

Bangladesh, Maldives eye stronger people-to-people, service-sector links in economic talks

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Dhaka: Bangladesh and the Maldives have expressed interest in strengthening people-to-people engagement and service-sector cooperation as part of broader efforts to deepen bilateral economic relations during a meeting between Bangladesh's High Commissioner to the Maldives and the Maldives National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI).

High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the Maldives Dr. Md. Nazmul Islam held talks with MNCCI President Mohamed Mamdooh and senior members of the chamber's board and management to explore avenues for expanding trade, business, and investment cooperation between the two countries, read a press release on 19 January.

The discussions, held in a cordial and forward-looking atmosphere, placed emphasis on enhancing bilateral business relations, technical

collaboration, cultural interaction, and greater engagement between private-sector stakeholders—areas considered vital for strengthening cross-border movement and connectivity.

MNCCI representatives stressed the importance of improving public awareness and perception of Bangladesh's development progress, particularly in infrastructure, manufacturing, technology, and services. In this regard, the chamber expressed interest in organizing a high-level visit to Bangladesh accompanied by a media delegation to directly observe the country's transformation and share those experiences with Maldivian stakeholders.

The chamber also proposed organizing joint business fairs and trade expos and pursuing memoranda of understanding with relevant Bangladeshi institutions to institutionalize cooperation and encourage greater private-sector participation.

MNCCI officials acknowledged Bangladesh's timely support to the Maldives during past water supply crises, describing it as a gesture of friendship and solidarity. They also expressed interest in Bangladesh's microcredit and financial inclusion models as potential tools to support small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Responding to the proposals, High Commissioner Dr. Nazmul Islam highlighted the deep historical and people-to-people ties between Bangladesh and the Maldives, noting that economic diplomacy has become an increasingly important pillar of bilateral relations.

He pointed to growing regional transshipment activities as an opportunity to expand connectivity, logistics, and supply-chain linkages between the two countries, adding that Bangladesh's expanding industrial base, skilled workforce, and strategic geographic location offer scope for closer collaboration across multiple sectors.

The High Commissioner also paid tribute to Bangladeshi nationals working in the Maldives, noting their professionalism and positive contributions to the local economy and society.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, and economic connectivity, with an emphasis on private-sector engagement and people-to-people interaction. The meeting concluded with optimism that enhanced economic engagement

would further consolidate Bangladesh-Maldives relations and deliver long-term mutual benefits.

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