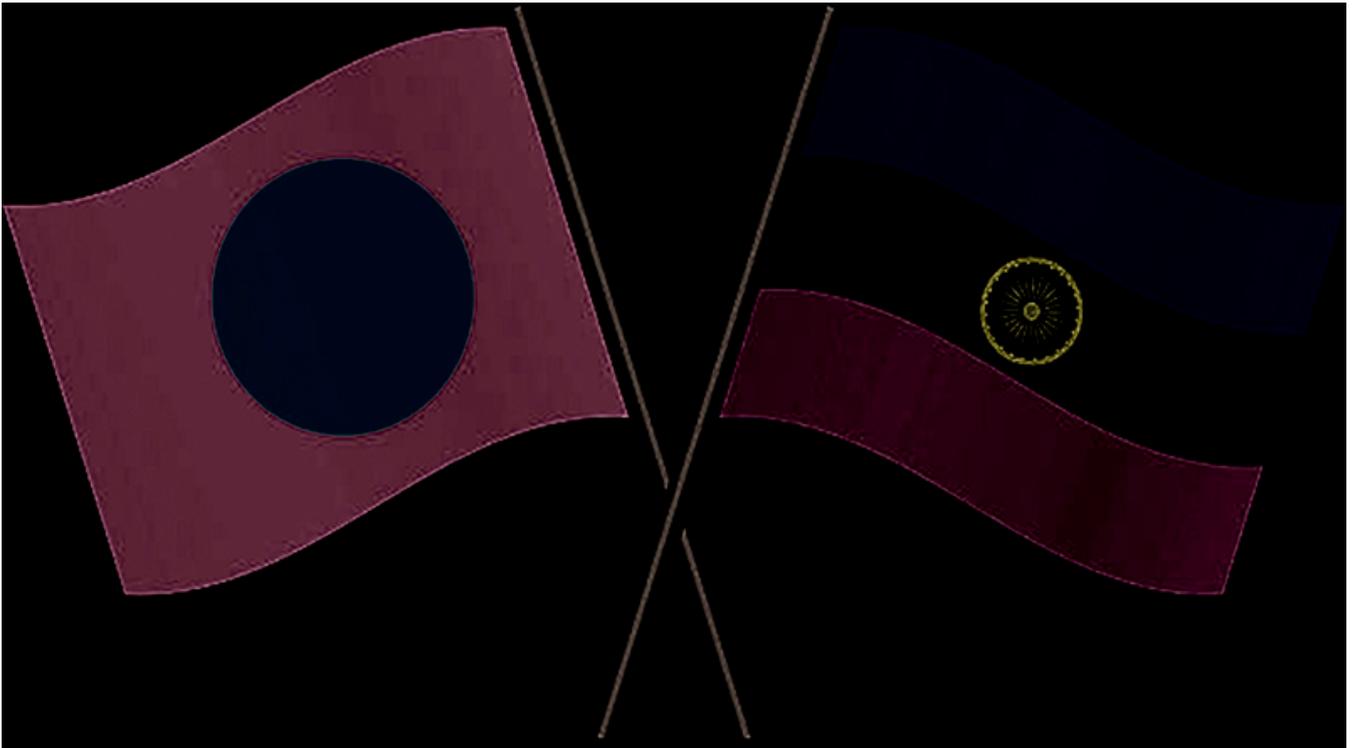


BD seeks flexible visa regime for travel to India

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Dhaka: Bangladesh has sought flexibilities in the visa regime and requested the Indian side to address the difference in overstay fine structures applied by India. Bangladesh also requested the Indian side to ease registration requirements for Bangladeshi patients for treatment at various hospitals in India.

The issues came up for discussion at the second consular dialogue between Bangladesh and India held in New Delhi on January 29.

Request to ease travel restrictions through all ports for Bangladeshi nationals was also reiterated by the Bangladesh side. The two sides agreed to expedite the consular access, transfer of sentenced persons, and visa-related issues among others.

Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams, Secretary (East) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the Bangladesh delegation while the Indian delegation was led by Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Secretary (Consular, Passport and Visa and Overseas Indian Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The Bangladesh delegation included high-level officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bangladesh Police, BGB, and Prison authorities.

The entire gamut of bilateral consular issues was discussed in depth during the dialogue, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The agenda included expeditious repatriation of each other's nationals, particularly trafficked women and children,

smooth facilitation of exit permits, and expediting consular access.

Both sides agreed that the consular dialogue is an important mechanism to further strengthen the people-centric approach which is at the core of the excellent ties between the two friendly countries.

The dialogue was held in a cordial atmosphere and the leader of the Bangladesh delegation invited the Indian side to Dhaka for the next round of Consular Dialogue at a mutually convenient date.

The first-ever consular dialogue between Bangladesh and India was held in November 2017 in Dhaka.