

Beyond Boarding



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Syed Mahbubur Rahman (SMR): Bangladesh's aviation sector is entering a transformative era with rising passenger volumes and major projects like Dhaka's Terminal-3 and Cox's Bazar's runway expansion. As travellers become more discerning and digitally connected, airport lounges are

Bangladesh's skies are busier than ever, with new terminals and runways reshaping how the country flies. Amid this transformation, Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) has built the nation's first and largest bank-led lounge network, setting a new benchmark for comfort and convenience. In this interview with The Daily Star, Syed Mahbubur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of MTB, discusses the future of travel, the role of lounges, and what's next for premium banking.

The Daily Star (TDS): How do you see air travel in Bangladesh changing over the next five years, and what role will lounges play?

SMR: We operate eight lounges across Bangladesh, including the country's first international bank-led lounge at HSIA Terminal-2. Through LoungeKey, our Visa Signature, Mastercard World, and UnionPay Diamond cardholders access 1,300+ lounges worldwide with 10 free visits annually. Domestically, premium cardholders enjoy complimentary entry in line with our policies.

TDS: What privileges do you offer across card tiers?

SMR: MTB lounges

shifting from luxury to necessity. MTB is proud to lead this evolution with the country's first and largest lounge network. Our focus now is on expanding amenities, capacity, and world-class services to meet the expectations of a new generation of travellers, especially Gen Z.

provide global-standard amenities such as a Library Corner, massage machines, shoe shiners, and air purifiers. Services like card activation, foreign part enabling, and endorsements are available on-site. At HSIA, premium clients also enjoy 'meet & greet' and 'pick & drop' facilities.

TDS: How do you ensure quality in third-party lounges?

SMR: We select partners carefully, backed by service-level agreements to maintain cleanliness and professionalism. Beyond lounges, MTB supports travellers with foreign exchange booths, ATMs, and premium travel services. Our efforts were recently recognised with the "Gold Award" for Best Airport Lounge

(Bangladesh) at the Monitor Airline of the Year 2024.

TDS: What feedback do you receive from customers?

SMR: Feedback is overwhelmingly positive, especially on connectivity between Dhaka and divisional airports. We continuously review suggestions to improve comfort, efficiency, and services.

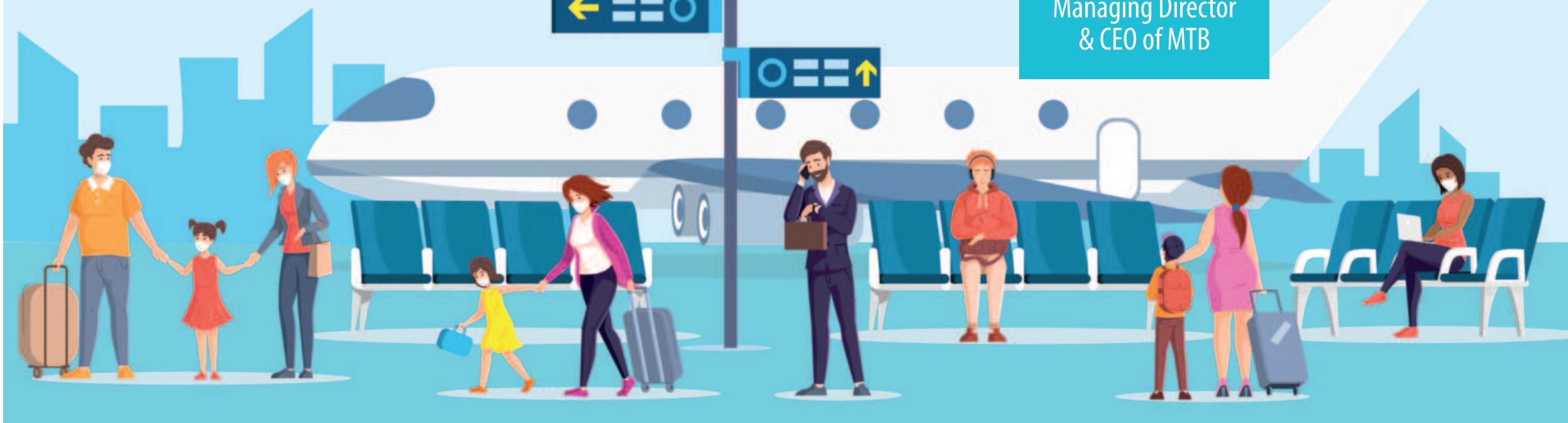
opportunities are immense, though challenges like digital security push us to keep innovating.

TDS: What's next for MTB lounges?

SMR: We're working on digital check-in, wellness-focused services, and expanded memberships. Challenges like space and security exist, but we view them as opportunities. From Dhaka to Jashore, our lounges symbolise a new benchmark in Bangladesh's travel experience.



SYED MAHBUBUR RAHMAN,
Managing Director & CEO of MTB



Smart Ways to Make Flight Delays Bearable

Few things test a traveller's patience quite like hearing the dreaded announcement: "Your flight has been delayed." While a brief hold-up is inconvenient, waiting several hours in the terminal can feel overwhelming. With the right approach, those extra hours can become manageable, sometimes even productive or enjoyable.

3. Explore the Airport
Modern airports often feel like small cities, offering far more than just gates and runways. Take time to browse shops, admire art installations, or visit cultural displays unique to the region. A brisk walk through the terminal also helps you stretch your legs and keep energy levels up.

4. Refuel Sensibly
Instead of grabbing fast food in frustration, make the most of airport dining. Many terminals now host restaurants serving regional specialties and international favourites. Staying hydrated and opting for lighter meals will also leave you feeling fresher when it is finally time to board.

5. Be Productive or Simply Switch Off
Delays can provide rare, uninterrupted time. Connect to Wi-Fi to clear your inbox, plan upcoming tasks, or read through a report. If work feels unappealing, use the hours to catch up on a novel, podcast, or TV series you have been meaning to enjoy.

6. Consider a Lounge Pass
If the delay is significant, a day pass to an airline lounge can be a worthwhile investment. Lounges typically offer quieter seating, free food and drinks, work areas, and sometimes even showers, turning wasted hours into a restorative break.



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1. Confirm the Delay Details

Begin by gathering accurate information. Airline apps, text alerts, and departure boards are useful, but speaking directly with a gate agent ensures clarity. Ask about the reason for the delay, the estimated waiting time, and whether rebooking, meal vouchers, or lounge passes are available.

2. Make Yourself Comfortable

If you are settling in for several hours, comfort becomes a priority. Seek out a quieter corner with charging points, or look for designated relaxation areas with recliners or nap pods.

A travel pillow, blanket, and noise-cancelling headphones can transform hard seats and bustling crowds into a more bearable environment.



Your journey starts with
ultimate luxury
at EBL Skylounge