

BD pursuing cruise tourism to Sri Lanka

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Dhaka : Bangladesh is currently pursuing its plan to introduce cruise tourism to Sri Lanka's Colombo, said the country's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Tareq Ariful Islam in a statement.

The aim is to strengthen people to people contact and tourism between the two South Asian countries, added the high commissioner.

The proposal came forth following a meeting between the premiers of the two countries in March. Sri Lanka's PM Mahinda Rajapaksa visited Dhaka to celebrate the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh.

During the visit, Sri Lanka received a currency swap of USD 250 million from Bangladesh and now the countries are interested in promoting bilateral trade in several areas.

The envoy explained that the efforts to introduce cruise tourism to Colombo follow Bangladesh's interest in extending the present political relations with Sri Lanka to sectoral cooperation which would open up new areas in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, western tourists are now reluctant to visit Asian countries. Therefore, the cruise tourism will help people in the region to travel to each other's countries, urged Islam.

Currently, the envoy mentioned, there are six weekly flights between Bangladesh

and Sri Lanka to serve tourists and about 25,000 Sri Lankans working in Bangladesh.

"The present volume of bilateral trade of USD 150 million is nothing compared to the huge potential of the two countries. Therefore, we want to expand the areas of shipping, exports-imports, and tourism even further," said Tareq Islam, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka.