

Regulator should come forward to support pvt sector's expansion efforts

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Dhaka : The regulatory body of the civil aviation industry of Bangladesh has to come forward with required infrastructure and policy support to facilitate the growth of the private sector airlines of the country.

Kamrul Islam, General Manager-Public Relations, US-Bangla Airlines, said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office in the capital recently.

US-Bangla, the largest private carrier of the country, has been aggressively undertaking expansion efforts to cater to the growing demand of air travel.

However, since the recent mass uprising that began mid-July and the reshuffle of concerned authorities in almost all sectors of the

government that followed, infrastructure development efforts of the aviation industry have been slowed down.

Referring to the launch of the Third Terminal of Dhaka Airport getting delayed, Kamrul mentioned, they were eagerly waiting for the new state-of-the-art terminal, as the airline was planning to serve the growing demand of air travel that would have followed the opening of the Third Terminal.

He expressed his doubts whether the expansion works at other airports of the country would get delayed similarly.

Following the unrest and student protests from the middle of July, sales had been slow initially, however, passenger number has started to pick up again, claimed Kamrul.

However, since India is yet to launch visa services to Bangladeshis fully, passenger numbers on all airlines on the route are starting to plummet, sighed Kamrul.

He urged, the government to quickly resolve these issues that are coming in the way of the country's air travel growth.

He also mentioned, the industry's long-pending demand of certain policy changes, especially regarding the excessive surcharges of the civil aviation authority as well as the monopoly price of jet fuel.

Since reforms are taking place countrywide in all sectors, so should in the civil aviation industry, according to Kamrul.

He stressed, it is high time.

The industry's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product of the country is the lowest in the region, sighed Kamrul.

He urged, the embassies worldwide to dedicatedly make efforts to brand Bangladesh as an attractive destination.

Such efforts should be made to, at least, those citizens who Bangladesh offers Visa on Arrival to, said the General Manager.

About passenger number taking a downturn, Kamrul expressed his optimism that the aviation industry will soon recover from the ongoing slow season.

By the coming winter, Kamrul expects to see an uptick in the passenger numbers on all routes, claimed the General Manager of US-Bangla Airlines.