

Biman plans to purchase Airbus aircraft

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Dhaka : Biman Bangladesh Airlines plans to purchase new commercial aircraft from the Netherlands-based multinational aerospace company Airbus with a view to bolstering the airline's fleet to cater to the current growing aviation industry of the country.

On this note, Md Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, said, "We definitely have plans to buy aircraft from Airbus to increase the size of Biman's fleet and we are working on it."

The State Minister made the announcement to the media after the first-ever Bangladesh Aviation Summit, organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, in collaboration with the British High Commission and Embassy of France in Dhaka, at a city hotel on March 22.

He further mentioned that Airbus had earlier submitted proposals to sell

aircraft to Biman. The matter came forth again during the summit.

After the inaugural session of the summit, Shafiul Azim, Managing Director and CEO of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said that discussions are being held with Airbus to this end currently.

"If it helps meet our requirements, then why not [buy aircraft from Airbus]?" he claimed.

Biman now boasts one of the youngest fleets in Asia with 21 modern aircraft comprised of four Boeing 777-300 ERs, four Boeing 787-8s, two Boeing 787-9s, six Boeing 737-800s, and five De Havilland Canada DHC-8 Q400s.

At the summit, State Minister Md Mahbub Ali said in his speech that, with the country's socioeconomic development, its civil aviation sector has undergone massive changes in the last 14 years.

"However, in this era of globalisation, it is not possible to achieve the desired goal of development alone in a high-tech industry like aviation without the exchange of technology, research and services," the State Minister said.

"The UK and France, whose cooperation we received earlier, are interested to support our aviation industry. So, I hope to see them in the future to help develop our aviation," he added.

Salman F Rahman, Adviser to the Prime Minister for Private Industry and Investment, in his speech, said the proposed partnership and collaboration with Airbus will undoubtedly accelerate growth in the local aviation sector. This includes cooperation in areas such as trading, infrastructure development, maintenance, repair and overall service.

He also said Airbus emphasised that it is not only interested in selling aircraft to Bangladesh as the company is keener on transferring technologies and providing training.

Rushanara Ali, trade envoy of the Prime Minister of the UK to Bangladesh, also spoke at the programme.

Marie Masdupuy, Ambassa-dor of France to Bangladesh, Robert

Chatterton Dickson, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mokammel Hossain, Secretary of Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Remi Maillard, President and Managing Director of Airbus India and South Asia, were also present on the occasion, among others.