

## Biman's misadventures continue

A CLOSER LOOK



TASNEEM TAYEB

Tasneem Tayeb  
is a columnist for  
The Daily Star.  
Her Twitter handle is  
@tasneem\_tayeb

**B**IMAN is once again making the headlines and, as usual, for all the wrong reasons. The country's national flag carrier has recently come under fire for performing a botched job in arranging logistics to operate the Hajj flights for 2022. According to media reports, Biman's board approved an agreement-signing with Lithuania-based Heston Airlines for wet leasing of two 260-seat Airbus A330s from the latter to operate the Hajj flights—despite having own capacity to run the operation with existing resources—at its 276th board meeting, held on April 30.

Mahbub Jahan Khan, Biman's director for corporate planning and training, had reportedly placed the same proposal earlier in April, which was turned down due to lack of insufficient study and analysis. However, when he placed the proposal again, it was approved for agreement signing. It has been alleged by Biman insiders that, due to vested interest of a certain quarter, the proposal had been placed for the second time before the board.

Air Asia and Avico had offered cheaper rates for the same, but Biman opted for the costly Heston block-hour offer of USD 7,000 per hour. In the face of allegations of irregularities and mismanagement, and backlash from various quarters, it was later announced that Biman would operate the Hajj flights with its existing resources—as it had done last year—by diverting three aircrafts from Middle East routes to support the operation.

This, however, is not Biman's only misadventure of this year. Earlier in March, the airline came under severe criticism from aviation industry experts for flying an "experimental commercial" flight on the Dhaka-Toronto-Dhaka route, carrying around 40 government officials and two MPs free of cost. There

were only 36 general passengers on the Dhaka-Toronto route, while the return flight had only six general passengers. The flight, operated with a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, had incurred an expense of around Tk 4 crore—a blatant misuse of the public's hard-earned money.

Even after repeated warnings from experts that the flight will not be

Tk 1,223 crore in total.

The terms of the five-year lease, from 2014 to 2019, had been against the interests of Biman, and one of the aircrafts had to be grounded since 2017 due to engine defects. The two aircrafts had been returned in July and October of 2019, respectively, to Egypt Air.

The fact remains Biman is a highly

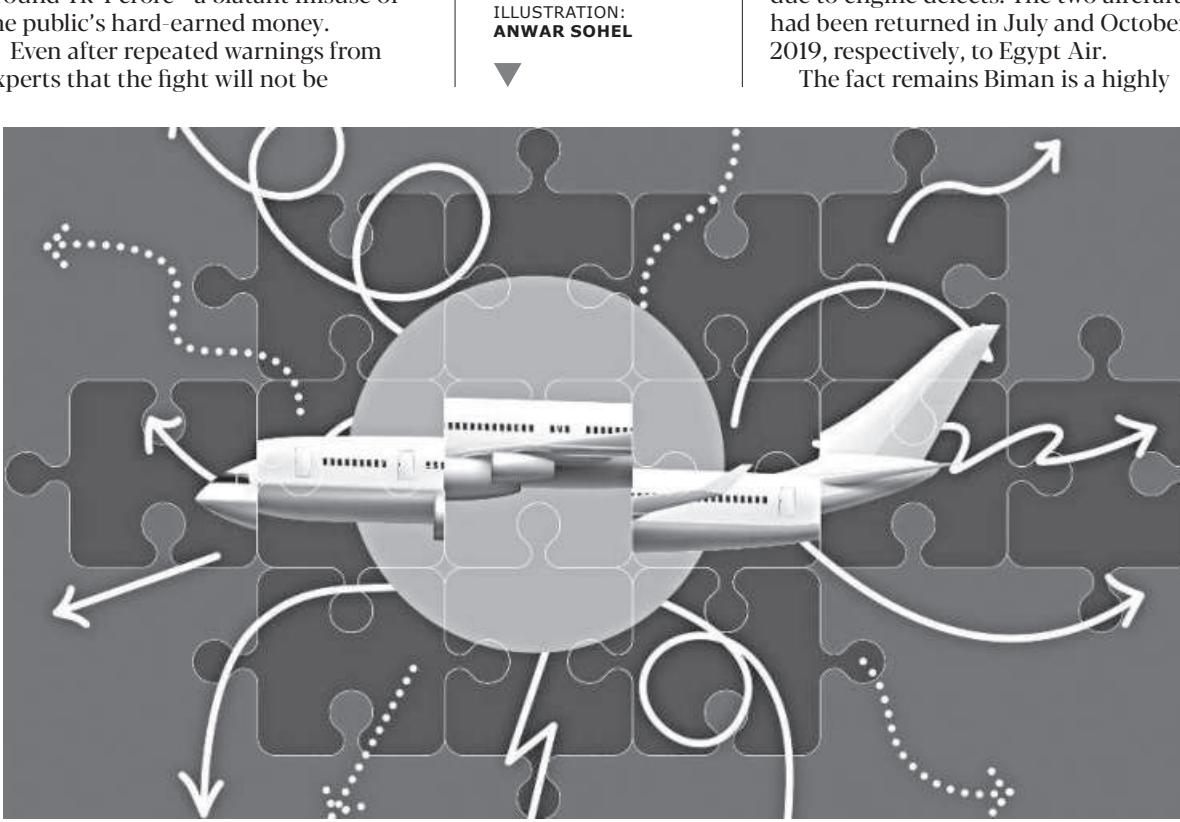
substandard customer service and their constant misuse of public money. Biman seems to enjoy some form of government protection, which is why they are hardly ever held accountable for their misadventures. Perhaps this has given them the idea that they can get away with anything. This scenario needs to be changed."

