

## Australia lifts ban on air cargo from Bangladesh

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**Dhaka:** Australia has lifted its ban on direct cargo flights from Dhaka marking a move that is anticipated to boost Bangladesh's shipments to the country.

"The Australian government has already taken an initiative to amend rules. There are also some other procedures. Direct flights will resume after the completion of the procedures," Jeremy Bruer, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said on February 23.

He held a meeting with Air Vice Marshal Mafidur Rahman, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh at the latter's office in the capital on February 23.

The country of the southern hemisphere was the first to impose the ban in December 2015 citing a lack of security at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. Four and a half months later, it was relaxed, with Bangladeshi freights having to be re-screened in a third country before it could be allowed to reach Australia.

Riding on duty-free benefits on the shipment of goods, especially garment items, Bangladesh has already been able to turn Australia into a major export destination.

Earnings from Bangladesh's overall exports to Australia stood at USD 729.7 million in fiscal 2019-20 while its corresponding imports at USD 252.9 million. As for fiscal 2018-19, the

figures were USD 629.3 million and USD 347.1 million respectively.

The ban was also imposed by the United Kingdom in 2016 and the European Union in June 2017.

Afterwards, Bangladesh recruited British company Redline for the screening of exports and training manpower as a part of measures to enhance the airport's security standards.

A number of explosive detection systems were installed while dogs trained at carrying out the task were also brought in.

An independent team from the EU carried out an assessment and Bangladesh passed the validation test in November 2017. Satisfied with the improvements, the UK government fully withdrew the ban in 2018.