

Bangladesh to start special flights for migrants from April 17

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Dhaka: Bangladesh is going to start special flights from April 17 amid the ongoing lockdown to carry migrant workers to and from five countries — Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Singapore.

Any interested airline could operate the flights on regular fare, said Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

The decision was made at a virtual inter-ministry meeting on April 15.

‘We have a plan to operate about 100 flights in a week,’ CAAB Chairman said.

He further said they were discouraging return of migrant labours as the country is witnessing a resurgence of corona spread. Hence the government imposed a strict weeklong lockdown while suspending public transport and offices.

Therefore, the main purpose of having these special flights is to repatriate the outbound migrant workers to their respective work destinations who are currently stuck in Bangladesh due to the ongoing lockdown.

However, if any Bangladeshi immigrant worker wishes to come home on emergency leave with the approval from the respective Bangladesh mission on the return flights, he can certainly do so. But he will be subject to institutional quarantine of 14-days at their own cost, CAAB Chairman added.

Five ministers and officials from civil aviation and tourism ministry, foreign ministry, expatriates' welfare and employment ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh attended the virtual meeting chaired by foreign minister AK Abdul Momen on April 15.

All types of scheduled passenger international and domestic flights remain suspended as week-long restrictions on public movement and overall activities came into effect on April 14.

As a result, 20 thousand migrant workers were stuck in the country worrying about their visas getting expired and losing their jobs.