

Boeing wants to sell planes to Bangladesh at lower prices

Says Momen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US wants to sell Boeing planes to Bangladesh at lower prices, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, as Bangladesh plans to buy planes from the European aviation giant Airbus.

"The US made a proposal for buying aircraft from Boeing long ago, not before elections. They said if we buy Airbus aircraft, it may create problems. Also, Boeing then said it can provide us with aircraft at lower prices. This is good," he told journalists at the foreign ministry yesterday.

In May this year, Bangladesh signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UK to buy 10 aircraft from Airbus. The government also made a commitment to France during the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron this year.

"There are many countries that have fleets of both Boeing and Airbus. Currently, majority of Bangladesh's aircraft comes from Boeing. We want to diversify the fleet," Momen said.

He said Bangladesh signed the MoU for Airbus aircraft, but now there is a shortage of money.

The minister was asked about US Ambassador Peter Haas' recent meetings with the officials of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh and Biman Bangladesh and if there is any relation between trade with the US and sanctions.

Momen said the US officials have not spoken anything about sanctions, but such rumours were spread by the media.

He said making proposals about selling products to foreign countries is part of ambassadors' responsibility. Bangladeshi ambassadors do the same, but those of the developed countries do it more. "It is a request, not pressure. We don't mind it."

The minister said, "Our relations with the US are very sweet. I was in Ghana last week when a number of US representatives met me. They lauded us for our peacekeeping missions."

"I think we are looking forward to building a better and stronger relationship with the US in the days to come."

Momen said the US considers Bangladesh a friend and so puts forward advice.

"We accept the advice that we think is good for us, not the one that is impractical. They also don't worry about it."

Independents

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The AL general secretary said many foreign organisations have already said that they will send election observers to Bangladesh.

"The European Union's Technical Committee on Elections is in Bangladesh. They will be here until the election ends. India, Japan, Palestine, OIC, and Arab League will send observers. There is a list of more election observers. The names of others will be known soon," he added.

Quader said the BNP-Jamaat's programmes mean "burning of vehicles, violence, and secret attacks."

"Several buses were set on fire yesterday [Monday]. We want to say that the election cannot be foiled through committing violence and terrorism."

He called upon the EC and the law enforcement agencies to take a strong stance against those opposing the polls.

Al Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim and organising secretaries BM Mozammel Haque, SM Kamal Hossain, and Sujit Roy Nandi were present, among others, at the press conference.

Suicide attack

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earlier put the death toll at 24.

The army had set up the base camp in a police station complex in the Darabgan area of the district.

"The attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted, which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive-laden vehicle into the post, followed by a suicide bombing attack," the army statement said.

The resulting blasts led to the collapse of the building, causing multiple casualties, it added.

The army said the attack came a day after two soldiers were killed in different operations in the region, along with 21 militants.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar condemned the attack, a statement from his office said.

Several of the wounded were in critical condition, said Aizaz Mehmood, an official of the state-run rescue service.



PHOTO: NB MANSOOR, AZIZA AHMED

Charm of 100ft: Dhaka's NEW PLAYGROUND

NUSRATH JAHAN

Have you ever found yourself cruising down 100ft of Madani Avenue in Dhaka? As you turn to the Bhatara Police Box, and take the straight lane, you are officially on 100ft. The scenery transforms frame to frame from the chaotic energy of shops and stalls followed by restaurants and then a total calm sets in until you find yourself on the more fun side.

The long stretch of a road has, over time, transformed into a plethora of experiences waiting to be discovered. Sure, it's known for the Chef's Table Courtside, but the charms of 100ft extend far beyond the culinary delights of one food court.

As taking a shortcut would not do it justice, let's take a look at each of these stops.

Street markets

First and foremost, the crowd unanimously agrees that nothing compares to Bongo Bazar or Noor Jahan Market for getting your hands on casuals at a reasonable price, especially winter clothes. However, if you are a resident of Bashundhara or the surrounding area, both these places are far from feasible for you. The street markets of 100ft, showcasing a diverse range of casual wear, backpacks, shoes, etc are almost exact replicas of these



loved places.

It's a shopper's paradise, offering everything from chic tops and fashionable T-shirts to timeless shirts and cosy trousers.

