

BFCC: pioneer in Bangladesh's in-flight catering sector

-A Monitor Special

Date: 01 January, 2024



Dhaka : The standard of the in-flight catering service that Biman Flight Catering Centre (BFCC), the profitable unit of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, provides is one of the top three deciding factors that makes the flag carrier the preferred choice of passengers to fly, especially, in long-haul routes. This is reflected in the BDT 46cr 20 lac record revenue earned in 2022 by BFCC-the highest ever in the centre's history.

Iqbal Ahmed Ali Za, General Manager, BFCC said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at the organisation's premise adjacent to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital.

Established in 1989, BFCC not only serves safe, halal and hygienic delectable food on domestic and international flights but also is in efforts to pioneer in Bangladesh's catering sector with the highest standard in service and hospitality, added the GM.

With 570 line-items, BFCC prepares and delivers 10,000-12,000 meals a day for Biman as well as foreign carriers like Malaysian Airlines and Turkish Airlines. For this purpose, the centre's technology sound and advanced facility including in-house laboratory operates 24 hours round the year. Also, the centre boasts internationally qualified 37 chefs as well as skilled 132 staff with experienced Q/A and Q/C team.

Furthermore, the centre is eyeing an additional USD 90,000-100,000 revenue as it will be serving five more foreign airlines Egypt-Air, Jazeera Airways, Cathay Pacific, Air China and Royal Brunei Airlines from 2024, informed the General Manager.



Chefs and staff preparing in-flight food at BFCC premise

He stressed that BFCC provides 348 gm food in one casserole which is more than the standard 330 gm food served by other airlines in one casserole.

Besides in-flight catering, BFCC also provides 14 airlines with cabin dressing services that yields an additional revenue of BDT 6-7 crore, further mentioned Ali Za.

Other key functions of BFCC includes in-flight items/equipment management, equipment management on domestic and international stations, sky catering outlet service, ground feeding service, executive meeting service, VVIP flight operation, charter flight operation (managing catering agreement with all stations abroad) and organising food preparation and cooking course.

It may be mentioned here that BFCC is the only internationally recognised flight caterer in the country. The centre's international accreditations include ISO 9001-2015 certified by ISOQAR, UK; certifications of ISO 22000: 2018 for food safety management by ISOQAR; and HACCP, WHO and ICQA compliant organisation. This shows that food safety and hygiene are the top priorities of BFCC, said the GM.



Final preparations of in-flight meals underway at BFCC facility

The General Manager of the centre also claimed till now, there has been no incident of food borne illness or any food related complication among

the passengers upon consumption of BFCC's meals.

BFCC develops its own food safety management systems based on the codex Alimentarius, a collection of internationally recognised standards relating to food safety. These are aimed at preventing any food contamination with (micro-) biological, chemical or physical agents. Since such contamination may occur at any point in the food chain, food safety management systems need to holistically integrate all the production processes. One of the measures is based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).



Chefs and staff at BFCC kitchen preparing rice for in-flight meals

Besides, there are 33 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) through which BFCC ensures safe food to air passengers, further claimed the GM.

All hot meals are cooked to the standard temperature and sent to blast chilling to avoid the temperature danger zone (5-degree C to 60-degree C). After blast chilling, foods are stored in cold room below 5-degree C. Eventually, the room temperature is maintained at 15-degree C to avoid temperature abuse.

On time delivery of catering services is another vital feature of BFCC as it is capable of providing any type of food and in-flight entertainment within the shortest period of time, he further expressed.



In-flight meals are being prepared for packaging at BFCC premise

Thanks to such features of BFCC, it has been honoured with "Excellence on Time Performance Award 2016" by Turkish Airlines, "Best Meal Provider in Economy, 2018 in HSIA" and "Partner in Excellence Awards" by British Airways for three consecutive years from 2006-2008, among others.