



CAAB expenses soar on loan repayment

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh's (CAAB) expenditure jumped 26.5 percent in the last fiscal year, largely due to hefty loan repayments for Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's third terminal.

Meanwhile, its income grew by only 2.4 percent as the long-delayed facility remained unopened and unable to generate the expected revenue.

CAAB's spending rose by Tk 680.18 crore to Tk 3,242.76 crore in FY2025-26 from Tk 2,562.58 crore a year earlier, according to figures presented at the second meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on Sunday.

In contrast, its income increased by just Tk 92.74 crore, reaching Tk 3,990.74 crore from Tk 3,898 crore in the previous fiscal year.

The authority repaid Tk 1,150.38 crore in loans during the fiscal year, compared with no loan repayments a year earlier.

Former CAAB chairman M Mafidur Rahman said the delayed opening of the terminal likely prevented the authority from achieving the substantial revenue growth it had anticipated from increased passenger and aviation-related activities.

CAAB had previously expected its annual revenue to exceed Tk 5,000 crore once the third terminal became operational, he said.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat had earlier said CAAB was facing financial pressure as it had to repay loans taken for the third terminal from revenue generated by existing terminals and other aviation activities, although the new facility had yet to become operational.

Speaking to journalists recently, he said the authority had already repaid Tk 1,100 crore from its earnings and would have to pay another Tk 900 crore in December.

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Police transport seized battery-powered rickshaws to dumping yards after confiscating them for operating on main roads in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area yesterday. Meanwhile, Dhaka South City Corporation has launched a registration drive for e-rickshaws, aiming to ease traffic congestion and improve road safety. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Cancel dealerships for fertiliser irregularities

Agriculture minister directs officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fertiliser dealerships would be cancelled if irregularities were found in distribution and management, while officials involved would face departmental action, said Agriculture Minister Mohammed Aminur Rashid yesterday.

Speaking at a meeting on fertiliser supply for the upcoming Rabi season at the agriculture ministry, he said licences of newly appointed dealers would be cancelled if they were found involved in irregularities, corruption or harassment of farmers.

He directed officials to determine dealership areas based on the amount of agricultural land, number of farmers and cropping intensity.

Fertiliser must be sold at government-fixed prices, with price lists and stock information displayed at every dealership, he said.

He also ordered regular drives and mobile courts to prevent artificial shortages, overcharging, hoarding and cross-border smuggling.

The minister instructed officials to

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HSC RESULT SHOCK

Deep urban-rural divide laid bare

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Students in major urban education centres have considerably outperformed their counterparts in many outlying districts in terms of pass rates and GPA-5 results in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

While the overall pass rate under the nine general education boards, which used identical question papers for the first time this year, was 51.62 percent, it reached 79.33 percent in Dhaka metropolis and 66.20 percent in Chattogram metropolis.

In Rajshahi and Sylhet districts, the rates were 55.33 and 57.62 percent respectively.

By contrast, five outlying districts under the same boards -- Manikganj,

Dhaka metropolis produced 13,482 of the 35,948 GPA-5 achievers under the nine general boards, or 37.5 percent, despite accounting for only 10.6 percent of examinees.

Khagrachhari, Naogaon, Jhalakathi and Moulvibazar -- recorded pass rates between 29.85 and 43.84 percent.

The findings point to a structural divide in educational opportunity, said M Niaz Asadullah, professor of economics at Dhaka University.

Dhaka's concentration of top grades is consistent with its advantages in coaching, private tuition, academic resources and strong peer groups, he said.

The Daily Star found a gap of 41 percentage points between Dhaka metropolis and Manikganj, both under Dhaka Board.

In the capital's metropolitan area, 88,154 of 1,11,119 examinees passed, compared with 3,915 of 10,234 in Manikganj. Their pass rates were 79.33 percent and 38.25 percent respectively.

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F1 crowns its youngest king

AFP, *Mexico City*

Twenty-year-old Kimi Antonelli ripped up the record books to become the youngest Formula One champion yesterday in Mexico, emphasising his domination by



collecting the title with four races still scheduled for the season.

The young Italian finished third at the Mexico City Grand Prix, following two great champions Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton across the line, to put himself clear of Mercedes teammate George Russell and seven-time world champion Hamilton, the only ones who might possibly catch him.

The fresh-faced prodigy, who was in tears as he crossed the line, has brought a breath of fresh air to the paddock, which he has completely won over with his performances and personality, as he became the first Italian to win the title since

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ANALYSIS

What to make of the US midterms

Democrats eye control of Congress as Republicans face uphill battle

TANIM AHMED

The House of Representatives, or just the House, goes to the polls every two years, which is also when a third of Senate, the upper house, is up for election. Every four years, this election also coincides with the presidential election. This November will also see the election of 36 governors.



Most polls put the Democrats at a significant lead in both the 435-seat House and the 100-seat Senate. Even the most conservative polls put Democrats comfortably ahead of the Republicans. For instance, the NYTimes poll was the most optimistic which had Democrats leading the Republicans by 11 points at 52%-41%, when Fox had Democrats leading by 9 points at 54%-45%.

If these polls are anything to go by, Republicans are set to lose both chambers of parliament, which would make President Donald Trump's life difficult, but not so much that it would be impossible for him to pursue his agenda.

Just as Trump could still use his veto to shoot down laws passed by the Congress and presidential executive powers to bypass much of the Congressional roadblocks, so could an adversarial House block crucial bills and the Senate refuse to confirm his nominees for judges and other executive offices.

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A person throws trash cans into a fire outside the International High School Montebello in Lille, northern France, yesterday, during nationwide protests demanding better school conditions. PHOTO: **AFP**

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

'Father, please pray for me'

Gopalganj man's last words before reported death in drone attack

SHAHRIAR HOSSAIN AVI

The last time 24-year-old Roni Fakir spoke to his family over the phone around 1:00pm Bangladesh time on Thursday, he said it was extremely cold in Russia and drone attacks were taking place all around him.

"Father, please pray for me," he said.

By evening, his family received news that he had been killed in a drone attack while fighting in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Roni, from Sitarkul village in Borashi union of Gopalganj Sadar upazila, travelled to Russia on May 7 with two other young men from the district through Jabal-e-Nur International Ltd, an agency based in Dhaka's Khilkhet.

Their families said the three were promised high-paying jobs at a company but were allegedly handed over to the



Roni Fakir

Russian military and sent to fight in the war.

Roni's father, Nur Islam Fakir, said a Bangladeshi man named Al Amin, who was with his son, called around the time of Isha prayers on Thursday to inform him of the death.

"I paid Tk 10.5 lakh to send my son there. After reaching Russia, he was

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