

New leadership in Civil Aviation and Tourism undertakes key initiatives

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Shortly after assuming office, the newly appointed Afroza Khanam Rita, Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, and M Rashiduzzaman Millat, State Minister for the same ministry, have begun charting a proactive course to reform Bangladesh's aviation and tourism sectors with a renewed focus on governance, service quality, and passenger experience.

On February 18, both ministers formally took charge of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, meeting senior officials at the ministry and pledging to work closely with stakeholders to modernize the sector and enhance public services.

In her initial days in office, Minister Afroza emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. She highlighted that the government is committed to strengthening governance across all

aviation and tourism operations to ensure passenger interests are protected and services are delivered effectively.

Airport hygiene, passenger comfort

One of the first major directives from the minister came in a progress review meeting on implementation of the Annual Development Program (ADP) for the current fiscal year, where she instructed authorities to launch immediate mosquito control measures and enhance hygiene standards at airports nationwide. This initiative aims to improve passenger comfort and safety, particularly at major hubs like Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

State Minister Millat also drew attention to operational challenges such as the shortage of luggage trolleys - a long-standing passenger grievance - and urged swift procurement of 1,000 new trolleys to reduce delays and improve service quality. Both leaders called for coordinated action to ensure smooth travel experiences without harassment or inconvenience for passengers.

Modernization, strategic vision

Beyond immediate service improvements, Minister Afroza has outlined a broader vision to modernize the aviation sector, noting that authorities will prioritize the full operationalization and qualitative enhancement of airport facilities to match international benchmarks.

She spoke about the government's commitment to passenger convenience and improved management systems in a views-exchange meeting with journalists in Manikganj. She also highlighted plans to address challenges faced by Hajj pilgrims by streamlining flight operations and immigration procedures during peak seasons.

Focus on tourism growth

While aviation reforms are underway, the leadership continues to stress the importance of concurrently boosting the tourism sector. Although specific tourism initiatives have not yet been formally unveiled in public forums, both ministers have reiterated in meetings with senior officials the need for long-term planning and development strategies to make Bangladesh a more attractive destination for both domestic and international travelers.

Early expectations, industry response

Analysts and industry stakeholders have welcomed the ministers' early emphasis on good governance, cleanliness, and passenger welfare, noting that functional and visible improvements at airports can significantly enhance Bangladesh's reputation as a travel destination. Improving basic infrastructure and services - such as reducing baggage handling times and eliminating corruption in ticketing practices - are seen as essential first steps in elevating the country's aviation sector.

However, industry observers also point out that sustained progress will depend on clear policy direction, effective implementation, and ongoing dialogue with private sector partners, airlines, and tourism operators. Sector Jlight that Bangladesh's tourism potential can be unlocked fully only when aviation connectivity, service quality, and destination promotion move in tandem.

Looking ahead

As the new leadership settles into its roles, the dual focus on enhancing passenger services and building long-term tourism capacity marks an active start to their tenure. With immediate directives already in place and reform agendas taking shape, the coming months are expected to reveal further policy measures and sector-specific development plans.

Whether these early initiatives will translate into tangible improvements across airports and travel hubs remains to be seen, but the ministry's renewed emphasis on accountability, hygiene, and coordinated action underscores a more responsive governance approach.