

New airline coming to Dhaka; Shree Airlines preparing for international expansion

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Dhaka: Kathmandu-based Shree Airlines is preparing for expanding scheduled passenger services beyond Nepal, a media report said on Sunday, January 18. The airline has selected Dhaka, in addition to other cities in India, as its initial international destination.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) confirmed Shree Airlines has applied for operating regular international flights. "Shree has requested approval to fly to various destinations in neighboring countries using its existing aircraft," said Gyanendra Bhul, a spokesperson of the agency.

In addition to scheduled domestic services, Shree Airlines has been operating international charter flights since receiving permission in July 2019. Now, CAAN has formed a study committee to review Shree Airline's application for regular international operations. The agency

will analyze the technical aspects of the airline's proposal, along with the financial implications for this expansion.

Initially, Shree Airlines plans to operate flights to Dhaka in Bangladesh and to New Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad in India from Kathmandu with its existing fleet and gradually expand further with long-haul flights upon acquiring Boeing aircraft.

The airline currently operates domestic flights to Bhadrapur, Bhairahawa, Biratnagar, Birendranagar, Dhangadhi, Nepalganj, and Pokhara from Kathmandu, with a fleet of two 50-seater Bombardier CRJ-200 and seven 76-seater De Havilland Canada DHC-8-400 aircraft.

Over the past few years, Shree Airlines has emerged as one of the most competitive domestic airlines in the Nepalese aviation industry. It became a public company two years earlier and is also preparing for an initial public offering (IPO). The airline reported annual revenues of around NPR 4.07 billion for the fiscal year 2024.

At this moment, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Himalaya Airlines offer regular services between Dhaka and Kathmandu. Shree Airlines will mark it as the third carrier to enter the route. Previously, US-Bangla Airlines and now-defunct Regent Airways and GMG Airlines also operated flights between this city pair.

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