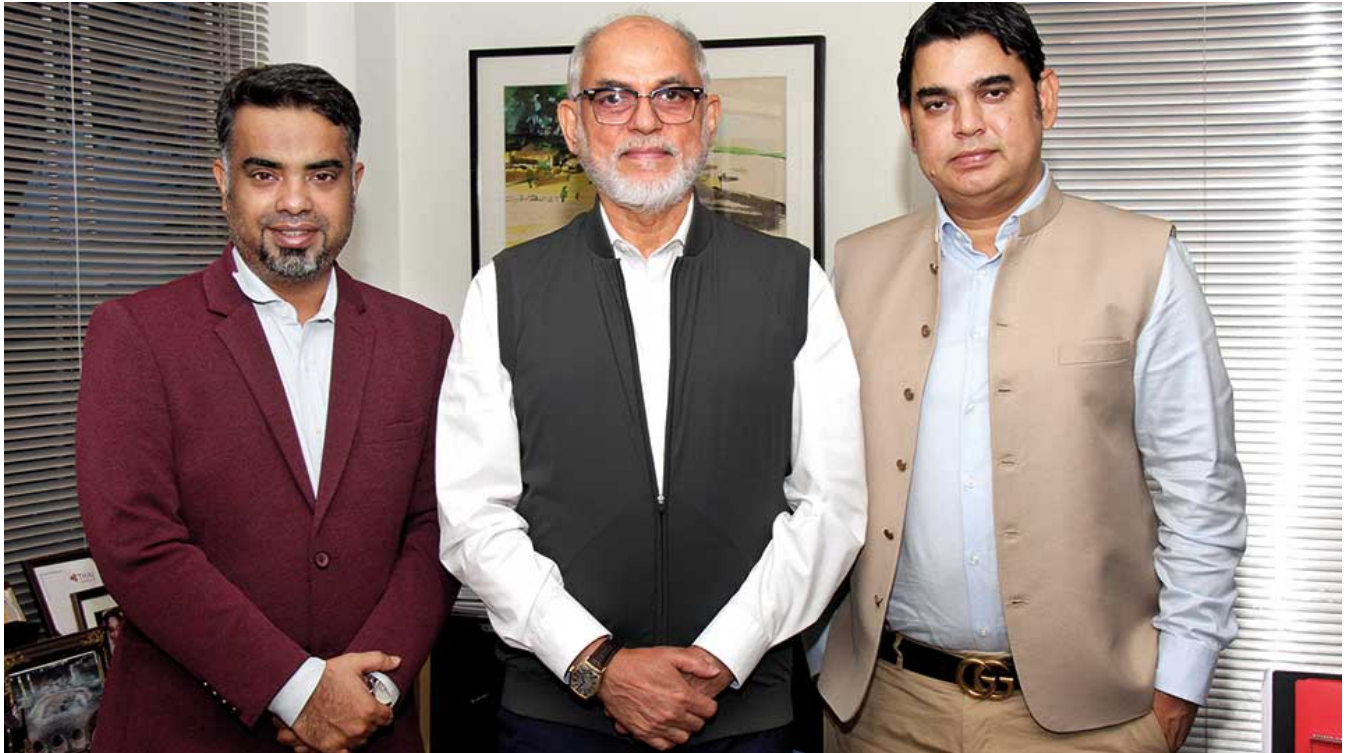


Air China connecting capitals of BD, China for first time ever

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Dhaka : Connectivity is crucial to increase bilateral exchange between two countries. Prioritising the idea, for the first time ever, connectivity between the capitals of Bangladesh and China-Dhaka and Beijing respectively-is going to be established with the latter's flag carrier Air China launching flights to/from Dhaka on July 10.

HBM Lutfur Rahman, Chairman and CEO of Irving Group (GSA of Air China in Bangladesh) said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office in the capital recently.

The airline will be operating four weekly flights on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and Beijing Capital International Airport with Boeing 737 MAX initially.

The move is expected to pave the way for Biman Bangladesh

Airlines to operate flights on the route as well, expressed Lutfur Rahman.

Since China is a key trade partner of Bangladesh, the new connectivity will certainly come in handy for further increase of trade between the two countries, claimed Lutfur.

Plenty of business travellers, leisure tourists and students travel between Dhaka and Beijing. The demand has increased so much over the years that the supply was falling short.



To meet the increasing demand and make up for the lack of supply, Air China decided to tap the highly potential market, claimed the CEO.

The airline is expecting to record full load factor in six months of operations, informed the CEO of the GSA.

Also, Air China will not only serve passengers with point-to-point connectivity but also with plenty of onward connections worldwide like North America, Korea and Japan, among others.

With competitive fares, Air China is aiming to stand out on the route, as another Chinese carrier-China Southern-will also be launching flights between Bangladesh and China shortly, remarked Lutfur.

Asked if the supply will be more than the demand, with more airlines launching flights between Dhaka and Beijing, Lutfur said, the travel market is ever-increasing, leaving fair share for every airline operator.

For instance, 25-30 years ago, when foreign airlines commenced flights to and from Bangladesh, they initially began with only a handful of flights a week, he mentioned.

Now, all those foreign airlines are operating daily flights, even double daily, while Biman Bangladesh Airlines is also increasing its frequencies to keep up with the ever-growing demand, claimed Lutfur, adding, this shows the demand will only increase with time.

Medical tourism from Bangladesh to China is a new avenue that

the latter is interested to tap, informed Lutfur.

Moreover, Air China is expecting a good number of belly cargo transportation on the flights from Beijing to Dhaka.