

## Alliance of South Asian airlines is a need of the time

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 11 February, 2024



Dhaka: To sustain in competition with global mega airline, realise own potentials and to strengthen own foot hold, an alliance of all south Asian public and private airlines is now a need of the time. The alliance would boost regional air connectivity, tourism and trade along with enhancing passengers' travel experience, aviation experts and top executive of regional airlines opined during a roundtable conference held on Saturday, Feb 10 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka.

The roundtable conference was organized by the aviation and tourism publication-The Bangladesh Monitor on sideline of the 3-day international tourism fair titled "Greater cooperation among South Asian airlines". Wing Commander ATM Nazrul Islam( Retd.) and also an aviation expert presented the key-note paper. Shafiqul Azim, Managing Director and CEO of the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines was the chief guest on the occasion.



In his paper Nazrul Islam highlighted growing passenger demand in South Asia, potentials of the region, and probable areas of collaboration among the regional airlines. He presented various statistical data supporting his recommendation for a regional alliance.

He said due to limited connectivity only 27 million passengers arrived in this region in 2019 from other regions whereas during the same period 198 million passengers arrived in North America, 968 million in Europe and 30 million in China while the South Asia region hosts one fifth of the global population.

According to him due to absence of an effective cooperation airlines of this region are losing revenue and business to the global mega airlines and alliances.

Nazrul Islam suggested cooperation in the areas like code sharing, interline agreement, sharing of operation facilities and training.

Biman MD and CEO Shafiul Azim said the idea of forging a collaborative alliance of South Asian airlines is both timely and visionary.

"Together, we can create an aviation landscape in South Asia that is safer, more efficient, and more accessible than ever before," he said further.

The discussion session was also addressed by Mohammad Salahuddin, Acting Director Marketing and Sales, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Ganesh Raja Ram, Country Manager, Air India, Morgan D,souza, Country Manager, Vistara, Mesbah-ul Islam, Head of Marketing and Sales, NOVOAIR, and Morad Bourouffala, Airbus Head of Bangladesh among others.

To take forward the idea of regional alliance The Bangladesh Monitor proposed an idea of organizing a Regional Conclave with the participation of topmost executives of the South Asian airlines at a suitable time in near future in Dhaka.

-N