

Nepal seeks Bhadrapur/Biratnagar-Saidpur flights

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Kathmandu has proposed Dhaka to establish regional air connectivity from Bhadrapur to Saidpur and Biratnagar to Saidpur with visa on arrival facility in Bangladesh.

Nepal has also offered to export yarn to Bangladesh through the Banglabandha land port.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has shown interest in investing in two hydro power plants in Nepal. Bangladesh will import this electricity through India. Thus, Dhaka emphasised a tripartite meeting with the two neighbouring countries.

With these agendas, the third two-day long Foreign Office Consultation between Dhaka and Kathmandu, which took place on April 12 in Nepal's Pokhara, emphasised various bilateral issues such as increasing trades and investment, removing non-tariff barriers, and mutual assistance in fisheries and agriculture sectors.

At a recent inter-ministerial meeting on the consultation, Foreign Ministry Secretary (East) Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams said Nepal has been requesting for visa on arrival at Banglabandha land port, the only notified customs station for Nepal via India.

Nepal issues visa on arrival to Bangladeshi citizens at its Kakorvita land port.

She also informed that the Nepalese side proposed Bhadrapur-Saidpur and Biratnagar-Saidpur flights and also shared a concept paper on it.

Earlier, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave guidelines to use Saidpur and Lalmonirhat airports to further boost connectivity with Nepal and Bhutan, and make those airports regional air hubs.

In the consultation meeting, the Bangladesh side sought aircraft details and preferred frequency of flights from Nepalese side.

Officials at the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism said upgradation of Saidpur airport is ongoing. The airport is now being used as a domestic airport for the northern districts-bound passengers.

The first Foreign Office Consultation between the two neighbours was held on July 31, 2012 in Dhaka while the second meeting was held five years later in October 2017, again, in Dhaka.