

## **US-Bangla enriching country's aviation with better fleet, bigger network, quality services, expert manpower**

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Dhaka : US-Bangla Airlines has taken it upon itself to help the country's growing aviation industry reach new heights with the introduction of new aircraft and destinations as well as by increasing the quality of services and manpower.

The airline has already completed a handful of new milestones to enrich the aviation industry, making it more promising, attractive and fruitful career-wise as well as business-wise.

With Godspeed the country's aviation industry is progressing, at pace with the growing demand of air travel. Hence, it will require plenty of quality manpower in the coming days, that the industry currently lacks.

Md Abdullah Al Mamun, Managing Director of US-Bangla Airlines, said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office in the capital recently. Training quality manpower

To prepare more quality manpower in the industry, the Managing Director mentioned, US-Bangla Airlines has established its own training institution on 24,000 sqft in Uttara with 30 classrooms.

For the last two months, the airline is offering theoretical, practical and on-job training on ground handling, sales, and customer handling as well as flying and cabin services through various courses.

It may be mentioned here, all of the 7-8 trainers at the institution are expert foreigners.

The Managing Director of the largest private carrier of the country US-Bangla Airlines further mentioned 4-5 new Bangladeshi airlines are on their way to launch operations and "together we will prepare more manpower to take the industry to further prosperity".

Engineering support to new airlines

Moreover, to further help the country's aviation sector expand, US-Bangla will also be providing two new Bangladeshi airlines with engineering support, one of them being the upcoming Fly Dhaka, said the Managing Director.

"We encourage more local players to come in the industry. This way, the business will be more competitive. Passengers will avail the benefits."

"Also, more foreign remittance will come to the country as more Bangladeshi airlines will operate international flights. The country's airlines would be able to grab the market share from the foreign airlines on international routes."

"In turn, the country and its economy will be benefited. And then the government will pay more heed to our demands as there will be more of us in numbers," added Abdullah Al Mamun.

Medical benefits for staff

It may be mentioned here, US-Bangla has become the first airline in the

country to offer all of its staff provident fund, gratuity and medical benefits, up to BDT 20,000 OPD every year and up to BDT 2 lac for hospitalisation.

"We will also bear any critical medical treatment cost of our staff and hospitalisation cost of their children as well," said Abdullah Al Mamun.

Currently, US-Bangla has 2300 staff in total, including 200 pilots, of them 40 are foreigners and 320 cabin crew.

To further attract quality manpower, the Managing Director stressed that the industry needs to offer better employment or career opportunities.

The airline has also become the first to change the culture in the industry by organising CRM between cabin crew and captains. Self check-in kiosk at airport

US-Bangla also launched the very first self check-in kiosk at the country's Dhaka Airport. This allows passengers to check-in themselves after arrival at the airport before a flight, making travel easier and more convenient.

It may be mentioned here, the airline group has its own technology company of 300 people. They themselves developed the two machines currently in operation at the domestic terminal of Dhaka Airport.

They even developed the necessary technology for the OTAs TripLover and FirstTrip of the airline group themselves. New Chattogram base station. The airline is on its way to set up its second base station at Chattogram. Line maintenance works will be carried out there.

"From Chattogram, US-Bangla will fly directly to Dubai, Sharjah, Doha, Muscat and Chennai," said Abdullah Al Mamun.

From Chattogram, the airline will be introducing four flights weekly to Chennai and seven weekly flights to Dubai, mentioned the Managing Director.

Currently, the airline flies seven flights a week from Dhaka to Chennai

and 10-11 flights a week from Dhaka to Dubai. Fleet expansion

US-Bangla on November 26 expanded its current largest private airline fleet of 16 aircraft to 17 with the introduction of new Boeing 737-800.

"We will also be bringing six brand new A330-300/900s in a year," said Abdullah Al Mamun.

These big long-haul aircraft will have a seat capacity of 377, 12 in Business and the rest in Economy.

"We will fly these aircraft to Jeddah, Riyadh, Kuwait City, Heathrow and Rome," the Managing Director added.

"We, the local airlines, must bring brand new aircraft to compete with the foreign airlines. We need to bring good inflight entertainment as well. We need to codeshare with other airlines too. If we can do these, we, the country's airlines, will not need to look back," noted Al Mamun.

It may be mentioned here, US-Bangla is currently in the Global Distribution System. This will allow the airline to codeshare with other airlines, which will turn out to be fruitful at least in the region. Load factor

The airline is getting great load factors to Chennai, Malaysia, Dubai, and Singapore, expressed the Managing Director.

However, Male and Kolkata are witnessing underload, he sighed, adding, the day flight to Dubai is not performing that good either.

"Bangladeshi travellers want a good quality plane, inflight entertainment, good food and on time performance. If the local airlines can ensure these services, then all the passengers will fly point to point in domestic airlines." Jet fuel price hike threatening aviation

Due to the consecutive price hikes of jet fuel, passengers one day will not be able to afford air travel on domestic routes, feared Al Mamun.

Even with the current airfare, 30-35 per cent seat remains empty on domestic routes, sighed Al Mamun. "If the price hike of jet fuel continues, all the airlines will need to subsidise their business," claimed

the MD. "The government should offer subsidy on jet fuel to the airlines. The aviation industry contributes to 10 other industries. This must be acknowledged. Our neighbour India does not take any custom, tax, or airport charges from the airlines as they have acknowledged it," noted Mamun.

The Managing Director of the airline shared, US-Bangla currently operates 40 flights daily on domestic routes, the highest in the country.

Internationally, the airline flies to Chennai, Kolkata, Male, Dubai, Muscat, Doha, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok, he added.

"US-Bangla is not in loss. The airline has great brand value. After two years, the way US-Bangla is progressing and expanding operations, it will get a good return from business," hoped the Managing Director.