

IU mega project delayed again despite three extensions

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A Tk 537.07 crore mega infrastructure development project of Islamic University in Kushtia is unlikely to be completed within the latest deadline despite three extensions, prompting the authorities to seek more time.

The project, initially scheduled for completion in December 2022, was extended twice until December 31, 2024. It later received a third extension until June 30, 2026.

However, with progress still incomplete, the university administration is now planning to apply for a fourth extension until December 31, 2027.

Approved in 2018, the project includes construction of nine 10-storey buildings and vertical expansion of 11 existing structures. Planned facilities feature male and female dormitories, academic buildings, residential quarters for teachers and staff, a second administrative building and an additional block for Sheikh Russell Hall.

The expansion works cover several key installations, including academic and administrative buildings, faculty complexes, dormitories, a medical centre, provost quarters, TSCC and the university laboratory school and college. The project also includes installation of deep

tube wells, rainwater harvesting systems, two 500 KVA substations and solar panels.

Officials at the university's engineering office said that although the project was approved in June 2018, physical work began only in July 2021. Construction slowed down significantly after a sharp rise in material costs forced contractors to suspend work on most of the buildings. Work resumed months later following repeated requests from the authorities.

By the end of the original deadline in 2022, overall progress stood at around 32 per cent. It reached nearly 60 per cent by the end of 2024. Currently, overall progress is estimated at about 70 per cent, with several structures nearing completion while others remain unfinished.

Officials attributed the delay to a combination of factors, including lengthy tender procedures, the COVID-19 pandemic, administrative changes and a steep rise in construction material prices.

Contractors claimed they were incurring heavy financial losses as the project was approved under earlier rate schedules, while current costs have increased substantially. They said prices of steel, cement and electrical equipment surged during the project period, affecting work progress. They also cited losses in elevator procurement due to a mismatch between actual costs and approved payments.

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IU superintending engineer M Alimuzzaman Tutul said that some works were at the final stage while others were still pending, particularly finishing works.

'It will not be possible to complete the project within June 2026. We will discuss with the ministry regarding extension,' he said, adding that incomplete structures would not be usable without finishing work.

University authorities have already applied to the ministry seeking an additional one and a half years to complete the remaining work.

They also said that some components, including furniture for academic and administrative buildings, were not included in the original project plan, creating complications at the final stage and requiring revision.

Project director Dr Nawab Ali said that additional time was necessary to complete finishing works.

'We submitted the extension proposal in advance as required. Progress reports are being submitted every 15 days, and an inter-ministerial team is monitoring the project,' he said.

A team from the planning ministry is expected to inspect the project and make recommendations before a final decision on the extension is taken, he added.