

Biman signs \$3.7b deal with Boeing

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for the purchase, while the government will provide a sovereign guarantee.

"The new fuel-efficient, technologically advanced aircraft will modernise Biman's fleet, sharpen operational performance, and extend its international route network -- strengthening Bangladesh's position in the global aviation market."

Biman's board chairman, Rumea A Hossain, said, "The new aircraft will raise daily seat capacity to more than 5,000 and enhance cargo handling capability."

Paul Righi, vice president of Boeing Company, said Biman has become one of the few carriers worldwide to operate the full family of 787 Dreamliners -- the 787-8, 787-9 and 787-10.

He noted that the 787-10 will deliver unmatched efficiency and increased capacity on high-demand routes, including the Middle East, while the 787-9 will serve long-haul routes to Europe and North America.

US Ambassador Brent T Christensen said, "We're proud this purchase is being financed by the Export-Import Bank of the United States, with terms that will reduce the burden on Biman's cash flows that align with aircraft delivery schedules."

This marks Biman's first aircraft purchase agreement in 18 years, aimed at modernising its fleet, boosting long-haul capacity, opening new international routes and strengthening regional operations.

After becoming a public limited company in 2007, Biman inked a deal with Boeing for 10 new planes in 2008. Two more were later added, bringing the total to 12 aircraft at a cost of around Tk 19,020 crore.

Biman's current fleet is dominated by Boeing aircraft, with 14 of its 19 planes from Boeing. The remaining five are Dash 8 aircraft manufactured by De Havilland Canada.

The deal to purchase Boeing aircraft was part of the interim government's strategy to reduce Bangladesh's trade gap with the US and secure tariff relief.

During negotiations over the 37 percent reciprocal tariff imposed by Washington last year, Dhaka had signalled plans to order 25 Boeing aircraft.

Through negotiations, the rate was cut to 20 percent effective August 1, 2025, and further reduced to 19

percent under a trade agreement signed with the US on February 9, 2026. The civil aviation ministry approved the acquisition during the interim government, with only the formal signing pending.

The deal concludes more than three years of competition between Boeing and European rival Airbus for Biman's next major fleet order.

A deal with Airbus gained traction in 2023 through high-level European engagement, including French President Emmanuel Macron's visit and references in a Bangladesh-UK joint statement to a possible purchase of 10 Airbus aircraft, including freighters.

Under the previous Awami League government, a policy decision had been announced to buy 10 Airbus planes.

for carriers with small fleets, mixed operations bring disadvantages. "An airline must choose its fleet considering routes and distances."

Biman has faced a shortage of aircraft in recent years after failing to secure planes through leasing, disrupting service to existing routes and delaying the launch of new services.

Officials said the 14 new aircraft are essential to expand capacity, strengthen international connectivity and meet future passenger and cargo demand.

On April 22, at a civil aviation ministry meeting, Biman outlined plans to operate flights to Yangon, Malé, New York, Kunming, Bahrain, Sydney, Wuhan, Jakarta and Seoul.

Experts noted that aircraft alone are not enough, stressing the need for

21 killed in mob violence in April: MSF

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Philippinar in Kushtia's Daulatpur upazila, triggering a huge outcry.

The persistent killings in mob violence were also discussed in parliament recently.

On April 20, Brahmanbaria-2 MP Rumeen Farhana told parliament that mob attacks continue despite repeated assurances from the home minister that such incidents will not be allowed in the country.

MSF, in its April report, said that as mob violence has not eased, the issue of public sense of security has become a matter of serious concern.

MSF statistics show that among the victims killed in mob beatings in April, three were killed over murder allegations,

seven over theft allegations, seven following altercations, two over robbery allegations, one over allegations of insulting remarks, and one over a land dispute.

At least 30 of the injured victims were handed over to the police, it added.

The rights body said that although there are signs of improvement in some areas of the human rights situation from March to April, deterioration or new risks are clearly noticeable in several other sectors, including violence against women and children and attacks on journalists.

