

Shamshernagar Airport reopening urged to boost region's tourism sector

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 10 April, 2026



Dhaka: Reopening the Shamshernagar Airport should be prioritized to meet growing passenger and tourism demand in the region, said Member of Parliament M Nasser Rahman, while addressing the opening ceremony of Dhaka Travel Mart 2026 held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon on April 9.

During his address as the chief guest, Nasser Rahman urged airlines to begin planning flight operations on the Shamshernagar route, noting that discussions with stakeholders will take place soon.

He also highlighted the need to improve rail connectivity to key tourist destinations such as Sreemangal and Moulvibazar. To make travel more comfortable and accessible, additional air-conditioned (AC) coaches are expected to be added to trains serving these areas.

Addressing broader industry concerns, Rahman expressed optimism that jet fuel prices could be reduced once global conditions stabilize. Lower fuel costs, he suggested, would help airlines manage operational expenses and potentially offer more competitive fares.

Turning to tourism costs, he strongly emphasized the need to reassess pricing structures in tourist destinations. He pointed out that foreign tourists are discouraged by unusually high prices of beverages and lack of entertainment in tourist areas.



M Nasser Rahman addressing the ceremony

Rahman called for urgent reforms to ensure tourist-friendly pricing, improved service quality, and internationally competitive entertainment options, warning that without these changes, Bangladesh risks losing its appeal as a global travel destination.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor, The Bangladesh Monitor; Mohammad Saiful Haque, Country General Manager and CEO of Sabre Travel Network Bangladesh; Abu Bokar Siddik, Divisional Head, Card Division, Mutual Trust Bank; Kamrul Islam, General Manager, Public Relations, US-Bangla Airlines; and Imran Asif, CEO, Air Astra; also spoke on the occasion.

The 21st edition of the international tourism fair Air Astra Dhaka Travel Mart 2026 is currently underway at the Ballroom of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka. The three-day event is organized by the travel trade publication The Bangladesh Monitor, with Air Astra as the title sponsor.

More than 50 travel trade organizations from Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Vietnam, China, and host Bangladesh are participating in the fair, showcasing their products and services across 10 pavilions and over 80 booths.

The fair is open to visitors from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm until April 11, with entry tickets priced at BDT 50.

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