

Biman operates with 23pc vacant seats in six months on int'l routes

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : The national carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines operated with 23 per cent vacant seats on various international destinations in the last six months.

A total of 3.41 lac Biman seats remained empty at the time, accounting for 23 percent of total seats. Such amount of empty seats is a reason for concern, said aviation insiders.

Earlier, the parliamentary standing committee on Civil Aviation and Tourism sought the reasons for the country's flag carrier's non-sale of tickets on international routes in the last six months, as well as information on ticket sales.

Based on this, Biman submitted the report at the parliamentary committee meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad on December 20.

According to reports, 14,77,456 tickets were available in various overseas destinations in the six months from June to November. Among them, 11,35,974 seats were booked. The remaining 3,41,482 were empty, representing a 23 per cent of vacant seats.

However, on several routes, there were just a few seats available while on others, over half of the seats were vacant.

In the last six months, Biman flights from Dhaka to China's Guangzhou route had 2,675 vacant seats. There were 1,037 passengers on board. The remaining 1,638 seats were empty, indicating that 61 per cent of the seats at this location were empty.

There were 17,665 seats on Muscat to Dhaka route. Of these, 9,285 seats or 53 percent remained vacant. 45 per cent of the total seats on

the Abu Dhabi-Dhaka route were empty.

On the other hand, flights from Dhaka to Muscat, Chattogram to Muscat, Dhaka to Riyadh, Chattogram to Jeddah were quite full. In these flights, 80 to 90 per cent seats were occupied.

Biman suspended its ticket sales services through its website from August 9, 2021 to February 26, 2022 due to changes in its Passenger Service System (PSS).

Shafiul Azim, the new Biman MD and CEO, said, as per reports, in many circumstances certain seats must be left unoccupied owing to load balancing for technical reasons.

According to industry insiders, airlines operating flights from Dhaka currently have an average of 10 to 15 per cent unfilled seats as "standard" (acceptable).

Since, the routes that Biman operates on are the most demanding, the plane seats are less likely to be empty. Meaning, 23 per cent of seats remaining empty on Biman flights is a matter of concern, they worried.