

Release Date 21/04/2022
Place: BSMRAAU, Dhaka Campus

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BSMRAAU Hold Focused Group Discussion to Commence Undergraduate Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Programme

A daylong Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was held at the BAF's Falcon Hall in Dhaka to deliberate on the modalities for commencing Aircraft Maintenance Engineering (AME) program at BSMRAAU – country's first public university for aviation and aerospace studies. The University's Aviation Safety and Accident Investigation (ASAI) department organised the event. Mentionable that the BSc in AME Programme is slotted to commence from 2023/24 academic year.

Vice Chancellor, AVM Muhammad Nazrul Islam was present as the Chief Guest while AVM Sade Uddin Ahmed, Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Maintenance) graced as Special Guest. Novoair Managing Director and the Secretary General of Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh (AOAB), Group Captain Mofizur Rahman (retd), acted as the moderator of the FGD participated by distinguished panellists from Bangladesh Air Force, civil airlines, and academia.

The aim of the FGD was to discuss the challenges and find solutions to commence BSc AME programme. The panellist deliberated on the pre-circulated questions on their areas of expertise. Secretary AOAB in his remarks observed that the institutional capacity to provide AME education in Bangladesh is very limited and requires university-industry collaboration. He applauded BSMRAAU's initiative in this regards and hoped that the event will provide a clear pathways commencing the program at BSMRAAU.

The current state of the AME workforce, as well as the reasons for the industry's local AME personnel shortage, were covered in depth throughout the seminar. The members of the focus group also highlighted the obstacles of starting a bachelor's degree program in AME, as well as the role of BSMRAAU in successfully managing the BSc program.

The Vice Chancellor in his remarks observed that the objective of the FGD is aligned with the honourable Prime Minister's vision of making Bangladesh an aviation hub. He highlighted that one of 11-point strategies for the aviation sector of Bangladesh, outlined in the Perspective Plan 2041 is to: "Improve maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities and services to save cost and time in a highly competitive [aviation] market." Thus, "our capacity to produce skilled and competent AME professionals to serve in our aviation industry is a key enabler to transform Bangladesh into an aviation hub" – the Vice Chancellor observed.

The Vice Chancellor also mentioned that BSMRAAU has seen an exponential growth in applicants, reaching over 7000 students competing for only sixty seats in the university's undergraduate programmes in 2022. Compared to the last year, this is an increase of nearly 72% - indicating that a large number of youths are primed to have a career in the local and global aviation industry. Thus, it is imperative that "BSMRAAU offers more number of Undergrad programmes covering the full range aviation and aerospace discipline including AME" – the vice Chancellor added.



The discussants also highlighted the tremendous prospect of the aviation sector and observed that, moving ahead, our task would be to translate the discussions into action. The representatives from the Industry have also identified the scope and nature of apprenticeship and collaboration opportunities for commencing the AME programme. The FGD ended with a vow to translate the discussions into action to realise the national aspiration of making Bangladesh an aviation hum and knowledge based society.
