

Biman's Dhaka-Toronto flights likely from June 26

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Biman Bangladesh Airlines has announced its much awaited commercial flight on Dhaka-Toronto route is likely to begin after June 26. The carrier has decided to make a "conditional technical stopover" in Manchester for the flights until the Russia-Ukraine war is over.

The national airline also said it will operate direct flights on Dhaka-Toronto route after the war ends.

"For the time being, until the Ukraine war ends, we will operate the Dhaka-Toronto flight with a conditional and technical stopover in Manchester for refuelling," said Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, Managing Director and CEO, Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Moreover, Biman officials said the decision was made on the basis of a feasibility study.

A direct flight to Toronto would take around 17 to 18 hours as Biman will not be using Russian airspace. Though Russia has no objection to using its airspace, the insurance company concerned did not want to give insurance coverage in case of any unwanted incident due to the war, added the airline.

Besides, plenty of fuel will be needed for a flight of 17 to 18 hours. Due to the load factor, the plane will have to carry a limited number of passengers, up to 120 to 130 at max, and that will not be viable commercially, mentioned the MD and CEO of the

airline, according to reports.

"There is another reason. As a large number of Bangladeshi expatriates live in Manchester, we are expecting to get passengers on this route while flying to Toronto," he further expressed.

Biman MD also said they are negotiating with the Canadian authority, seeking approval to carry passengers from Manchester to Toronto under the fifth freedom agreement.

A fifth freedom agreement allows an airline from one country flying between two others to carry passengers between them.

Biman MD claimed, after the end of the Ukraine war, they will operate direct flights to Toronto and the flight time will be reduced by two to three hours.

"In that case, we will be able to carry more passengers which will make the route commercially viable," he noted.

For direct flights to Toronto, Biman shared its expectations to get passengers who will come to Dhaka from Kolkata, Nepal and even from Myanmar.

Biman is planning to use Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner for operations on Dhaka-Toronto route. The Dreamliner has a total of 298 seats, including 30 in business class, 21 in premium economy class, and 247 in economy class.

The airline is yet to finalise the airfare for commercial flight on the route.