

## HSIA T3 opening after one year, unusual construction cost increase to be investigated

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Dhaka: The long-awaited and much-needed Third Terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital will be opening after a year. However, the excessive construction cost of BDT 25,000 crore, which has unusually gone way above the initially estimated expense of BDT 7000 crore, will surely be investigated in the coming days.

A F Hassan Arif, Adviser for Civil Aviation and Tourism, said this while addressing a roundtable discussion on “HSIA’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Terminal: Opportunities and Challenges” organised by Aviation and Tourism Journalists Forum of Bangladesh (ATJFB) at Le Meridien Dhaka on December 2.

Speaking as the chief guest, the adviser informed, the iconic Third Terminal of Dhaka Airport is not meant to be a sightseeing spot, rather a functional infrastructure that will effectively fulfill the much-anticipated

demands of the passengers as well as stakeholders.

For this purpose, the adviser claimed he has urged the civil aviation and airport authorities as well as the ground handler Biman Bangladesh Airlines to carry out proper research and development accordingly.

Also, in an effort to expedite cargo operations that currently suffer due to continuous scanner breakdowns at the existing terminal, A F Hassan Arif mentioned, discussions are underway with the Chief Adviser with the aim of solving this long-pending issue.

On the other hand, to stay true to the goal of ensuring international standard facilities and services, a Japanese company will be operating the third terminal for the next 15 years, stressed Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), speaking as the special guest.

The Japanese company will have to meet the KPIs set by CAAB. Otherwise, the latter will take action, he further claimed.

Moreover, due to constant scanner breakdowns, inadequate facilities at HSIA's cargo village, high charges and negligence of sole ground handler Biman towards its said duties, neighbouring countries are taking over our fair share of the air cargo transport market, claimed the participants at the roundtable discussion.



To cover the limitations of the existing cargo terminal of HSIA, the civil aviation authority is preparing other airports of the country accordingly, according to its Chairman.

To this effect, from January 1, 2025, Sylhet Airport will be fully ready to transport air cargo. Preparations are complete with two EDS machines in place at the airport, he further expressed.

Soon, works to make Chattogram Airport export ready will begin, also claimed the CAAB Chairman.

However, according to the issues raised by the participants at the roundtable discussion, it seemed that doubts on ensuring proper service at the Third Terminal still remained, as Biman Bangladesh Airlines again has been given the sole responsibility of ground handling even after

failing in the role till now at the existing terminal.

The participants urged to end the long-existing ground handling monopoly of Biman and appoint a number of international and national ground handlers to make the service competitive at the coming terminal.

About the matter, Adviser Hassan Arif explained, Biman has been given the responsibility for two years initially. Meaning, there is room to change the ground handling agent if the airline fails to prove its capacity.

Mofizur Rahman, Managing Director of NOVOAIR and Secretary General of Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh, presented the keynote paper, while Tanzim Anwar, President of Aviation and Tourism Journalists Forum of Bangladesh chaired the event.

Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan, Member—Operations and Planning, CAAB, and Hayat-Ud-Dowla Khan, Director—Customer Service, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, delivered two presentations—one on Third Terminal of HSIA and another on Biman's ground handling capacity for the Third Terminal respectively.

Among others, Saiful Hoque, Country Manager, Sabre Bangladesh; Muhammed Kamrul Islam, Executive Director of HSIA; Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor; Imran Asif, CEO of Air Astra; Dilara Hossain, Chairman of AOC; Suhed Ahmed Chowdhury, Cargo Manager, Qatar Airways; and Constantinos Gavriel, General Manager of Le Meridien Dhaka also spoke on the occasion.

The event was supported by Sabre and Le Meridien Dhaka.

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