

Bangladesh to provide 190 acres of land in Kurigram for Bhutanese investors; discussion to import hydropower underway

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Online Desk: Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud on Sunday said Bangladesh will allocate 190 acres of land in Kurigram for a special economic zone for Bhutanese investors.

He said Bangladesh wants to import hydropower from Bhutan and a tripartite agreement is required to bring the electricity through India.

“We are in discussion to that end,” he told reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday.

He said Bhutan has a potential of producing 25,000 megawatts of hydropower.

The Foreign Minister said Bangladesh will also import hydropower from Nepal and things are settled regarding that initiative.

Hasan said Bangladesh will construct a burn unit in Thimphu as a goodwill gesture which also demonstrates the country’s capacity.

He also briefed about the visit of the Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Three new MoUs will be signed between Bangladesh and Bhutan while another MoU on cultural exchange will be renewed, said the Foreign Minister.

The King, along with Bhutanese Foreign, Health, Industry and Commerce Ministers and the Bhutanese Queen, is scheduled to arrive on Monday morning on a four-day visit demonstrating the strong relations that Bangladesh and Bhutan have developed steadily since 1971.

“We have multifaceted relations with Bhutan,” Minister Hasan said.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and the First Lady will receive the King amid gun salute and guard of honour.

The King is scheduled to arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10 am on Monday by a special flight, a senior official told UNB.

After the ceremony at the airport, he will go to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32 to pay tribute to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On Monday afternoon, the Bhutanese King will have a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office. They will have a one-to-one meeting.

The two sides are likely to sign a number of MoUs after the meeting.

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud will meet the King at his place of residence the same day before the meeting with the Prime Minister.

On Tuesday, the King will visit the National Martyrs’ Memorial at Savar.

The King will also visit Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

He will visit Bangabhaban where he will be received by the president and the first lady.

The King will have a meeting with the president at 4:30 pm on Tuesday.

The president will host iftar and dinner in honour of the visiting royal.

On Wednesday morning, the Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck and selected Bhutanese delegation members will leave Bangladesh for Bhutan by a special flight.

Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Rehana and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen will see them off at the airport.

The Bhutanese King will visit Padma Bridge and Bangladesh Special Economic Zone in Araihaazar, Narayanganj.

On Thursday, the King will visit Kurigram Special Economic Zone.

He will leave Bangladesh territory for Golakganj, Assam via Sonahat Land Port on Thursday afternoon.

Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, state minister for shipping, will see him off there.

The 4th King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, sent a letter of congratulations to the prime minister recently saying under her dynamic and strong leadership, Bangladesh has enjoyed peace, stability and unprecedented economic development.

He also termed Bhutan as a "close friend" and rejoiced with the people of Bangladesh on this occasion.

Bhutan was the first country to recognise the newly independent Bangladesh on December 6 in 1971 when the 3rd King of Bhutan sent a message of recognition by telegram.

Since then Bangladesh and Bhutan share a special multidimensional bilateral relationship. Immediately after the independence, the Bhutanese government took initiative to establish diplomatic relations with Bangladesh and, consequently, formal diplomatic relations were established on 12 April 1973.