

UNB Report

National flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines is going to appoint another foreigner as its managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) although the Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister had asked to find a native person for the post.

According to the Biman sources, Managing Director (MD) of South African budget carrier Fastjet, Kyle Haywood, is going to be the next boss of Biman Bangladesh Airlines 'if everything goes well'.

The Board of Directors of the national flag carrier in a meeting recently approved a proposal of the selection committee to appoint the South-African-born British citizen.

"As I know, Biman Board has already short listed the person for the post and sent offer letter," Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon told on Monday.

He said that the person who was sent the offer letter is a foreign national.

When his attention was drawn about his previous remarks to appoint the new Biman MD and CEO from among the locals, the Minister said he had given this instruction to the Biman Board during a previous meeting. "But, the board did not find any suitable person for the job from among the local professionals," he added.

On April 20, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon while holding a meeting with the high-ups of the national flag carrier emphasized finding a local person for appointing as the managing director.

"We want to pick a person from the country; if we fail to find anyone at home we'll then look for someone from outside. If a foreigner can run Biman as MD, why can't we do it?" Menon had told the meeting then.

Biman had received 40 applications for its vacant post of managing director and chief executive officer.

The sub-committee headed by Civil Aviation Secretary Khurshed Alam Chowdhury made a short-list from the applicants.

According to sources at Biman, a total of 26 foreign nationals and 14 Bangladeshis showed their interest in taking the charge of Biman.

Biman, a losing concern for the last couple of years, on April 9 invited applications from deserving Bangladeshis and foreign nationals for the post. The last date for submission of applications was May 16.

Candidates aged between 45 and 60 years, having minimum 20 years experience in aviation, including 10 years in a senior management or directorial position and with detailed knowledge of airline marketing, were asked to apply for the post.

The aspirant candidates faced a preliminary interview. Of the applicants living abroad faced the interview through videoconferencing.

Later, the short-listed candidates were given a special problem-solving assignment to prove their ability for the post. Based on their performance, candidates were invited for the final interview.

After the interview, the Biman Board made the final selection and sent the offer letter.

Kyle Haywood served in traditional carriers such as British Airways and Etihad Airways, and low-cost carrier Air Arabia. He also served as the CEO of Air Uganda.

Sources in the Biman Board said that primary negotiations about salary had been done. The immediate past Biman MD and CEO used to get Tk 18.30 lakh as his salary.

The post of the MD and CEO of Biman has been lying vacant since April 17 last as the first-ever foreign MD of the national flag carrier Kevin Steele resigned from the post showing personal reasons.

Steele was appointed the MD and CEO of Biman in March 2013 for a two-year term. For the first time in Biman's history, Steele, a foreign national, joined the national carrier on March 13 with monthly salary of Tk 18.30 lakh. The British national was also provided with a flat in a posh area of capital Dhaka to stay, transport facilities and 12 free business-class tickets a year. AM Mosaddique Ahmed, a director of Biman, is currently serving as the acting managing director and CEO of the national flag carrier.