

BD air travel market to double in 10 years, result in tremendous fleet expansion for country's airlines

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Dhaka : Boeing forecasts air travel in Bangladesh to double in the next decade, driven by the country's growing population and expanding economy. Through 2032, Bangladesh is expected to achieve an annual economic growth rate of over 5 per cent-double the global average-supporting annual air-traffic growth at nearly 8.5 per cent annually. The impact this growth will have in the aircraft fleet expansion of the country's airlines will be tremendous.

Dave Schulte, Managing Director, Commercial Marketing, Asia Pacific and India, Boeing, said this in an exclusive interview with The Bangladesh Monitor after the aerospace company provided details about the increasing demand and capacity for air travel in Bangladesh at a briefing about its commercial market outlook, a yearly forecast of global and regional airplane demand, at a city hotel on May 10.

"As travel restrictions were relaxed over the past year, capacity growth in Bangladesh has increased by 11 per cent year-over-year," said Dave Schulte, adding, "Led by regional traffic to the Middle East and India, Bangladesh's air travel is forecast to double over the next 10 years."

To meet strong demand in passenger travel and air cargo, Boeing anticipates South Asia's carriers will need more than 2,300 new commercial airplanes over the next 20 years, more than tripling South Asia's current in-service fleet of 700 airplanes while Asia Pacific as a whole will require 17,000 new aircraft, he added.

"We see tremendous opportunity in South Asia, with over 80 per cent new deliveries supporting air-travel growth and 20 per cent replacing older, less fuel-efficient airplanes," said Schulte.

"Boeing airplanes have played a tremendous role in the rapid growth of commercial aviation in Bangladesh. Commonality across the fleet will continue to play a major role in furthering growth, especially as it enables our airline customers to reduce operating costs and expenditures associated with training and maintenance," also noted Schulte.



Single-aisle airplanes like the Boeing 737 family will make up nearly 90 per cent of South Asia's future fleet, while 10 per cent of the regional fleet will be widebody airplanes like the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, mentioned Schulte.

It may be mentioned here that both airplane models are currently in operation with Biman Bangladesh and US Bangla Airlines.

The 737, 787 and 777 planes of Boeing in Biman's fleet have been performing great, claimed Schulte, in terms of bringing in improved efficiency over previous generation airplanes. The 787 is one of the most versatile and utilised aircraft in the world and in Bangladesh, according to Schulte.

It would be great to see the 777 and 787 being used in the long-haul routes in addition to the regional operations, said Schulte, adding that

as the market continues to grow, there will be more opportunities for these aircraft to fly on more long-haul routes.

Boeing projects travel from Bangladesh to North America will double over the next decade.

Schulte further mentioned his excitement to see the manufacturer's products like the 737 Max in operation in Bangladesh in the future, which has 20 per cent lower fuel consumption and carbon footprint than the previous generation 737-800s.

Boeing's team is continuously in discussion with the airlines of Bangladesh as the former is helping the latter to determine the most economically viable long term fleet options.

Also, long-haul opportunities will be further utilised once Dhaka Airport reaches FAA's Category-1 standard, the managing director added.

Schulte claimed he sees the 787 fleet in Bangladesh to expand as the market grows over the next decade tremendously. Once Dhaka Airport reaches Category-1 status, there will be an opportunity to fly 787-9s and 787-10 into North America and other large markets like Europe.

Schulte also said that Boeing is working on providing resources and support to facilitate the conversation between Bangladesh and the USA authorities regarding the development. This is a reflection of the 50 years long healthy and successful partnership between Boeing and Bangladesh, Schulte noted.

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