

Bangladesh, Maldives explore direct shipping, halal food trade cooperation

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Dhaka: Bangladesh and the Maldives have discussed strengthening bilateral economic cooperation with a focus on launching direct shipping connectivity and expanding collaboration in the halal food industry.

The issue was raised when the Bangladesh High Commissioner to the Maldives, Dr. Md. Nazmul Islam, met Maldivian Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Mohamed Ameen in Malé, according to a press release from the Bangladesh embassy.

Both sides emphasized that establishing direct shipping links would play a critical role in boosting trade, improving logistics efficiency, and reducing transportation costs. Enhanced maritime connectivity was seen as a practical step toward facilitating smoother trade flows and building more resilient supply chains between the two countries.

A key highlight of the meeting was the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Direct Shipping. The High Commissioner briefed the minister on the progress of discussions and reiterated Bangladesh's readiness to finalize the agreement at an early date. He noted that direct shipping would significantly cut transit time and bring greater predictability to cargo movement, benefiting businesses and consumers in both countries.

The meeting also explored growing opportunities in the halal food industry, an area of shared economic and cultural importance. Dr. Islam highlighted Bangladesh's capacity to export a wide range of halal-certified products, including processed foods, beverages, and packaged goods that meet international standards. He expressed interest in working with Maldivian stakeholders on investments, supply chains, and quality assurance mechanisms to expand halal trade.

Minister Ameen welcomed the proposal for direct shipping, saying it could enhance bilateral trade volumes and strengthen regional supply networks. He also pointed to the potential use of Maldivian ports and airports for cargo operations, indicating the Maldives' interest in expanding its logistics role in the region.

During the meeting, Minister Ameen thanked Bangladesh for its timely support in supplying drinking water during a previous crisis, describing it as a reflection of the strong friendship between the two nations.

The High Commissioner also welcomed the planned resumption of Maldivian Airlines flights to Bangladesh in March 2026, noting that improved air connectivity would complement maritime links and strengthen people-to-people ties.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in direct shipping, trade facilitation, halal food industry engagement, and transport connectivity, underscoring the long-standing friendship and growing economic partnership between Bangladesh and the Maldives.

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