MSF findings show that at least 312 incidents of violence against women and children were recorded in April, which is 23 more than the previous month. During the month, 54 rape

incidents, 14 gang rape incidents, and one case of rape and murder were reported. Among the victims, six were girls and women with disabilities.

Among the 54 rape victims, 18 were children and 14 were adolescent girls. Furthermore, in April, a total of 89 children, adolescent girls, and women were victims of murder, while the number was 73 in March.

MSF said that killings and injuries stemming from political violence decreased in April compared to March. In April, three people were killed and 303 were injured, while 14 people were killed and 390 were injured in March.

According to MSF, a total of six people died in jail custody in April. In the previous month, the number was 11.

A mixed fleet would not be viable for Biman, which operates only 19 aircraft. You would need a whole new set of everything, including pilots, crews, engineers, and hangars for a mixed fleet, which will increase operational costs.



Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam

But after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster in the face of a mass uprising in August 2024 and amid pressure over US tariffs, the interim government shifted in favour of Boeing.

Debate over Boeing versus Airbus surfaced, with European officials arguing that Airbus would diversify Biman's all Boeing fleet, while Boeing mounted a strong push to retain dominance.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said a mixed fleet would not be viable for Biman, which operates only 19 aircraft. "You would need a whole new set of everything, including pilots, crews, engineers and hangars for a mixed fleet, which will increase operational costs."

He cautioned, however, that relying solely on one manufacturer may undermine competitiveness.

Another expert, ATM Nazrul Islam, said airlines can bargain better if they buy from both companies, but

manpower development, including pilots and cabin crew, as well as proper fleet and route planning. They said Biman has struggled to utilise its existing aircraft due to shortages of pilots and crew and poor management.

Although Bangladesh has air service agreements with about 50 countries, Biman currently flies to 22 international destinations in 14 countries, mostly short- and medium-haul. At its peak, Biman operated flights to 29 destinations, from New York to Tokyo and major European cities.

Despite a large captive market and loyal passengers, Biman's market share on international routes is only about 25 percent, due to limited aircraft, poor service, mismanagement, weak planning and marketing, and lack of professionals, experts said.

Even so, Biman has posted profits for five consecutive years, recording a net profit of Tk 785 crore in fiscal 2024-25.

US suffered a 'shameful defeat'

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serving Iran.

And Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said control of Hormuz would allow Tehran to "provide itself and its neighbours with the precious blessing of a future free from American presence and interference".

Trump was expected to receive a briefing yesterday on new plans for potential military action in Iran from Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of US Central Command, two sources with knowledge of US planning told news site Axios.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned, meanwhile, that it was "possible that we may soon have to act again" against Iran to achieve the war's objectives.

But the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards aerospace force, Majid Mousavi, said that even a "short and tactical" enemy operation would be met with "with painful, prolonged, and extensive strikes".

"We have already seen the fate of your bases in the region; we will also see your warships" face the same, he

added, speaking to state TV.

This week Trump has reportedly told oil executives and national security officials to prepare for a long US blockade designed to force Tehran to surrender its nuclear programme, and, speaking to Axios, said: "They are choking like a stuffed pig."

US Central Command said Wednesday in a social media post that it had reached a "significant milestone after successfully redirecting the 42nd commercial vessel attempting to violate the blockade".

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called the US blockade "a disruption to lasting stability" in the Gulf that was "doomed to fail".

Oil prices struck a four-year high yesterday. International benchmark Brent crude soared more than seven percent to \$126 a barrel, but then eased in afternoon trading in London.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the closure of Hormuz was "strangling the global economy" and International Energy Agency chief Fatih Birol told a meeting at his Paris headquarters: "The world is facing the biggest energy crisis

in history."

Trump faces domestic political pressure to end the war, which is unpopular even with much of his base, and has increased costs for American consumers and unnerved US allies.

Iran's economy is also suffering, and the rial has fallen to historic lows against the dollar.

Iran proposed easing its chokehold over the Strait of Hormuz if Washington lifted its blockade and broader negotiations took place. But the Trump administration has insisted that Iran's nuclear programme be on the table.