Dr Iftekharuzzaman further suggested a three-pronged strategy that the government can adopt to address the situation: Cleaning up the Biman board by appointing aviation industry experts whose strategic and policy directions will help steer the organisation in the right direction; streamlining the top management through the appointment of competent individuals who can implement strategies with a focus on achieving competitive edge in the international market; and introducing a stringent code of conduct to strengthen the internal control system and make Biman accountable internally and to the government.

In addition to these, the government also needs to demonstrate a strong political will to reform Biman internally and transform it into an efficient and profitable organisation. And it can do so by thoroughly investigating the misdeeds of Biman's management and officials and holding accountable the culprits, irrespective of their identity or political connections.

Biman, as an organisation, is in dire need of exhaustive Business Process Reengineering, without which it will never be able to come out of its laidback, government-office attitude, enforce internal accountability, or grow the appetite for commercial viability. If it is allowed to continue on its current course, its losses will only grow in scale and the public and the nation will suffer because of it.

The government should take a hard look at the mismanagement and misconduct of Biman's board and management, and immediately take uncompromising and committed measures to reform the organisation from within. Public money cannot be allowed to be wasted for the gains of certain vested quarters.



commercially viable—despite having 298 seats, the flight would be able to accommodate only 120 to 130 passengers because of fuel and luggage weight—Biman was confident that it would be the contrary. In the end, the flight was shelved because of its lack of commercial viability.

Now, the question is: Who is going to take responsibility for the massive wastage of public money? And why did Biman high-ups not take into consideration the opinion of experts? When is Biman going to be held accountable for its misdeeds?

Over the years, Biman has been embroiled in multiple controversies with regards to mismanagement and corruption. One would recall the leasing of two Boeing 777 aircrafts from Egypt Air, for which Biman had to face a loss of

**The government needs to demonstrate a strong political will to reform Biman internally and transform it into an efficient and profitable organisation.**

inefficient organisation, mired in corruption and mismanagement since its inception of its operation, resulting in loss after loss, and significant wastage of public money.

While discussing the issue with this writer, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, said, "Biman has so far run as a government organisation. They do not seem to have any business strategy or even a basic plan, and clearly operate on ad-hoc basis having no concern for value for money of investments and expenses. And Biman's organisation structure could not internalise the corporate culture required to compete in the international market, despite their salary and benefit structure, which is on par with corporate standard. This is reflected in their

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	33	Reads over	7	Sean of "The	
1 Confines	34	Crew members	8	Lord of the Rings"	
7 Tennis great	35	Dispatch	9	Cad	
Arthur	36	Hampers	10	Closest items	
11 Change over	37	Huron	11	Pencil part	
time	38	neighbor	12	Sum of one's	
12 Marquee name	39	Not nervous	13	actions	
13 Arts section	40	Pencil part	14	See 6-Down	
feature		40 Toadies	15	20 Turns	
14 Turner of song			16	suddenly	
15 Hat parts		22 Heartfelt	17		
16 Chess pieces		1 Cook's	18	See 6-Down	
17 Rose part		collection	19	20	
18 Big Apple		2 Tennis star	21	Turns	
player		Chris	22	suddenly	
19 At any time		3 Studio output	23		
21 Go wrong		4 More willowy	24	Fairy queen	
22 Party		5 Composer	25	Manor settings	
decorations		Charles	26	Trawler or	
25 Clock numeral		6 With 18- and	27	tanker	
26 Periods		36 Down,	28	Stopped	
27 Types in		beginning of a	29	30 First-string	
29 Race goal		sort	31	players	
			32	31 In itself	
			33	32 Green steel	
			34	city	
			35	34 Dole out	
			36	36 See 6-Down	

WRITE FOR US, SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO  
dsopinion@gmail.com.