Food haven

Traditional pithas, the ever-popular fuchka, and mouth-watering chotpoti beckon you to taste the flavours of Dhaka. And if you are in the mood for something heartier, the roadside restaurants serve up piping hot haleem, crispy paratha, kebabs, fluffy luchis, khichuri, tehari, and biriyani.

When you set out in 100ft, our taste buds are in for a journey of their own.

A million activities

If you continue driving, the scenery unfolds into an exciting new world. A local favourite, GoKart, adds a little zip line action with its go-karting track. Driving enthusiast or not, racing around this track is an adrenaline adventure that cannot be missed. While it is mostly visited with friends, it is a place where strangers will become your friends in a matter of minutes.

For the younger set, Courtside provides something extra unique. Fun rides take up a full portion and include classic train rides as well as swings, slides, and a bouncy castle. If you want to get creative with your children, seek out the Clay Station inside Chef's table. Not only is it fun, but this is one of the most amazing ways of spending quality time with your little ones where you both participate equally.

Just when you thought there could be no more attractions, Courtside transports you to a sizeable amusement area called Zero Gravity, where you can defy the laws of adulthood as well as gravity itself and unleash your inner child. Jump, leap, flip, and go crazy because the only rule for this one is to have fun!

All of these outdoor activities and places that are less than pleasant during the hot days of summer are marvellous for spending a winter day. With the crisp air and festive mood, take that trip down 100ft the next time you are seeking something new from your Dhaka experiences.

AL may not go for sharing seats with JP

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Sources said the PM, referring to recent meetings between AL and JP over share of seats, said that the JP had demanded 75 seats and the withdrawal of AL nominees and "AL independents" from those seats.

She questioned whether the JP could win 75 constituencies even without the BNP in the race.

During the one-hour meeting, Raushan, the widow of JP founder HM Ershad, urged Hasina neither to form any electoral alliance nor make a deal with the JP led by GM Quader, Ershad's brother, sources said.

Raushan's son, Rahgir Almaha Ershad (Saad Ershad) MP, spokesperson of the opposition leader Kazi Mamunur Rahim, and Opposition Chief Whip Moshiur Rahman Ranga were present during the meeting.

Asked after the meeting what the PM had said, Ranga, who has been expelled from the JP, told The Daily Star that Hasina told Zafarullah that there would be no deal or alliance with the JP.

The Daily Star could not reach Zafarullah despite repeated attempts.

When a reporter asked AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader about Raushan's meeting with Hasina, he said, "She [Raushan] is still the leader of the opposition. The leader of the opposition party can meet the leader of the House and also the prime minister."

Pressed for more information, he said Raushan might have expressed her anger.

"But the prime minister did not tell us anything, and we have not made any decision about forming an alliance with Jatiya Party or going to polls elections under an alliance [with Jatiya Party]. So, we cannot say the last word about this now."

GM Quader and Raushan's conflict has been making headlines since Ershad died in 2019.

Emerging from yesterday's meeting, GM Quader told reporters that GM Quader had seized the party illegally.

Asked whether Hasina told her anything about taking part in the polls, she said, "The time is up [for doing that]. What else will she say?"

The Jatiya Party chairman didn't behave well with us. He is



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greets Jatiya Party chief patron Raushan Ershad at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

contesting from my son's constituency [Rangpur-3]. He has forgotten about him [Raushan's son]."

Asked if she would support JP nominees, Raushan said, "They have intentionally removed us from the race. Why will we support them?"

Kazi Mamun later read out a statement from Raushan, saying, "While finalising the party's nomination, he [GM Quader] has dropped me, my son and important leaders of the Jatiya Party. He has taken the party's leadership through a coup d'état."

She urged the PM to ensure that the JP and its candidates run independently to make the polls more acceptable and competitive.

This is the first time in 27 years the five-time lawmaker is not running. She alleged that she could not take part in the polls despite being ready to run as long as it is ensured that the voters would be able to cast votes freely.

Asked about the PM's comment on Monday, Chunnu said, "What we can say is that we have come to take part in the election, not to quit."

The 80-year-old had welcomed the announcement of the election schedule and had said that the JP would take part in the polls.

The JP on November 27 announced its candidates for 287 seats. It did not nominate anyone in Mymensingh-4, where Raushan is the incumbent.

