

## First ever job, career fair in BD travel trade held to meet industry's HR crisis

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Dhaka : Amid the unprecedented growth of Bangladesh's aviation, tourism and hospitality sectors, industry stakeholders are failing to fill up various positions with qualified professionals, leading to a crisis in expert human resources in the trade. Also, due to lack of proper career guidance, the country's young generation is unable to foresee the sector's future as well as themselves' for pursuing respective careers that are fit for them in the industry.



*Technonext representatives offering floral greetings to Mahbub Ali*

Against this backdrop, to help the industry employers find the right personnel and the youth to realise suitable career paths in the trade for themselves, the first-ever Job and Career Fair in Bangladesh travel trade was successfully held on March 19-20 in the capital.

The two-day job and career fair, participated by 50 organisations, representing airlines, travel agencies, online travel agencies, travel technology providers, tour operators, hotels, resorts, training centres, educational institutions and software companies, was held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

✘ Visitors by the US-Bangla Airlines pavilion

All the participating organisations showcased their products and services, while most of them received applications to fill up various positions available in their companies. Some of them conducted walk-in interviews and, when found suitable, handed over appointment letters on the spot as well.

Organised by the premier travel trade publication of the country The Bangladesh Monitor and supported by the leading software technology company Technonext as the title sponsor, the first-ever job and career fair in the country's travel trade welcomed over 5000 applicants. Of them, over 50 applicants received on-spot appointments by the participating organisations in a range of job positions while many other scheduled further follow-up interviews.

✘ *Applicants registering for job positions at Hotel Sarina Dhaka's stall*

Md Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, himself, handed over some of the appointment letters to the applicants present at the fair's concluding day on March 20.

The inaugural ceremony of the fair on March 19 was addressed by Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

In his speech, he said, the Covid-19 pandemic has left a vacuum of skilled manpower in the country's travel trade sector. When global travel and tourism was temporarily halted, several organisations in the sector had no other mean but to furlough many expert human resources to survive in the difficult times.

Now, as the industry is on its way to surpass even pre-pandemic levels, it is high time the trade brought in skilled workforce to meet the industry's increasing demand and unparalleled growth.

In this backdrop, the timing of such a job and career fair in the country's travel trade sector could not be more perfect, he added.

The opening ceremony was also addressed by ASM Fakhru Islam, Vice Chancellor, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University.

In his speech, he mentioned, the country requires plenty of skilled manpower to cater to the growing travel trade industry and to tap into its full potential. Hence, he added, this job and career fair is surely a timely initiative to attract young talents to this promising sector.

Md Rashidul Islam, Head of Operations, Technonext, and Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor, The Bangladesh Monitor also spoke at the inauguration ceremony.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor, The Bangladesh Monitor, the organiser of the fair, said, until now, the youth were not sure what would be a better option for them to choose as a career path in this trade and what they should do to pursue their career in the right direction.

Hence, those seeking to pursue a career in the aviation, hospitality and travel industries, found excellent opportunities at the fair, he further noted.

Young job seekers who are willing to join the travel and tourism industry had the opportunity to directly interact with the employers during the fair, while, the employers recruited suitable candidates on the spot, claimed Kazi Wahidul Alam.

On the other hand, those who are thinking of pursuing a career in the industry were able to know about the scope of education and training in the field.

During the two-day fair, three career guidance seminars were organised on different topics where relevant experts and professionals shared their knowledge with the audience to help them in choosing a suitable career for themselves.

On March 19, a seminar was organised on the topic "Career Building in Airline Sales and Marketing." On March 20, there were two seminars titled "How to become a hotelier" and "Career Building as an Airline

Pilot" in the morning and afternoon respectively. Ten lucky winners also had the exciting opportunity to win air tickets and staycation packages as raffle draw prizes at the fair. It may be mentioned here, according to a latest estimate by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the travel trade sector has, so far, created 17,000 direct jobs worth USD 246 million in Bangladesh. IATA further noted that this industry supports 120,000 jobs in Bangladesh, of which 30,000 jobs in its supply chain and 65,000 jobs in the tourism sector.

Against this backdrop, the travel service providers in the country are on the rise, opening up new avenues of services, like online travel agencies, travel technology establishments and others.

Likewise, the hospitality industry of the country is also registering a rapid growth. Dhaka, as well as other cities of the country, have been witnessing the entry of major international hotel chains one after another and more are in the offing.

All these positive developments are creating a new job market for thousands of employees, both skilled as well as entry-level executives, who would like to build up their careers in the aviation, travel and hospitality sectors.

Hence, such a job and career fair in Bangladesh travel trade is crucial considering the demand of today's time, said the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism on the concluding day of the fair.