

Bangladesh air freight industry at highest peak after post-covid boom

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : After the post-covid export air cargo boom in 2021, Bangladesh's air freight industry is currently at its peak, as 36 metric tonnes of export air cargo is being transported every month.

Shifa Qadeer, Director and CEO of M&C Aviation Bangladesh, said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at her office in the capital recently.

Of the total supply, M&C Aviation-the Global Sales Agent of four airlines in Bangladesh-transportes a significant number of export air cargo to several destinations worldwide.

Due to the Red Sea crisis and sea freight container capacity limitations, air freight is currently witnessing added pressure, informed Shifa explaining why there is such a boom in air cargo transport at present.

Despite the high demand, there is not enough capacity, sighed Shifa, as there is a 40 per cent gap between supply and demand, which is why every player in the market is planning to charter air freighters.

She further stressed, due to capacity limitations, the freight rates have increased as well. According to her, the current cargo transport rate is three times higher than the regular rate.



Shifa Qadeer, Director & CEO, M&C Aviation BD

The capacity limitations have further resulted in plenty of backlogs at Dhaka Airport, according to the Director and CEO.

Due to these backlogs in Bangladesh, transshipment has become a popular solution to the shippers and buyers, which actually saturates Bangladesh's export revenue and benefits to other countries like India, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia, among others.

To solve this problem, airlines operating to/from Bangladesh need to increase their capacities while authorities have to regulate transshipments.

On a positive note, Shifa expressed her hopes of Bangladesh having a way bigger air cargo industry in the coming days.

Dhaka Airport will be getting a new export cargo terminal once the Third Terminal opens. This will see the expansion of the cargo village as well as the arrival of new airlines and flights. Such developments will increase the capacity of the industry, foresaw Shifa.

According to her, the cargo market will double in the next 3-4 years in terms of revenue and tonnage.

As part of the GSA's further plans, they are eyeing to partner with more new airlines, informed Shifa.

M&C also operates charter freighters during peak seasons. In the days ahead, the GSA is planning to launch regular freighter operations.