

# A quieter world beyond the gate

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Rafiq Ahmed had been waiting for hours at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. His flight to Singapore was delayed, and the crowded waiting area offered little comfort. The plastic chairs were hard, the noise constant, and finding a quiet corner for a work call seemed impossible. Then a friend suggested he try his bank's airport lounge. Stepping inside for the first time, Rafiq felt as though he had entered another world. The clamour of the terminal gave way to calm music, plush seating, warm food, and Wi-Fi that worked seamlessly. For him, the journey became an enjoyable experience instead of just a wait. That is the promise of the airport lounge: a space designed to turn travel from hassle into pleasure. The idea itself isn't new. In 1939, American Airlines

pioneered the concept with the Admirals Club at New York's LaGuardia Airport. What began as a private retreat for VIPs gradually became part of global travel culture, with airlines, banks, and card companies offering their best customers the perk of lounge access. Today, lounges are standard worldwide and, for many, inseparable from the flying experience.

## LOUNGES IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has quickly caught up with this global trend. At Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet airports, travellers can now escape the chaos of crowded terminals by stepping into lounges operated by airlines and banks. Several leading banks, including United Commercial Bank (UCB), have made this service central to their premium offerings, with international

card networks like Mastercard and Visa also extending access to eligible cardholders. Today, UCB boasts one of the widest lounge networks in Bangladesh, making premium travel comfort accessible nationwide, not just in Dhaka.

## UCB'S FLAGSHIP LOUNGE

At Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, UCB's dedicated lounge is a standout. Unlike shared facilities, this purpose-built space reflects international standards and UCB's own brand of hospitality. For a country where travel volumes



are soaring, it represents more than a financial product perk. Lounges are an investment in client comfort and convenience. Inside, the

difference is immediate. Modern interiors, soft lighting, and plush furniture create an atmosphere closer to a boutique hotel lobby than a crowded departure hall. Most strikingly, it is the only double-height lounge in Dhaka, setting a benchmark in design and sophistication. For weary passengers, it is a welcome change of pace.

## ACCESSIBLE LUXURY

Access has been kept selective yet attainable. UCB Gold, Platinum, and Signature credit cardholders, along with Imperial debit and selected prepaid cardholders, enjoy complimentary entry. Depending on card type, family members and guests are also welcomed. The process is seamless: present the card, swipe, and step in. With modest annual fees on many cards, a full year of lounge privileges has become both affordable and attractive for frequent flyers. Every detail inside is designed with travellers in mind. A halal-certified buffet offers Bangladeshi and international dishes, with vegetarian and special options. Coffee and snacks are always available. High-speed Wi-Fi, workstations, and charging points cater to business passengers, while families appreciate the calm, safe

environment for children. Attentive but discreet staff ensure the atmosphere remains polished and relaxed.

## MEETING A GROWING NEED

The timing is ideal. With passenger numbers steadily climbing and more international flights connecting Dhaka to global hubs, the pressures of travel are intensifying. Lounges are no longer a distant luxury but an essential escape, and UCB has embraced this shift. By making premium travel comfort widely available, the bank positions itself as more than a financial institution. It then becomes a lifestyle partner, investing in journeys as much as in accounts. Feedback supports this vision. Business travellers highlight the quiet work areas and fast internet. Families value the stress-free environment. Solo flyers like Rafiq describe the lounge as peace of mind itself. Looking ahead, UCB is expanding its global footprint with Priority Pass and exploring new features such as digital concierge services and wellness-focused spaces. For now, the presence of a premium double-height lounge backed by a Bangladeshi bank at the nation's busiest airport is newsworthy on its own. Combined with UCB's growing network nationwide, it reinforces the bank's leadership in premium travel banking. Each time a cardholder swipes at reception and steps into that quieter, more comfortable world, the message is clear: the journey can be just as rewarding as the destination.





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**quiet comfort before takeoff**

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Head of Commercial Partnership at Robi Axiata PLC, values the family benefits: "Good food, a good relaxation space with family, and quality time spent in comfort." His suggestions will be to add shower facilities for hurried travellers, sleeping spaces or couches for long waits, business zones for

**remote work, and even light spa touches or a kids' area.**

These fittings are useful for long layovers, delayed flights and last-minute work. Several domestic lounges also operate around the clock to support early or late departures.

**FACILITIES, GAPS AND SIMPLE FIXES.**

Still, travellers report consistent gaps. Many lounges lack dependable shower rooms, a deficiency which Amin described as "a must-have for any international departure lounge." Quiet sleeping pods and dedicated rest zones are scarce. Laptop-friendly seating and more power outlets would aid business travellers, while families would welcome clearly defined children's corners and healthier, lighter menu choices. These practical upgrades are straightforward to describe and, often, inexpensive to implement.

For operators, the path forward is clear: modest investments in dependable showers, quiet rest or nap areas, enhanced business seating, and lighter, healthier menus would produce substantial gains in passenger satisfaction.

For travellers, a small habit change like choosing a lounge over a crowded gate will often yield meaningful benefits. For example, you can enjoy a calm coffee, ensure your device is fully charged, have uninterrupted work time, or take a chance to sleep before a long flight. Bangladesh's lounges have come a long way recently; with focused upgrades they can evolve from convenient waiting rooms into genuine havens for beginning a journey. Discover them; your next journey will change noticeably.

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