

Mattala Airport posts record 140,000 passenger traffic in 2025

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Dhaka: Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) recorded its highest-ever passenger movements in 2025, handling a total of 140,614 passengers, said the Airport and Aviation Services Company of Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of Ports and Civil Aviation said the figure marked the largest annual passenger volume since the airport was inaugurated in 2013, underscoring a notable turnaround for the southern Sri Lankan gateway.

During the year, the airport also handled 703 international flights. Officials noted that passenger traffic has increased steadily over the past three years, with renewed focus on Mattala Airport following the appointment of the new government playing a key role in achieving the milestone.

In the past, airlines were reluctant to operate services to Mattala due to safety concerns linked to wildlife activity in the surrounding area. Authorities said a series of corrective measures implemented by the new administration helped mitigate these risks, leading to a sharp rise in flight operations in 2025.

Reflecting growing confidence, several international airlines launched services to Mattala during the year. These include Red Wings from Russia, SkyUp from Bahrain and Pakistan, Fly One from Dubai, Centrum Air and Uzbekistan Airways from Uzbekistan, and Bulgaria Air from Bulgaria.

Additionally, Belavia Airlines from Minsk, Belarus, is scheduled to commence flights to Mattala for the first time in 2026, further expanding the airport's international network.

Officials said Mattala International Airport continues to support Sri Lanka's tourism sector due to its proximity to major domestic tourist destinations and its strategic value as an alternative to the increasingly congested Bandaranaike International Airport.

Constructed at a cost of billions of Sri Lankan rupees, the airport was long criticized for underutilization. The record passenger traffic in 2025, however, marks a significant turning point and has renewed expectations for its contribution to the national economy.

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