

# Quiet Comfort BEFORE TAKEOFF

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A friend once admitted he would spend years dreading Dhaka airport's crowded gates, overpriced tea, and nowhere to sit without guarding the spot like treasure. Then he discovered the lounge. Suddenly, there was space to breathe, hot food that did not feel like a rip-off, and enough charging ports to rescue every dying device. By the time his flight was called, he could not believe he had ever waited outside.

Bangladesh's airports now boast a range of air lounges to pamper tired travellers. In Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, about nine lounges serve passengers. These include the InterContinental Dhaka's Balaka Executive Lounge, two City Bank American Express lounges, the EBL Sky Lounge, the MTB Air Lounge, the UCB Imperial a Standard Chartered Signature Lounge, Thai Airways' Royal Silk Lounge, Biman Bangladesh's Maslin Lounge, and the Expatriate Welfare Lounge. Outside Dhaka, lounges are fewer but growing: Chattogram's Shah Amanat Airport has an EBL Sky Lounge and an MTB lounge on the

domestic side. Sylhet's Osmani International and Cox's Bazar airports both have a lounge too. Many of these lounges are tied to local banks or airlines, and some can be accessed via international programmes: for instance, Priority Pass members enjoy entry to Dhaka's UCB Imperial and MTB lounges. Altogether, Bangladesh now has roughly a dozen lounges spread across its airports, a dramatic change from a few years ago.

## WHY USE AN AIR LOUNGE?

The reasons are practical. Lounges offer quiet seating, flight monitors, charging points, and reliable Wi-Fi. Complimentary food and drinks reduce spending at airport cafés, while business corners and quiet tables allow professionals to work without interruptions. Lounges ease travel for families and elderly passengers by offering quieter, safer spaces to regroup. In short, a well-run lounge transforms idle waiting into rest, focused work, or a relaxed meal before boarding.

Frequent flyers like Anowarul Amin, the Head of Corporate Affairs of Arla Foods Bangladesh, shared direct impressions: "I have used 3/4 lounges in the airport so far. Mainly Balaka, EBL and Amex. I would say almost all of them are similar in nature. But it can be a bit differentiated in certain parameters. Like, food is always good in the Amex lounge compared to the rest. Facilities are better both in EBL and Amex, but I felt EBL is always more crowded." He praised Balaka's guest allowance he gets through his bank partnership, but he felt local lounges could adopt more international polish.

## WHY DO TRAVELLERS CHOOSE LOUNGES FOR COMFORT?

Ahmed Raihan Ahsanullah typically uses the EBL lounge "because it is convenient, offers most of the services I desire and because they have maintained their standards consistently since inception." He praised its food, solid internet and reliable amenities, and he valued that EBL allows guests with the cardholder. Ahmed added that lounges make travel more pleasant when accompanying elderly or infirm family members. His practical advice is to raise staff service standards across venues.

On the other hand, Md. Sanjid Hossain,

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