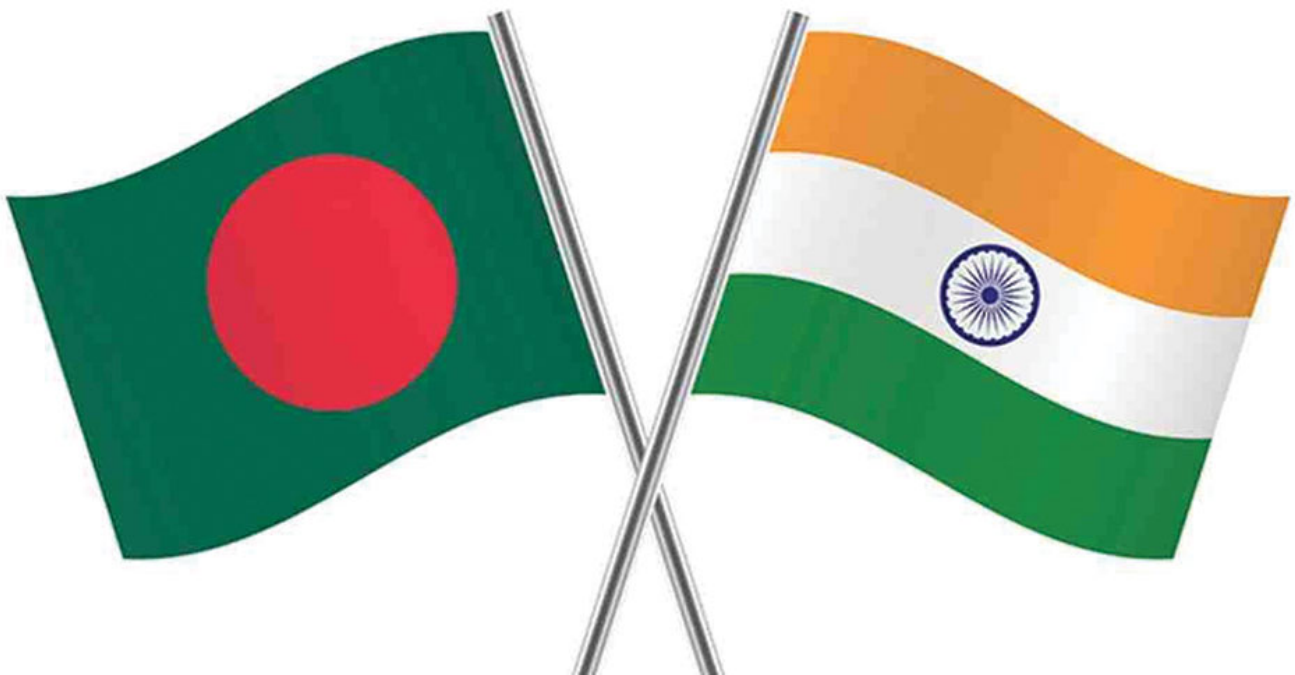


Bangladesh proposes enhanced convenience, flexibility for travel to/from India

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Dhaka : Bangladesh is going to propose substantial amendments to its travel agreement with India. The country is eyeing enhanced convenience and flexibility for citizens travelling between the two countries.

The proposed changes include issuing visas that allow travel through any check post and offering flexibility for long-term medical treatments, such as allowing multiple travel.

As per reports, a senior official from the Ministry of Home Affairs anticipates the signing of the new travel agreement within February 2024. To facilitate this process, Bangladesh's Security Service Division has meticulously prepared a proposal.

An inter-ministerial meeting, on January 14, gathered opinions and

recommendations from relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and the Ministry of Shipping.

Following the meeting, the finalised proposal will be sent to the Indian side through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, initiating a mutual exchange of opinions before the agreement is renewed.

One of the significant proposals aims to replace the term "Designated check post" with "Through any check post" in visa documentation. This change aims to provide travellers with the flexibility to choose their entry and exit points, alleviating congestion at specific checkpoints and streamlining the travel process.

Similarly, the proposal includes provisions for multiple travels and the option to change hospitals during long-term medical treatments, addressing the diverse needs of individuals seeking extended medical care in either country.

Additionally, Bangladesh will propose increasing the visa-free stay period for diplomatic and official passports from 45 to 90 days. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already submitted this proposal to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Other proposals include extending the validity of short-term double-entry visas from 3 to 6 months and recognising river routes as a legitimate travel option. The inclusion of river routes follows recent agreements between both countries to launch river cruises.