Violence has continued on the war's Lebanese front, despite a recently extended ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least nine people, the health ministry said Thursday, shortly after Lebanese President Joseph Aoun denounced what he called "continuing Israeli violations" of the truce.

The Israeli military yesterday said that another soldier had been killed in Lebanon's south -- the 17th since the campaign there began.

BNP moves to reign in its ranks

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organisational decisions.

Several senior leaders have taken up government responsibilities as ministers or lawmakers, while many others have been removed from party posts or are inactive.

This has created a vacuum in the organisational structure and weakened coordination between the central leadership and grassroots units.

Decision-making has also slowed in some areas because many influential leaders are now busy with government and parliamentary work.

BNP policymakers have primarily identified a breakdown in the chain of command, lack of coordination, internal feud and weak supervision as major reasons behind the situation.

Unacceptable activities by some leaders of associated bodies and front organisations are leaving a negative impact on people, said a BNP standing committee member, who is also a minister, seeking anonymity.

"The government and the party cannot be separated in people's eyes. If party activists behave poorly, people will also blame the government. It is a wake-up call for both the government and the party."

More than two months have passed since the election.

"The government is trying to perform well, but a section of party leaders and activists is doing things that are hurting the party's image," he added.

Party insiders said Tarique is considering a quick reorganisation of the BNP's front and associate bodies, alongside measures to strengthen the party's grassroots network.

He wants to keep the party active outside the government, they said.

For this, Tarique may assign senior

leaders who were not made ministers or MPs to oversee the reorganisation process and make party activities more dynamic.

BNP leaders said the party also wants to hold its national council by the end of the year.

Before that, it wants to activate grassroots units, reduce internal divisions and update committees at different levels.

The BNP last held its national council on March 19, 2016. Under the party constitution, a council is supposed to be held every three years.

Party leaders said the council could not be held during the last 17 years of Awami League rule because of political, legal and organisational constraints.

The council is important because it decides the party's key committees and sets the organisational direction for the next term, they said.

Meanwhile, the terms of 10 out of 11 committees of the BNP's affiliated and associate bodies have expired, according to party insiders.

The committees of Chhatra Dal, Svecchhasebak Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Muktiyoddha Dal, Sramik Dal, Tanti Dal and Jatiotabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS) have expired.

Subo Dal is still running with a partial committee, while Matsyajibi Dal has had no committee since 2024.

Chhatra Dal's committee expired on March 1 this year. The Subo Dal central committee remains incomplete one and a half years after a partial committee was announced on July 9, 2024.

The Svecchhasebak Dal committee, formed on September 4, 2022, completed its term last year. Krishak Dal's committee expired one and a half years ago.

Mohila Dal's committee, formed in 2016 for a two-year term, has been functioning for nearly a decade. Muktiyoddha Dal and Sramik Dal are also operating with committees formed more than a decade ago.

The Tanti Dal committee, formed in 2019, completed its term in 2022. Matsyajibi Dal's committee was dissolved in September 2024, but no new committee has been announced. JASAS's three-year committee has been in place for nearly five years.

US deployments in Europe 'in US interest': EU

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday said that the deployment of US troops in Europe was in Washington's interest, after President Donald Trump threatened to cut force numbers in Germany.

European Union spokeswoman Anitta Hipper said the United States was "a vital partner in contributing to Europe's security and defence".

"The deployment of US troops in Europe is also in the US interest in support of its global role," she added.

Trump said the United States was considering reducing its troop deployment, following a row with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the Iran war.

The spat is the latest to rile up Trump against Washington's European NATO allies, with the US leader already lashing out over their response to his attack on Iran.

Most reserved seat picks

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candidates, 26 (72.22 percent) are multimillionaires, while among Jamaat-e-Islami's nine candidates, five (56 percent) are multimillionaires. Additionally, the sole candidate from Jatiya Ganotantrik Party is also a multimillionaire.

Candidates with an average annual income of more than Tk 10 lakh account for 38.78 percent (19 people); among directly elected general seat MPs, this rate is 67.9 percent.

However, overall, in the 13th parliamentary election, including directly elected and reserved women's seat members, the total number of multimillionaires is 269, which is 77.3 percent.

