

Air Astra approaches Nepal to operate flights on Dhaka-Pokhara route

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Air Astra has requested the concerned authorities of Nepal to allow the airline operate its first international flight services from Dhaka to the hilly nation's popular travel destination Pokhara, according to reports.

The airline has also applied for some fee exemptions including waivers on landing, fuel, turnover tax, parking and navigation charges.

To secure flying rights and exemptions, Air Aistra has approached Nepal's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation as well as its Civil Aviation Authority.

Reports cited Buddhisagar Lamichhane, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, saying, "The company has sought exemptions on various issues. We need to coordinate with the relevant

ministries for this. The proposal for direct flights at Pokhara International Airport is also a good opportunity for us."

If given the approval, the airline will become the sole operator on Dhaka-Pokhara route.

As per reports, Air Astra has applied for four weekly flight operations between Dhaka and Pokhara. Currently, the airline boasts a fleet of three ATR72-600s.

At present, country's flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Nepalese carrier Himalaya Airlines are the only two players serving the Bangladesh-Nepal route. The airlines operate one weekly flight between Dhaka and Kathmandu.

Reports claimed, Pokhara International Airport has not handled any international flight since its establishment in 2023. Hence, Nepalese authorities are reportedly keen to increase international traffic to and from the airport.