

Govt efforts underway to expand aviation infrastructure, increase pax service, ensure smooth air navigation

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Dhaka : Government efforts are underway to ensure timely expansion of aviation infrastructure across the country, increase passenger service, improve technical skills as well as to ensure safe and smooth air navigation. Through such development initiatives and the prosperity that follows, the scope of air connectivity in Bangladesh is further increasing, to an extent that the country is now advancing in international pace.

Md Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism said this as the Chief Guest while addressing the ShareTrip Monitor Airline of the Year 2023 gala award ceremony held at InterContinental Dhaka on September 20, organised by the country's premier travel publication The Bangladesh Monitor.



Md Mahbub Ali

"As part of the expansion efforts, several upgradation projects have already been completed across all the airports of the country while other infrastructure development works progress at a fast pace, including the historic project of the Third Terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital, to be operational by October 2024," added the State Minister, in his speech.

Additionally, a project is underway for strengthening the runway of Chattogram Airport and for installing airfield ground lighting system there too.



Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam

The State Minister further informed about some other aviation development works currently ongoing across the country such as construction of a new terminal building at Sylhet Airport and strengthening its runway capacity; extension of Cox's Bazar runway into the sea and construction of a new terminal building there.



AVM M Mafidur Rahman

He further mentioned the installation of a state-of-the-art radar for safe and secure air navigation is also underway at Dhaka Airport, among other projects being implemented to ensure the security of all international airports of Bangladesh.

Md Mahbub Ali also informed the government is working to turn Saidpur Airport to a regional hub.

"The goal of these development initiatives is to transform the country into a prime aviation hub and an attractive tourist destination," stressed the State Minister.



Sadia Haque

It may be mentioned here that Bangladesh, at present, has bilateral Air Service Agreements with 53 states. As many as 32 international and domestic airlines are operating their flight operations in the country

while several new foreign airlines have expressed interest, also noted the Junior Minister.

Hence, in this time of industry growth, recognising the airlines for their service standard is a timely initiative taken by The Bangladesh Monitor which is greatly commendable, expressed the State Minister wishing the event a great success.



Mohammad Saiful Hoque

Professor Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam, Chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, was the Chairman of the ShareTrip Airline of the Year 2023 Jury.

Speaking at the gala award ceremony, he mentioned how vibrant the aviation industry of the country has become currently.

"The country's aviation market has doubled over the past one decade. We need to move at par with the growing demand," he stressed.

Thus, ShareTrip Monitor Airline of the Year 2023 awards plays a vital role to inspire the airlines to continue improving their service excellence, claimed the Jury Chairman.



Ziaul Karim

M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, attended the gala award ceremony as the special guest.

In his address, CAAB Chairman, said, "The Honourable Prime Minister envisions to make Bangladesh a developed and smart country by 2041. For this purpose, the government efforts are aimed at taking the country's aviation sector to an international standard."

To this effect, the government is undergoing various initiatives, as mentioned earlier, while the private sector is also contributing to the growth, he added.

"Therefore, this one-of-a-kind award programme is very relevant in today's time to recognise the efforts made by the airlines operating in the country to ensure best air transportation services to the customers. This significant initiative by The Bangladesh Monitor contributes to the

development of the country's aviation industry," claimed the CAAB Chairman.

Premier aviation and tourism publication The Bangladesh Monitor introduced the Airline of the Year awards in 2007. This year, the 10th edition of the award was supported by ShareTrip as the Title Sponsor, Eastern Bank PLC as the Banking Partner, InterContinental Dhaka as the Hospitality Partner and Sabre Bangladesh as the Technology Partner.

Speaking at the award ceremony, Sadia Haque, Co-Founder and CEO, ShareTrip, said, "We have come together with The Bangladesh Monitor to honour the airlines that have served the people of Bangladesh with unparalleled commitment and excellence. These recognitions not only motivate and inspire the airlines to do more but also encourage us to take the next leap towards perfection."

"Airline of the Year awards allows users-the lifeline of our industry-to voice their opinions and preferences. It provides a platform to the most vital aspect of our work-the customers-to tell us what they expect and deserve from us. The feedback drives us to raise the bar continuously."

"I believe, our collaborative efforts are paving the way for a smarter and more innovative Bangladesh within the travel industry," rejoiced Sadia.

Ashwani Nayar, General Manager, InterContinental Dhaka, in his address, expressed that it is the iconic hotel's privilege to welcome back Airline of the Year awards back to InterContinental Dhaka from where it started.

"InterContinental Dhaka is always in effort to contribute to the community. Hosting this award ceremony has always been a privilege. Thanks to the elevated expressway and other connectivity development works in the capital, it is now easier to welcome all the stakeholders of the aviation industry to our hotel," he further claimed.

While delivering his address, Ziaul Karim, Head of Communications and External Affairs, Eastern Bank PLC, highlighted that Airline of the Year is the only award programme in the country that recognises the services of the airlines operating in Bangladesh.

"The ultimate objective of the award programme is to recognise the best

airlines in different categories for their services and create an atmosphere of healthy competition among the airlines which will further motivate them to enhance their service standards."

"As EBL is tourism friendly, over the years, the bank has introduced innovative products and services to make travel exciting and rewarding for its customers. That is why, we have also partnered with this event this year," he added.

Mohammad Saiful Hoque, CEO, Sabre Travel Network Bangladesh also spoke on the occasion.

"This award programme not only recognises the contributions and efforts of the airlines operating in Bangladesh but also motivates them to contribute further in the continued growth of the aviation industry," he mentioned.

"Sabre has always been thriving to introduce new technologies to bring excellence in the travel sector of the country. Our participation in this award programme also serves as a testament to our commitment in supporting the growth of the airline sector," Saiful further noted.

Referring to International Air Transport Association's data, Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor Kazi Wahidul Alam, in his speech, said, air transportation in Bangladesh is forecast to grow by 160 per cent in the next 15 years based on the current trends.

"This would result in an additional 12.01 million departures by 2038. If met, this increased demand would add approximately USD 2.1 billion to the country's GDP and create around 140,000 new jobs."

This shows how promising the aviation sector of the country is. However, Kazi Wahidul Alam also addressed some concerns.

"The way passenger numbers are growing, available seat capacity is not growing at a similar pace. As a result, the aviation market still predominantly remains a seller's market," said the Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor.

"We need to encourage more foreign Airlines to connect Bangladesh with the rest of the world, while effective efforts should be taken to strengthen the national carrier and other private airlines to enhance their fleets and networks to meet the growing demand," he stressed.

In order to do so, government should facilitate local airlines with policy support and implement business-friendly tax structures including competitive fuel prices, so that they can face all odds and competition from foreign airlines, urged the Editor.