

## Bangladesh–Maldives academic talks highlight prospects for educational tourism

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Dhaka: Bangladesh and the Maldives have moved to deepen academic and cultural cooperation, with fresh emphasis on educational tourism and cross-border student mobility, following a meeting between the Bangladesh High Commissioner and the Vice Chancellor of Maldives National University (MNU).

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the Maldives, Dr. Md. Nazmul Islam, met MNU Vice Chancellor Dr. Aishath Shehnaz Adam to explore ways to strengthen collaboration in higher education, research, training, and cultural exchange as part of Bangladesh's broader education diplomacy, read a press release of the Bangladesh Embassy. Senior MNU officials, including pro-vice chancellors, deans, and heads of academic institutes, were present, reflecting strong institutional interest in expanding ties with Bangladeshi universities.

During the meeting, Dr. Islam stressed the importance of formalizing partnerships through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) between MNU and leading Bangladeshi institutions. He cited ongoing discussions with universities such as the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh University of Professionals, and Bangladesh Maritime University, noting that such frameworks would facilitate student and faculty exchanges, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives.

The Vice Chancellor expressed keen interest in inviting short-term visiting faculty from Bangladesh and engaging Bangladeshi experts for specialized training programs. With MNU overseeing 21 higher education institutions across the Maldives, she said there was significant scope for joint academic seminars, conferences, and collaborative research—initiatives seen as key drivers of educational tourism.

Dr. Adam also revealed MNU's plan to introduce Bengali language courses, particularly to support the tourism sector, and showed interest in expanding cultural exchanges through the participation of Bangladeshi artists and performers. The move is expected to attract more Bangladeshi students and academics while enhancing people-to-people connections.

Dr. Islam welcomed the initiatives and reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to promoting education-led mobility in the region. He said the Bangladesh High Commission would actively facilitate academic exchanges, international conferences, and exposure programs, contributing to the growth of educational tourism and long-term bilateral partnership between the two countries.

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