

BD passengers relieved to travel to Male at less cost, time

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Bangladeshi passengers rejoice as they are now able to visit the popular tourist destination Male in Maldives at less cost and time with the launch of direct flights on Dhaka-Male route by our local carrier, the biggest in the private sector, US-Bangla Airlines.

Currently, three airlines operate flights from Dhaka to Maldives - Sri Lankan Airlines, Maldivian Airlines and US-Bangla Airlines. Of which, Sri Lankan does not operate direct flights, passengers have to transit in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. This takes an additional time and cost of 8-10 hours and BDT 12-15 thousand respectively.

Even though, Maldivian Airlines does operate direct flights on the route, but since it is a foreign airline too, it costs more than flying on our local carrier US-Bangla.

Hence, US-Bangla's Managing Director Abdullah Al Mamun said the airline has reduced the cost of one-way travel on the route to BDT 25,000 from BDT 65,000 per flight. Also, US-Bangla's direct flight on the route allows passengers to travel to and from Maldives in four hours only.

As a result, passenger numbers have been rising on flights of US-Bangla on the route. Of the three airlines operational on the route, Sri Lankan operates daily flights while Maldivian and US-Bangla both fly thrice weekly.

Sources from Dhaka Airport said, every week, 1400 passengers fly on Dhaka-Male route. Of which, US-Bangla carries the highest number of passengers 650 while Maldivian 450 and Sri Lankan 300.

Passengers - tourists, business travellers and migrant workers - are currently preferring US-Bangla to fly to and from Maldives because it costs less time and money. Also, the airline now allows passengers to carry 40 kg luggage, compared to the previous limit of 30 kg.

Rear Admiral Nazmul Hassan, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the Republic of Maldives, said, "With the introduction of direct flights on Dhaka-Male route by US-Bangla, the hard earned money of the Bangladeshi migrant workers in Maldives can now be saved. At the same time, they can now travel more to visit their families back at home."

With the launch of direct flights on the route, tourists are also showing more interest to visit the popular beach destination Maldives now, said Kamrul Islam, General Manager, Public Relations, US-Bangla Airlines. Hence, depending on demand, the airline might increase flight frequency on the route later.

According to the Bangladesh High Commission around 1 lac of 5 lac people living in the Maldives are Bangladeshis.

Direct flight operations have also opened up various possibilities to increase bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Maldives as well, said the High Commissioner.