

## US-Bangla's maiden flight to Dubai takes off today

A Monitor Report

Date: 01 February, 2021



Dhaka : The largest private carrier of the country US-Bangla Airlines launched its six a week passenger services on Dhaka-Dubai-Dhaka route with the maiden flight to the new and popular destination in the Middle East taking off today at 6:30 pm from Dhaka airport.

With this, the carrier marks its efforts to stay committed to the promise of network expansion globally despite pandemic blues. And Dubai as their latest destination, was the obvious choice, mentioned Md Shafiqul Islam, Head of Marketing and Sales of US-Bangla Airlines in an interview with The Bangladesh Monitor.

"Dubai is home to over 10 lac immigrant Bangladeshis. Many of whom cannot make it back to the country at their convenience because of poor flight capacity. With the aim of facilitating them, we have chosen to launch flights on this route (Dhaka-Dubai-Dhaka)."

Also, Dubai is now the only popular tourism destination, inviting tourists to visit the country while others have severe restrictions in place, either temporary travel ban or mandatory quarantine, due to the pandemic.

Thus, many Bangladeshis now seem to be visiting Dubai on holidays for leisure purposes, while many even fly on the route for medical purposes, two segments US-Bangla aims to cater to as well, added the Marketing and Sales head.

Luckily, we can see a reflection of it on the passenger load US-Bangla is getting on the route. All scheduled flights for the first week from Dhaka to Dubai are fully

booked, stated Shafiq. This certainly marks a good load indication on the route, while the one-way flights on the following weeks have a load factor of 70 per cent, based on the bookings made as of now.

However, the return flights from Dubai to Dhaka are going a bit slow, but the world will pick up soon, said Shafiq.

As the carrier is new to the Dubai market, it will take some time to settle over there. Shafiq mentioned, they have not hired a GSA there, rather they are operating all by themselves in Dubai.

"But we are foreseeing to receive satisfactory load on the return flights by the end of this week," Shafiq noted.

Besides, due to the restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic, the airline is having to keep one or two rows at the back vacant for sick patients. Hence, they can only carry 140 passengers on the Boeing 737-800 being operated on the route while the usual capacity of the aircraft is 164.

The B737-800 of the airline operating on the Dhaka-Dubai-Dhaka route can seat passengers in a two-class configuration: 132 in Economy Class and eight in Business.

For Economy Class tickets from Dhaka to Dubai, the minimum one-way fare is BDT 54,999 while the return fare on the route is BDT 73,000. And from Dubai to Dhaka, the minimum one-way fare is AED 1,670 while the return fare is AED 2,753.

For Business Class, the one-way fare is BDT 79,200 and the return fare is BDT 153,526 on Dhaka-Dubai route while on Dubai-Dhaka route, the fares are AED 2,620 and AED 4,453 respectively (including all taxes and surcharges).

Now US-Bangla is operating six days a week flights on the new route. The flight from Dhaka will depart at 6:30 pm on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays and will reach Dubai at 10:00 pm on the same days. The return flight will depart Dubai at 11:30 pm on the same scheduled days and will reach Dhaka at 6:00 am in the following mornings.

On Tuesdays, the flight will start from Dhaka at 5:30 pm and will reach Dubai at 09:00 pm while the return flight will start from Dubai at 10:30 pm and land in Dhaka at 05:00 am. On Wednesdays, the flight will depart Dhaka at 3:55 pm and will reach Dubai at 7:25 pm while the return flight will start from Dubai at 8:55 pm and reach Dhaka at 3:25 am.

To note, all return flights from Dubai will reach Dhaka in the morning. This allows the arriving passengers to conveniently connect to any domestic destination countrywide. For this purpose, passengers can book through tickets on US-Bangla's system from Dubai and elsewhere.

"The airline's strong domestic network provides the arriving passengers with a good connection to all domestic destinations in the country," claimed Shafiq. The airline is now operating 28 flights daily, highest to all the domestic airports from Dhaka with an average load factor of 85-90 per cent. Meaning, the airline has survived the travel downturn in the domestic market caused by the Pandemic and has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The Sales and Marketing head further mentioned the airline's plan to soon start flights to Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Colombo and Male this year. The carrier currently flies to Muscat, Doha, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Kolkata, Chennai and Guangzhou in the global network.

Currently, US-Bangla has the biggest fleet as a private airline with a total of thirteen aircraft, including four Boeing 737-800s, six brand new ATR 72-600s and three DashQ-800s. The airline will further add three more brand new ATR 72-600s to its fleet soon taking the total number of planes to 16.

