

## Air India Express launching flights to Bangladesh from mid-July

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Dhaka: Air India Express, low-cost subsidiary of Air India, will be launching flights to and from Bangladesh effective mid-July.

Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial officer of Air India Express said this during an agent briefing session held in the capital on May 28.

The airline is planning to commence operations between Dhaka and Kolkata as well as Chennai, with daily services on each route.

Furthermore, Bangladeshi passengers will get to enjoy onward connections from Chennai to various international destinations of Air India Express.

From India, the carrier currently operates flights to 12 destinations in the Middle East like Dammam, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE as well as one in Southeast Asia—Singapore.

From Kolkata, Bangladeshi passengers can avail onward connections to various domestic points in India such as Bangalore, Hyderabad, Guwahati and many others.

With 120 international flights and 260 domestic flights a day, Air India Express operates 380 daily flights in total.

In terms of fleet, the airline has 78 narrowbody aircraft—50 Boeing 737s and 28 Airbus A320s—as of now.

Last year, Air India Group placed an order of 470 aircraft to be distributed among all its airlines including Air India, Vistara and Air India Express.

Of them, Air India Express is in the process of inducting 190 Boeing aircraft into its fleet, mentioned its CCO at the briefing session.

The airline has already inducted 20 aircraft of those 190 in the last six months, informed Ankur, adding, by 2024 end, Air India Express will be inducting 15 more aircraft, taking the fleet size to a hundred.

He also mentioned that some of the new aircraft will have dual cabin configuration—business class as well as economy—initially.

Moreover, quality inflight offerings are available for passengers upon payment including hot meals, salads, fruits and desserts as well as priority services.

Another quality feature of the airline, as Ankur explained, is the easy and convenient after-sales support it provides to the passengers through its chatbot on WhatsApp.

Furthermore, in the coming days, the airline wishes to add more connectivity into the Bangladesh market, expressed the CCO.

In phases, it will be eyeing to connect Chattogram of Bangladesh and other destinations of India with flight services based on demand, according to Ankur.

Lastly, passengers will also get to enjoy domestic codeshare options between Air India Express and other airlines of the Air India Group.

Meaning, Bangladeshi passengers will be able to avail onward connections under the networks of Air India and Vistara as well.

Soon, international codeshare options will also be available between the airlines of the Air India Group, claimed Ankur.

It may be mentioned here that MAAS Travels has been appointed the airline's Global Sales Agent (GSA) in Bangladesh.

Shashikumar Chetia, Head of Network Planning and Alliance and Anup Manjeshwar, Head of Sales and Distributions of Air India Express as well as high officials of MAAS Travels were also present at the agent briefing session.

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