

## Total flight suspension in BD sends wrong message to world

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Dhaka: The government is now under heavy fire for shutting down air services to and from Bangladesh. The decision has been termed as "injudicious" by many and demanded its immediate withdrawal for the greater interest of the country.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) from April 14 is going to suspend scheduled international passenger flights to and from Bangladesh till April 20, apart from special or chartered flights.

The local aviation industry as well as airline service seekers have strongly criticized the CAAB decision and described it as highly injudicious. They think that this unnecessary total ban has no parallel in the world and going to harm the interest of the country.

Since the government only suspended public transport on the roads while allowing private transport to continue as well as garments and other industries to run amid the [strict lockdown](#), there is no point in halting flight operations with the baseless excuse of "passengers cannot reach airports in the country due to unavailability of transport services". The passengers can surely manage private transport services on their own to reach their respective airports to catch their flights.

Also, incoming travelers were not posing a risk in regards to the spread of the [coronavirus](#) in the first place, because all were having to quarantine for 14 days anyway. And stopping outbound travel from the country in the name of curbing the virus spread does not sound sensible as outbound passengers would depart the country and leave for a foreign destination posing no risk for Bangladesh.

In addition to aviation and airline industries, expatriate workers—the big foreign exchange earners for the country—are going to be losers as well.

Bangladesh exports plenty of manpower to Middle Eastern countries who in return send millions of remittance back to the country, contributing greatly to its economy.

Thus, the way the government has prioritized the garments sector and other industries and allowed them to run even amid the strict lockdown, the same was expected for civil aviation as the movement of the labor market has now been halted.

This might lead to Bangladesh having a bad reputation on the global stage. The workers might lose their jobs and countries might look elsewhere for recruiting labor – this poses a significant risk to Bangladesh's economy as we could lose a sector that used to earn millions every year.

The Middle East job market, which was gradually opening for Bangladesh workers, will get a big hit if the ban on air traffic continues. According to a market source, thousands of people have booked their air passage and hotel room for quarantine in Qatar and Oman. So canceling all these would be a great hassle for all parties concerned.

They argued that if minimize the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is the reason for the CAAB decision, then the restriction on incoming air traffic would have been a much better option. Departing flights leaving with passengers, can no way be a threat in any form.

Market insiders fear that if a total flight ban is implemented then the expatriate labor market will collapse, leaving hundreds and thousands of workers in great distress with heavy loss of money.

Describing the government and CAAB decision as "suicidal", the market insiders have demanded reconsideration of the whole question.

Moreover, when the government has allowed industrial and other commercials to continue, why the total ban on air services? There is hardly any justification.