

# Fast fashion orders pile up as war stalls planes

Ruma Paul, Alessandro Parodi and Helen Reid  
REUTERS

DHAKA, Bangladesh – Shipments of garments for Zara owner Inditex and other major clothing retailers are stranded at airports in Bangladesh and India, according to three manufacturers, as the war in the Middle East forces airlines such as Emirates and Qatar Airways to cancel flights.

South Asia is a clothes manufacturing powerhouse and fast fashion brands around the world rely on factories in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan for a constant stream of new T-shirts, dresses and jeans.

“Some of my apparel consignments are currently stuck at Dhaka airport,” said Shovon Islam, managing director of manufacturer Sparrow Group, whose European clients include Inditex, M&S, Next, and Primark.

“They were supposed to be flown to the UK via Dubai, but with operations at Dubai airport suspended, we are now in a very difficult position. We’re trying to figure out alternative routes, but none of them are simple or cost-effective,” Islam added.

Most airspace in the Middle East is still closed since the war began Feb. 28, forcing the world’s busiest airport, Dubai, to shut down for several days with airlines including Qatar Airways, Emirates, and Etihad canceling many flights.

Much of South Asia relies on Gulf airlines to send cargo, usually in commercial flights with some cargo-only aircraft, said Frederic Horst, managing director at Trade and Transport Group in Sydney.

More than half of Bangladesh’s air cargo travels via the Gulf, he said, and 41% of India’s, with Emirates and Qatar Airways the most important carriers.

Inditex has 150 suppliers in Bangladesh, 122 in India and 69 in Pakistan, according to its 2023 annual report. Its most recent annual report does not disclose country-specific supplier numbers. The company did not reply to Reuters’ questions about the disruption.



**A worker sorts undergarments at the packing section of a garment factory in Ashulia, Bangladesh. South Asia is a clothes manufacturing powerhouse and fast fashion brands around the world.** FATIMA TUJ JOHORA/REUTERS FILE

tion.

As air capacity has reduced sharply, prices have shot up.

Alexander Nathani, managing partner at Mumbai-based Kira Leder, which produces leather jackets for Inditex and for Austrian retailers Cigno Nero, Fussl and Wiedner, said freight charges to fly his products from Mumbai to Austria have doubled because of the cancellations.

“One consignment in Pakistan is stuck in the factory, and the other consignment from Mumbai is being accepted for Swiss Air,” Nathani said. “Let’s hope they’re also flying and that it all goes.”

Asked about the disruption to shipments from South Asia, Primark, H&M and M&S said the majority of their shipments is made by sea. Next did not immediately reply to Reuters’ questions.

“The suspension of cargo flights due to airspace closures in the Middle East is already disrupting air shipments,” said Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, adding if the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping channel separating Iran from Oman and the UAE, remains closed it will drive up the cost of sea transport, too.

# Have gift cards from closed stores? You could get refund

Samantha Neely  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

From Joann Fabrics to Forever 21, more than 8,100 stores closed across the United States in 2025, according to retail industry analytics firm Coresight Research.

People with unused gift cards from these businesses might wonder what they can then do with those cards.

Warehouse chain Costco recently issued a recall for Synergy restaurant gift cards sold from Oct. 27, 2025, to Jan. 26, 2026. According to FOX Business, the recall is due to Synergy World, a gift and loyalty card company, abruptly shutting down in January after filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection. Thus, the gift cards can no longer be redeemed.

## What happens with a gift card when the business closes?

If a business closes, the Consumer Federation of America provides steps on its website on how people can possibly get their money back:

- **Contact the business:** “Try contacting the city or town hall where the business was located or your secretary of state’s office to get contact information for the business’s owner so you can ask for a refund.”

- **Ask credit or debit card provider to reverse the charge:** “Every credit or debit card company has its own policy, but some may be able to reverse the charge if you (or your friend or relative) purchased the gift card with a credit or debit card. Contact your card provider as soon as possible to request that the charge be reversed.”

- **Contact state or local consumer protection agency:** “If you can’t reach anyone from the business to get a refund, contact a government agency that offers consumer protection services in your state. This will alert the agency to the problem (you are probably not alone) and it may be able to get your money back.”

- **File a proof of claim:** “If the business filed for bankruptcy, you can file a proof of claim with the U.S. Bankruptcy



**Many people still have gift cards for stores and services that have since shut their doors.** JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Court and be added to the list of creditors who are owed money. Keep in mind that filing a proof of claim does not guarantee you’ll get a refund, however. Occasionally, businesses are bought during the bankruptcy process, and there is a chance that gift cards would become redeemable again.”

The Consumer Federation of America notes that if all else fails, gift card owners may want to consider taking legal action to recover their money.

## What if the store hasn’t closed yet?

Possibly. According to Debt.Org, it depends on the store and the reason for the closure.

“When companies file for bankruptcy, they can only continue accepting gift cards if they ask the bankruptcy court for permission and the court authorizes it,” the website says. “So, companies that declare bankruptcy may be less likely to honor gift cards than companies that are going out of business for other reasons.”

Check with a store beforehand to see if a gift card can still be redeemed.

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