

Airbus urges merit-driven evaluation as Biman weighs future fleet choices

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Dhaka: Airbus has called on Biman Bangladesh Airlines to ensure that its upcoming fleet decision is guided strictly by technical and commercial merit, stressing the importance of a fair and objective evaluation process as Bangladesh's aviation sector enters a period of rapid expansion.

During a visit to Dhaka, Wouter van Wersch, Airbus Executive Vice President for International, told the media that the company expects Biman's ongoing techno-financial review to be handled professionally.

"We want the assessment to remain factual and based on the strengths of each proposal — commercially, technically, and in terms of long-term capability building," he said.

Van Wersch was joined by Edward Delahaye, Airbus Head of Customer

Accounts for South Asia.

The Airbus executive described Bangladesh as one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, saying the country is "on a strong development path" with air connectivity poised to play an increasingly significant economic role.

Passenger numbers in Bangladesh currently stand at around 13 million annually, a figure projected to reach 28.5 million by 2030 — representing yearly growth of roughly six percent, almost double the global average.

With travel demand surging particularly on routes to the Middle East, North America, and Southeast Asia, van Wersch said Biman is strategically positioned to capture new opportunities.

"As the national carrier, Biman can take advantage of this expansion, tap new routes and generate substantial revenue for the country," he noted.

Support for interim capacity

Airbus officials confirmed that the manufacturer has offered to assist Biman in sourcing leased aircraft to meet short-term needs while awaiting new deliveries.

"We do this for every customer," Delahaye said. "If Biman opts for Airbus, we can help facilitate leases before delivery slots open."

Van Wersch added that the company would work with aircraft lessors to ensure interim availability.

A321neo, A350 pitched as long-term solutions

Airbus promoted its A321neo for regional and medium-haul operations, highlighting its strong global performance. The company recently surpassed the Boeing 737 family in total deliveries across single-aisle models.

For long-haul expansion, Airbus emphasized the A350 family — particularly the A350-900 and A350-1000 — describing them as unmatched in efficiency and range.

According to Delahaye, the A350-900 offers the lowest seat-mile cost

and the widest cabin in its category, while the A350-1000 holds the title for the longest range globally.

The aircraft, Airbus said, would enable Biman to operate non-stop flights from Dhaka to major US destinations, including Los Angeles and New York. Van Wersch also claimed that routes such as Dhaka-Toronto could be operated non-stop with greater passenger and cargo loads compared to Biman's current 787 operations.

Delahaye added that the demand potential in Bangladesh is already evident: "When you see Emirates, Qatar Airways, Saudia, and others flying here with 777s, it clearly signals a strong market."

Addressing fleet-mix, training concerns

Responding to questions on whether introducing Airbus aircraft would complicate training or maintenance, Airbus executives stressed the company's cockpit commonality across models.

"Introducing Airbus will not increase costs," Delahaye said. "Pilots can transition easily between the A321 and A350, which significantly reduces training expenses."

Van Wersch added that Airbus can support Biman whether it chooses an all-Airbus fleet or a mixed one.

Plans for wider aviation cooperation

Beyond selling aircraft, Airbus said it aims to contribute to Bangladesh's broader aviation ecosystem. This includes potential work with the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and cooperation with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on areas such as regulatory standards, flight safety, maintenance, training, and skills development.

"We want to help strengthen Bangladesh's aviation framework — from MRO capabilities to regulatory cooperation," van Wersch concluded.