged road sections	Bridge approach roads	Toll plazas	Bus terminals	Industrial zones	Markets and U-turns

Four Dhaka exits raise Eid travel fears

Highway police identifies 94 choke points across country

SHARIFUL ISLAM *and* SHAMIMA RITA

With four major entry and exit points of the capital already battered by ongoing construction work and incessant rain, transport operators and commuters fear the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha exodus could trigger severe traffic congestion.

Unless immediate temporary repairs are carried out at these key gateways connecting Dhaka with the northern, eastern and south-eastern districts, millions of holidaymakers may face prolonged suffering on the road, while the smooth movement of cattle-laden trucks into the capital could also be seriously hampered.

MAJOR CHOKE POINTS

1. Areas around Baipail intersection
2. Kanchan Bridge approach road
3. Jatramura near Kanchpur Bridge
4. Elenga bus stand in Tangail

These four points are among 94 congestion-prone and high-risk locations identified by the Highway Police across seven major national highways, based on field reports and photographic evidence submitted by its personnel nationwide.

The most vulnerable stretches include Baipail, the Kanchan Bridge approach roads and parts of the Asian Highway, the Jatramura area near Kachpur Bridge under the SASEC project, and the Elenga bus stand area on the Dhaka–Tangail highway.

According to police sources, concerns over deteriorating road conditions were raised at meetings with the Road Transport and Highways Division on May 11 and the home ministry the following day.

The assessment by the Highway police identified 25 vulnerable

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