

## **Biman to use own aircraft for operating Hajj flights in 2023**

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Dhaka : Flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines will use its own aircraft in 2023 for operating Hajj flights instead of leasing planes.

"As we don't benefit from the leasing process, we have decided to use our own aircraft for Hajj flights," said Shafiul Azim, CEO and Managing Director, Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Biman authorities discussed the decision at an inter-ministerial meeting on January 18.

"We are preparing in advance to ensure smooth operation of Hajj flights," the Biman CEO added.

The decision follows the airline's experience from 2022's Hajj flights. It used four of its widebody planes for 2022's Hajj flights.

Md Faridul Haq Khan, State Minister for Religious Affairs, said that Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) will

carry 50 per cent of Hajj pilgrims each in 2023.

"According to the Saudi-Bangladesh Hajj Treaty of 2023, Bangladeshi pilgrims can perform Hajj in 2023 as per full quota," he added.

He also said that Hajj packages will be announced by January 25-30. The State Minister also mentioned that prices will not be increased this year.

"Passengers may have to spend a slightly higher amount for the increased dollar price, however," he added.

A total of 1,27,198 Bangladeshis can perform Hajj in 2023.

Faridul Haq Khan also said the age limit has been withdrawn and Bangladeshis over the age of 65 can perform Hajj this year.

Pre-arrival immigration for all Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims will be completed in Dhaka under the 'Road to Makkah' agreement.