According to the affidavit information, the highest number of women candidates in reserved seats are lawyers: 26.5 percent.

The second highest profession is business (22.5 percent).

In addition, 12.2 percent are homemakers, 10.2 percent are teachers and 8.2 percent are directly involved in politics. Doctors account for 4.1 percent and the other professionals also make

up 4.1 percent.

At least three candidates for women's reserved seats have more than 100 bhoori of gold ornaments either in their own names or jointly with their spouses. Among them, one candidate alone has 502 bhoori of gold ornaments in her own name.

Analysis of the total assets of multimillionaire candidates in reserved seats shows that their total immovable assets exceeding Tk 1 crore amount to Tk 66 crore and total movable assets amount to Tk 78 crore.

However, when immovable and movable assets are added separately, the total amount of assets stands at Tk 152 crore.

Party-wise, the rate of indebtedness is equal for BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami candidates at 22.22 percent. However, compared to reserved seat candidates (20.41 percent), directly elected MPs (50.84 percent) have 2.49 times higher indebtedness.

The analysis also highlights that 20.41 percent of candidates are in some form of debt or liability.

The average age of candidates for reserved seats is 52.17 years.

By age group, the highest number of

ICT asks how Qamrul got foreign report

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Qamrul was allowed treatment at Bangladesh Medical University, where he remains. His lawyer later sought his transfer to Evercare Hospital, submitting several medical reports, and the tribunal initially approved the move.

At yesterday's hearing, Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam questioned the authenticity of those reports, saying defence documents showed Qamrul obtained a report from Mount Elizabeth Hospital on February 12 while in jail. He asked how such a report could be issued without the tribunal's permission.

The tribunal pressed the defence on how the report was obtained and how a doctor issued it without

court approval. The defence said the examinations had been conducted with permission from a lower court. When the order was read out in the court, a tribunal member noted it contained no such provision.

The chief prosecutor also said another report submitted by the defence was signed by a doctor from a diagnostic centre in Kamrangirchar, within Qamrul's former constituency. The tribunal chair questioned whether the doctor exists and how the report was issued without approval.

Contacted later, a lawyer for Qamrul told The Daily Star they were preparing to submit a certified copy of the lower court order permitting the

examinations.

CHARGES FRAMED
Earlier, the tribunal framed three charges against former minister Rashed Khan Menon and Qamrul over alleged crimes against humanity linked to killings on July 19, 2024.

Asked in the dock, both pleaded not guilty and said they expected justice.

The charges allege that Menon, Qamrul and Awami League leaders attended a 14 party meeting chaired by then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, which directed suppression of the anti-discrimination student movement and a nationwide curfew, after which deaths, injuries and crimes against humanity allegedly occurred.

Bangladesh slides 3 spots

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performance is analysed through five distinct lenses: political climate, legislative structures, economic pressures, social dynamics, and physical security.

Bangladesh performed poorer in economic, legal, and social indicators this year, which dragged its score down again.

In South Asia, Bangladesh is still ahead of Pakistan and India in ranking, but only by one and five notches respectively.

Nepal is 65 places ahead of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka 18, and Bhutan two.

About the Asia-Pacific, RSF said in its report, "It is one of the most repressive regions in the world -- and the situation continues to deteriorate."

"On paper, virtually every country in the region recognises press freedom. In practice, the principle is systematically violated."

Globally, for the first time in a quarter of a century, the overall average score of all the countries assessed has

never been so low, said RSF.

In over half of the world's countries and territories (52.2 percent), the state of press freedom is categorised as "difficult" or "very serious".

The "very serious" category was a small minority (13.7 percent) in 2002, when 20 percent of the global population lived in a country where the state of press freedom was categorised as "good".

Twenty-five years later, less than 1 percent of the world's population lives in a country that falls under the "good" category, the index showed.

Shamima appointed Dhaka SP

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police officers, including Shamima, were transferred to different postings through two separate notifications issued by the Police-1 branch of the home ministry.

The notifications were signed by Deputy Secretary Tausif Ahmed on behalf of the president.

