

## Biman planning to launch direct flights to Male : PM

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Bangladesh's national carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines is thinking of launching direct flights on Dhaka-Male route. The country hopes, with direct flights, people-to-people contact and exchange of tourism will be further increased.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this on December 23 while delivering her joint press statement at the Presidential Office in Maldives during her visit to the island nation.

The Premier noted with satisfaction that the direct air connectivity between Bangladesh and Maldives has been enhanced through the commencement of flights by Bangladeshi carrier US-Bangla Airlines.

She added that the Bangladesh government has decided to facilitate visas on arrival for Maldivian nationals in the context of the improved situation of the current pandemic.

In her speech, she laid emphasis on fully tapping the potentials of bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and Maldives.

The Prime Minister mentioned that she had a detailed discussion with Maldivian President Solih on promoting bilateral trade, investment, and connectivity between the two countries.

She said, both the countries also reviewed the possibility of establishing a direct shipping line.

"We also discussed the regularisation of undocumented Bangladeshi nationals

whose substantial contributions to both economies," the Premier said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina claimed Bangladesh, with its growing manufacturing capacity, would be able to supply many quality products to the Maldives at competitive prices.

The Premier also reemphasised the necessity of a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two countries and a bilateral investment protection arrangement for mutual facilitation of investment.

She mentioned that both agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation, especially in Health, Education, Human Resources Development, Youth and Sports, Fisheries, and Agriculture.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction that Bangladesh has accepted the Maldives' proposal for recruiting health professionals from Bangladesh; vis-s-vis, we'll create opportunities for specialised postgraduate medical courses for Maldivian students," the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home on December 27 from the Maldives wrapping up her six-day visit from December 22 to the island nation at the invitation of the county's President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.