

Biman clarifies suspension of Manchester flights

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Biman Bangladesh Airlines has issued a clarification regarding the temporary suspension of its Dhaka/Sylhet-Manchester flights amid discussions in various media outlets and on social media platforms. In a press release issued on Thursday, January 22, the national flag carrier outlined the operational and fleet-related realities behind the decision.

According to Biman, the decision to temporarily suspend operations on the Manchester route is aligned with fleet limitations and operational considerations. The airline stated that the Manchester route is not economically viable at present. Biman operates its Europe, Hajj, and Middle East services using a limited number of wide-body aircraft, including Boeing 787 and Boeing 777 aircraft. As the Manchester route is a long-haul operation, a single aircraft remains engaged for several days, creating pressure on fleet management.

The airline further noted that during the Hajj season, it must operate a significant number of additional flights within a fixed timeframe to transport a large volume of pilgrims. As a result, adjustments to flight frequencies on other routes become operationally necessary.

Biman also pointed out that Middle Eastern routes currently experience very high demand from expatriate workers and Umrah passengers. Given the limited fleet, the airline needs to deploy aircraft on routes with higher demand and operational efficiency. In addition, scheduled C-checks, engine overhauls, and structural inspections require one or more aircraft to remain out of operation for weeks or months, leading to aircraft shortages due to long-term maintenance.

The press release also highlighted the global shortage of flight crew, which affects Biman as well. The airline stated that operating comparatively shorter routes instead of long-haul flights allows more efficient and effective crew management under the prevailing circumstances.

Considering all these factors, Biman said it decided to temporarily suspend operations on the Dhaka/Sylhet-Manchester route to ensure continuity of passenger services, maintain operational stability, and make optimal use of its limited fleet.

To mitigate passenger inconvenience, Biman has increased flight frequency on the London route to a total of five flights per week. Of these, four flights operate via Sylhet, while one flight operates directly from Dhaka to London. The airline also revised the previously announced suspension date from 1 February 2026 to 1 March 2026.

Furthermore, Biman is offering Manchester-route passengers the option to change flights or receive ticket refunds without any additional charges. Passengers may also travel via London or change their travel dates to any previously convenient date without incurring extra fees.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines expressed sincere regret for any inconvenience caused to passengers and stakeholders due to the temporary suspension. The airline added that aircraft procurement and crew recruitment processes are currently underway, and upon completion, the resumption of Manchester flights will be considered and communicated in due course.

