

India greenlights sea-air route for Bangladeshi exports

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Dhaka : The Indian government approved Bangladesh's transshipment cargo to be handled at the Delhi Air Cargo complex. An air freight window for Bangladesh transit cargo is available from February 15, according to India's Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC).

Since June 2020 till now, Bangladeshi shippers have had air freight access from the Kolkata air cargo complex. However, the fewer flight connections there, including for freighters, had put pressure on their ability to take advantage of this alternative trade corridor.

CBEC said using the Delhi Air Cargo facility would improve cargo evacuation and logistics efficiency, as per reports.

Transshipment through India can also lead to significant cost savings for Bangladeshi exporters, as it allows them to take advantage of the lower air cargo rates and more competitive shipping options available through

Delhi Air Cargo, added the neighbouring country's industry insiders, as per reports.

Transshipment through Delhi Air Cargo will allow Bangladesh exporters to reach a wider reach of markets, including those in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, which may not be accessible directly from Bangladesh, mentioned stakeholders.

Also, the Delhi air freight opening builds on a sea-rail multimodal logistics system CBEC laid out in September to permit transshipment of Bangladesh export containers from Nhava Sheva and Mundra ports by sea.

Under this trans loading arrangement, laden boxes from Bangladesh are transported by barge or coastal ships to Kolkata or Haldia, and then loaded onto trains connecting Nhava Sheva or Mundra.

Historically, for sea freight, in the absence of direct mainline services, Bangladesh containers have mostly been feedered to Sri Lanka's Colombo Port or Singapore.

The alternative transshipment facilitation push, both for sea and air services, comes as the Bangladesh government and local exporters are looking to capitalise on global sourcing shifts away from China, with RMG goods leading that migration.