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## Bangladesh, Cambodia to tie up for agri sector cooperation

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**Bangladesh is set to tie up with Cambodia for promoting investment and development co-operation in agricultural sector aiming to raise food grain production through taking some of the latter's land on lease, officials said.**

**The Prime Minister of the South-East Asian nation Hun Sen is scheduled to visit Dhaka soon when the two countries are expected to sign a number of deals on bilateral cooperation, mainly on farming, the official added.**

**"The major cooperation will be in the agricultural sector as food shortage-stricken Bangladesh seeks to take land on lease from Cambodia to produce rice there and bring the same back to meet local demand," a senior commerce ministry official told the FE.**

During Hun Sen's visit, the two countries will form a joint commission at the foreign ministers' level, sign a deal for holding annual advisory meetings at the foreign secretary-level and tie up for bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector.

They will also sign deals about taking lease of Cambodian land, importing rice from there to Bangladesh, providing visa exemption for diplomats and promoting investment.

Cambodia has sought Bangladesh's investment for establishing rice mills there as the former has no such facility. The Cambodian farmers grow paddy and export the same directly to Vietnam and Thailand.

Sources said a nine-member committee, headed by a joint secretary of the ministry of commerce, has been formed to explore the possibility of leasing land for farming in Cambodia.

The committee has also been tasked with handling the matter about setting up rice husking mills in Cambodia and importing or procuring rice produced there by the would-be Bangladeshi investors.

The members of the committee will shortly visit Cambodia to sort out the matters, the sources added.

Cambodia has already granted lease of some of its lands to other countries for farming and Bangladesh is seeking long-term lease of such land for a period, up to 99 years.

Officials said Cambodian land is ideal for high quality rice production and Bangladesh has large potential to reap gains out of taking land there on lease.

The world's fourth largest rice-growing nation, Bangladesh, with an average annual production of 33 million tonnes, has, however, been one of the major foodgrain importers this fiscal.

Source: The financial times - Bangladesh

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