GM Quader will run in two constituencies, including Rangpur-3 where Saad Ershad is the incumbent.

The JP nominated HM Shahriar Asif, a cousin of GM Quader, in Rangpur-1, where Ranga is the incumbent.

This angered Raushan, Saad and other JP leaders loyal to Raushan.

JP Secretary General Chunnu at a press briefing in Dhaka yesterday said the JP has no intention to quit the race as long as it is ensured that the voters would be able to cast votes freely.

Asked about the PM's comment on Monday, Chunnu said, "What we can say is that we have come to take part in the election, not to quit."

According to the case statement, a group of leaders and activists of BNP and Jamaat and their front bodies gathered in front of Dania High School in the city's Demra around 9:00am on December 9, 2012. They vandalised vehicles, assaulted cops and prevented them from discharging their duties.

DISPUTED VOTE

US puts visa curbs on 300 Guatemalans

AFP, Washington

The United States on Monday imposed visa restrictions on some 300 Guatemalans, including around 100 lawmakers, whom Washington accuses of "undermining democracy" in the Central American country.

The sanctions come amid tensions in Guatemala, where the surprise second-round presidential election victory by anti graft candidate Bernardo Arevalo has been challenged by the country's prosecutor's office.

"We are taking steps to impose visa restrictions on nearly 300 Guatemalan nationals, including over 100 members of the Guatemalan congress, as well as private sector representatives and their family members for undermining democracy and the rule of law," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

"The United States will continue to take steps to impose such restrictions on any individuals undermine Guatemala's democracy," he added.

Arevalo's triumph and his pledge to fight corruption are widely seen in Guatemala as alarming to the establishment political elite.

Last week, after the prosecutor's office sought to annul the election results amid accusations of an "attempted coup," Guatemala's electoral court insisted the results were "unchangeable."

Miller said Monday, "the United States strongly condemns ongoing anti-democratic actions by Guatemala's Public Ministry and other malign actors who undermine Guatemala's rule of law."

Arevalo, 65, is set to take office January 14.

In addition to the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization of American States have repeatedly blasted Guatemalan prosecutors' efforts to annul the August election results.

ATTACK ON CJ RESIDENCE

SC upholds HC bail for BNP leader Nipun Roy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court orders that granted anticipatory bail to BNP leader Nipun Roy Chowdhury in four cases, including one filed over the vandalism of the chief justice's residence.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, dismissed four petitions filed by the state seeking stay on the HC bail orders.

On December 4, the HC granted anticipatory bail to Nipun, Dhaka district BNP general secretary, until January 11 next year and ordered her to surrender before the lower courts concerned in connection with the cases.

The cases were filed with Ramna, Paltan and South Keraniganj police stations over violence centring BNP's October 28 grand rally.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi appeared for the state while senior lawyer Md Badruddoza

Another 49 BNP-Jamaat men jailed

FROM PAGE 1

In a case filed with Bhatara Police Station in September 2018 over political violence, four leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were handed, in absentia, three years' rigorous imprisonment each by a Dhaka court yesterday.

The convicts are BNP leader Md Ataur Rahman, former chairman of Bhatara Union Parishad, and its members Abdul Aziz, Mosharrif Hossain Swapan, and Md Helal Uddin.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arfatul Rakib also issued conviction warrants against the four and directed the officer-in-charge of Bhaba Police Station to comply with its order.

The magistrate acquitted 16 other accused as the prosecution failed to probe the charges against them beyond reasonable doubt.

According to the case statement, a group of leaders and activists of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami gathered in front of Fansertek around 8:15pm on September 19, 2018. They created anarchy and made an attempt to overturn law and order in the area.

After an investigation, police submitted the charge sheet in the case against the 20 on January 25, 2019.

Also yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mehedi Hassan sentenced, in absentia, 25 leaders and activists of BNP-Jamaat and their front organisations to 30 months' rigorous imprisonment each in a case filed with Demra Police Station on February 6, 2013.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arfatul Rakib handed down the sentences in absence of the convicts in the courtroom.

The magistrate issued conviction warrants against the 11 and directed the Kamrangirchar Police Station OC to execute its order.

After an investigation, police submitted the charge sheet in the case against the accused on April 20, 2014 on charges of creating anarchy in Jaffrabad area of Kamrangirchar.