

## Biman's maiden flight to Narita takes off

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Dhaka: Biman Bangladesh Airlines' maiden flight from Dhaka to Narita took off on September 1, 2023, following the recent development of bilateral ties to strategic partnership between Bangladesh and Japan for boosting trade as well as people to people contact.

The inaugural flight BG 0376 took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital at 11:45 pm (local time) and reached Narita International Airport in Japan on September 2 at 9:15 am (local time).

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Md Mahbub Ali inaugurated the maiden flight as the chief guest.

The Ambassador of Japan in Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori, Biman Board Chairman Mostofa Kamal Uddin, Managing Director and CEO Shafiul Azim, Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister Office Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Md Mokammel Hossain, and Civil Aviation Authority Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman was also

present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, State Minister Md Mahbub Ali, said, Biman's direct flight to Narita will boost bilateral ties, trade cooperation and people to people contact between Bangladesh and Japan.

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MoCAT State Minister Md Mahbub Ali speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Biman's Dhaka-Narita flight at HSIA on September 1—Photo: Monitor

The State Minister expressed his hope that the Biman's direct connectivity to Japan will open new doors of trade, tourism and cultural exchanges between Bangladesh and Japan.

He further mentioned that this direct air connectivity will add value to the

ties between Bangladesh and Japan, as the two friendly countries recently elevated its bilateral relations to strategic partnership during the recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Tokyo.

In his inaugural address, the Ambassador of Japan in Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori, shared his hope that the new flight would attract Japanese tourists to visit attractive tourist spots of Bangladesh.

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"Dhaka-Narita could be a promising route for Biman Bangladesh Airlines as we are expecting passengers from our neighbouring countries too, apart from our local passengers," said Shafiul Azim, Managing Director and CEO of Biman Bangladesh.

He said the resumption of Biman's route to Japan is part of the national flag carrier's plan to expand operations to many other new international destinations.

In the coming days, Biman will be launching flights to Guangzhou and Chennai as well, mentioned the Managing Director and CEO, in his speech.

The Biman Chief further said the national flag carrier is planning to carry its passengers to Australia, the west coast of the United States and Canada with the help of other carriers via Japan through code sharing.

He said currently Biman is working with Japan Airlines Ltd (JAL), All Nippon Airways and Air Canada for code sharing purposes.

Many Japanese companies have been extending their investments in Bangladesh in different sectors, paving the way for more Japanese business travellers to travel to and from Bangladesh.

Also, plenty of students now travel to study at the reputed universities in Japan from Bangladesh.

As per reports, till 2022, there were 20,954 Bangladeshis living in Japan.

Apart from the Bangladeshi expatriate community, there are about 41,000 Indians, and 1.40 lac Nepalese nationals in Japan too.

"So, passengers from India and Nepal can fly to and from Japan via Dhaka in only six hours," Biman's chief said.

It may be mentioned here that the airline is allowing additional luggage weight as part of its promotional efforts to lure in passengers from Nepal and

Kolkata to its Narita flight.

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Biman will operate three weekly flights on the route with Dreamliner 787-8 and 787-9 aircraft.

The flight will depart from Dhaka every Friday, Monday and Wednesday while the return flight will depart from Narita every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Currently, Biman has a total of 21 aircraft in its fleet, of these, four are Boeing 777-300 ER, four are Boeing 787-8, two are Boeing 787-9, six are Boeing 737 and five are Dash 8-400 aircraft.

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