Among those transferred were six SP-ranked officers and six officers of the rank of additional deputy inspector general.

According to the notifications, current Dhaka SP Mizanur Rahman has been transferred as SP of the Police Bureau of Investigation.

Bagerhat SP Mohammad Hasan Chowdhury has been made SP of Chattogram Range, while DMP Deputy Commissioner Hasan Mohammad Naser Rikabdar, who holds SP rank, has been posted as SP of Bagerhat.

In another order, Commandant of the In Service Training Centre in Sathkira Md Mokbul Hossain has been transferred to the same post in Kushtia.

Commander of Dhaka Armed Police Battalion-12 Md Iqbal has been made commander of Dhaka APBn-5, while Highway Police Additional DIG Md Enamul Kabir has been posted as commander of Dhaka APBn-12.

Commander of Dhaka APBn-13

Mohammad Sihab Qaiser Khan has been transferred as additional DIG of PBI.

RAB Directors Mohammad Kamruzzaman and Md Khalidul Haque Howlader have been made joint commissioners of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

DMP Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Robiul Hossain Bhuiyan has been made SP of the River Police, while APBn Additional SP Nusrat Jahan Mukta has been transferred as additional SP of the Special Branch.

The notifications said the transfers were made in the public interest and would take immediate effect.

Farmers race to save crops as rains pause

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of the four days due to the persistent rainfall finally broke.

Since yesterday morning, hundreds of farmers and children were seen busy threshing, drying and boiling paddy.

"Now that we have the sun, it will help us reduce our losses," said farmer Roish Uddin.

Paddy dries in a day if there is enough sunlight. "But we were not in luck for long," he added.

Sitting beside his submerged land in Medar Beel of Kalmakanda in Netrokona, farmer Abdul Hai said: "The weather is improving, but everything is already lost for me."

Out of ten acres, he managed to harvest two acres, and the rest are underwater.

"I don't feel like staying at home. I am sitting here with the hope that the weather improves and my paddy will reappear," he said.

Though the weather was favourable all day, thousands of farmers struggled to harvest paddy due to the shortage of agricultural labourers.

Take the case of Jahir Uddin, an elderly farmer of Korchar Haor in Jogaigaon village in Sunamganj Sadar Upazila.

He harvested more than 100 sacks of paddy, but the sacks remain unopened as the family has no money to employ labourers to do the job.

"We hope that the weather continues like this and we can dry the paddy," said Jahir, whose wife, Rebeka Begum, is helping him dry paddy.

With no sunshine for eight days, the paddy they had harvested started sprouting.

"As the sun showed up in the sky today [Thursday], we are trying to dry as much as possible," Rebeka said.

The relief, however, may not last, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) and Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

The BMD yesterday issued a warning of heavy (44-88mm) to very heavy (over 88mm) rainfall over the Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions in the next 48 hours starting 1:00 pm Thursday.

In a bulletin issued yesterday, FFWC said there could be heavy to very heavy rainfall over the haor region in the next seven days and the flood situation could deteriorate.

Rainfall data shows no heavy rain recorded in the Haor regions or the Indian upstream areas. The water level at

Manu in Moulvibazar has receded below the pre-monsoon danger level, though four other rivers show a slight rise.

According to the FFWC, the Khowai River in Habiganj and Someshwari, Bhugai-Kangsha and Mogra rivers in Netrokona are flowing slightly above the danger mark at 3:00 pm yesterday.

With the projection of heavy to very heavy rainfall, the FFWC forecasts the Kushiara may breach the danger level soon and the Surma will approach the danger mark by Sunday, flooding more low-lying areas in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

The Baulai River at Khaliajuri may also cross the danger mark as early as Saturday, worsening conditions in Netrokona.

With no significant rainfall in the northeast region and upstream of India, the rivers showed a good sign of receding or standing still, said Partho Protim Barua, sub-divisional engineer of the FFWC.

While there is a forecast of rainfall in the coming days, the situation will not deteriorate anytime soon, he added.

[Our correspondents Dwaha Chowdhury, Mintu Deshwara, Jaydul Islam and Talsilul Aziz contributed to the report]