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Bangladesh expected to seek leases for farming in Cambodia

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DHAKA (Daily Star/ANN) - Bangladesh and Cambodia have decided to set up a joint commission to boost bilateral relations and conclude bilateral agreements on agricultural and cultural cooperation, investment promotion and protection.

The agreements will be inked during Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen's three-day official visit to Dhaka beginning on Monday.

This is going to be the highest-level visit from Cambodia. Hun Sen is coming at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam told a press briefing yesterday.

Hasina visited Cambodia on January 21-23, 2001.

Diplomatic sources said Dhaka and Phnom Penh finalised the decision to sign four deals in December 2010 during the then Foreign Minister Dipu Moni's meeting with Cambodian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hor Namhong.

The official talks between Hasina and Hun Sen will be held on Tuesday, and it will be followed by signing of four agreements and memoranda of understanding, the state minister said.

Several Cambodian ministers, including deputy premier, foreign affairs minister, agriculture minister, forests and fisheries minister and senior officials will accompany the Cambodian PM during the visit.

The bilateral relations and cooperation between the two nations strengthened in recent years following the signing of a trade agreement on August 4, 2006, the sources said.

During Hun Sen's visit, Dhaka is expected to seek long-term lease of lands for contract farming in Cambodia by its nationals.

Bangladesh has also shown interest in signing a long-term agreement with Cambodia to import rice, they said.

At the official talks, Dhaka will also stress the importance of increasing people-to-people contact. In this context, Hasina is expected to request her Cambodian counterpart to ease visa restrictions for Bangladeshi nationals.

Earlier, Bangladesh had offered scholarships to Cambodian students for studying at Bangladesh Agricultural University.

Both countries had also agreed to hold joint researches in the agriculture sector.

According to the programme schedule, Hasina will host a banquet in honour of Hun Sen.

The Cambodian premier will also visit National Mausoleum in Savar and Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital.

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