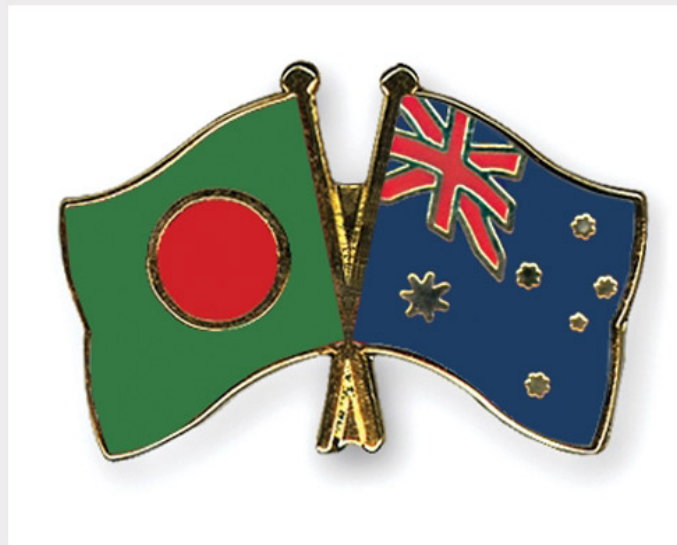


Bangladesh eyes direct air connectivity with Australia

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Bangladesh High Commission in Australia was eyeing the possibility of establishing direct air connectivity between the two countries in a move to strengthen strategic bilateral relations.

In a letter on January 18, Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra stated to Bangladesh's Civil aviation and Tourism Ministry that direct air connectivity between the two countries would allow the country to attract more foreign direct investment.

Bangladesh High Commission said, the Australian government is eager to strengthen strategic relations with Bangladesh by introducing the country as its key partner in South Asia.

The letter was sent ahead of the first meeting of the joint working group between the two countries under the Trade and Investment Framework scheduled in Canberra on February 22.

Direct air connectivity and withdrawal of air cargo restriction were the two components the commerce ministry included on their agenda for the civil aviation and tourism ministry.

The Bangladesh High Commission said in the letter that it would be possible to sign a deal

over the direct flight between two countries following the meeting. The High Commission also suggested a feasibility study over the financial viability of direct flights between the two countries.

Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman also noted that the Australian authorities have already withdrawn the restriction on direct cargo transportation.

They are now working to start flights between Dhaka and Toronto as well as to resume Dhaka-New York direct flights, he added.

It may be mentioned here that Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding on direct flights with Australia on August 15, 2008. However, no direct flight has been launched on the route yet.

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