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

A	S	C	O	T	F	O	C	U	S
S	C	O	R	E	I	W	O	N	T
S	A	M	B	A	T	E	M	P	I
E	L	I	C	S	I	L	L		
T	I	N	H	A	N	N	U	T	
S	A	G	G	E	E	G	G		
T	E	R	S	E	S	T			
Z	O	M	O	N	P	O	S	T	
A	B	A	A	N	T	A	T	E	
P	E	N	M	G	R	H	A	S	
A	R	E	N	A	G	E	N	T	
T	O	N	E	S	P	E	A	C	
A	N	D	E	S	S	E	D	E	

## New Message

Have things to say? Want your opinions about current events to be published in The Daily Star? Send us a short letter with your name and city!

Write to us:  
letters@thedadlystar.net

Send



## গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ

কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার) এর কর্মসূচি

ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট



উন্নত দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি-১

তারিখ-১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ

সেবক নং-৩৩১/ইন-সার্ভিস (সিলেট) এর জন্ম দিবসের জ্ঞাতব্য ও যোগ্যতার বিবরণী	আজাই দরদাতাদের জ্ঞাতব্য ও যোগ্যতার বিবরণী
জন্ম সংস্থাক সংস্থা ও তথ্যালীন বিবরণী	আজাই দরদাতাদের জ্ঞাতব্য ও যোগ্যতার বিবরণী
১. মুসলিম/মুসলিমান	ব্রহ্মা মুসলিম/জনমিত্রাপত্নী প্রভাগ।
২. সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩. দরপত্র আহ্বানের সূচী ও তারিখ	কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার), ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট।
৪. দরপত্রের প্রকার্তা	৩১/ইন-সার্ভিস তারিখ-১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ।
৫. দরপত্র আহ্বানের প্রকার্তা	৩১/ইন-সার্ভিস তারিখ-১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ।
৬. দরপত্র প্রয়োক্ত নথৰ	২২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বর্ষের পুলিশ হেডকোর্টার্স হিসেবে অর্থ বরাদ আপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।
৭. দরপত্র প্রিজিপ্টি প্রকার্তার তারিখ	০১/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ অর্থসূল।
৮. দরপত্র তহবিল কর্তৃপক্ষের তারিখ	১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ এবং পর্যবেক্ষণ কর্তৃপক্ষের তারিখ।
৯. দরপত্র তহবিল কর্তৃপক্ষের তারিখ	১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ (১০:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যবেক্ষণ সরকারী ছাটুর দিন ব্যাচ্চাত)।
১০. দরপত্র তহবিল কর্তৃপক্ষের তারিখ	০১/০৬/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ (১০:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যবেক্ষণ সরকারী ছাটুর দিন ব্যাচ্চাত)।
১১. দরপত্র বার্ষ খোলা তারিখ	০১/০৬/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ দরদাতা অথবা প্রতিনিধির সম্মতে ঘোষণা করে উপস্থিত দাতান দ্বারা বার্ষ খোলা হবে।
১২. দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	১৫/০৫/২০২২ষ্টৰ্থ এবং পর্যবেক্ষণ কর্তৃপক্ষের তারিখ।
১৩. দরপত্র সরকারী অধিকারী অফিসের নাম ও কর্মসূলি	কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার) ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট।
১৪. দরপত্র ডক্টরেন্টের অধিকারী/অফিস	কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার) ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট।
১৫. দরপত্র গৃহিণী/অধিকারী/অফিস	কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার) ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট।
১৬. দরপত্র হাজার স্থান	কমান্ডার্ট (পুলিশ সুপার) ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেইনিং সেন্টার, সিলেট।
১৭. দরপত্র আন্তর্বিক প্রক্রিয়ার তারিখ	পিপল্পত্র-২০২৮ এবং সাম্প্রদায়ী মোব