

USD 32m of airline revenues from BD blocked for repatriation

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Dhaka: Bangladesh's aviation sector is among several in the world facing financial strain as USD 32 million in airline revenues remains blocked for repatriation, according to a new report released by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The blocked funds — generated from ticket sales, cargo, and other airline operations — are currently trapped for repatriation due to foreign exchange restrictions imposed by governments and central banks, hampering airlines' ability to repatriate earnings.

IATA's December 10, 2025, report reveals that out of USD 1.2 billion in airline funds blocked for repatriation worldwide at the end of October 2025, Bangladesh accounts for USD 32 million, ranking it among the top ten countries contributing to the total shortfall.

The bulk of the blocked funds are held in countries across Africa and the Middle East, which together account for 93 percent of the total, but South Asian nations like Pakistan and Bangladesh are also affected. Airlines argue

that access to their revenues — especially in stable currencies like the US dollar — is critical to cover operational costs, pay international suppliers, and maintain vital air connectivity.

IATA Director General Willie Walsh emphasized that “airlines need reliable access to their revenues in US dollars to keep operations running, pay their bills, and maintain vital air connectivity.” He urged governments to honor their commitments under bilateral air service agreements and remove barriers to repatriating airline funds.

The restrictions cited in the report include burdensome approval procedures, lengthy delays, and limited foreign exchange availability, all of which can hinder airline liquidity. IATA stresses that easing these measures would not only benefit carriers but also support broader economic growth by enhancing international connectivity.

While IATA noted a slight improvement in blocked funds compared to April 2025 (when levels were even higher), the issue remains pressing for many carriers operating in developing markets. The association has launched a dedicated web page to track blocked funds quarterly, promote greater transparency, and encourage policy reforms to resolve the backlog.

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