

Biman suspends flights to Saudi Arabia till May 24

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Dhaka: Biman Bangladesh Airlines has suspended flights to Saudi Arabia till May 24, announced the airline on May 20. The flights were suspended after KSA authorities imposed new conditions on arrivals to contain the spread of the coronavirus that include hotel quarantine and corona insurance.

The fresh suspension of flights has put the return of several Bangladeshi migrant workers to their workplaces in Saudi Arabia in uncertainty, said sources at the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies ([BAIRA](#)) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh ([ATAB](#)).

Biman currently operates flights to three destinations in Saudi Arabia – Riyadh, Dammam, and Jeddah. The airline operates 18 flights a week to these destinations.

Apart from this, there are also flights to Mecca and Medina. However, flights to these two destinations are not being operated at present due to the Covid-19 situation.

The Saudi Arabian government has recently imposed various conditions to prevent coronavirus infection.

Covid-19 medical insurance has been made compulsory for all foreign nationals traveling to

the country. This insurance will cover the cost of seven days in institutional quarantine in hotels and treatment at hospitals and clinics if needed.

Apart from this, arrangements have to be made to stay in the institutional quarantine through the concerned airlines.

Airlines are also required to conduct PCR tests on the first and seventh days of travel for passengers wishing to travel to the country.

Saudi Arabia has also demanded that the airline submit the list of passengers to the country's authorities four days before their departure.

A spokesperson for Biman said they have informed their offices about the conditions by the Saudi government. "Our officers there are trying to manage the hotels."

"It takes some time to arrange those. Apart from this, there is a condition to give the passenger list four days before the start of the flight. That is also the reason for temporarily suspending flights to Saudi Arabia," he claimed.

Saudi Arabia is the largest expatriate income market for Bangladesh. At least 26 lac expatriates are working in different sectors in the country.

Biman has requested its passengers to contact its nearby offices regarding hotel bookings and fixing post-suspension journey schedules from May 24.

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