

Ferry service between India and Sri Lanka

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Dec 20, Colombo: A ferry service between Sri Lanka and its neighbor India is to commence in two months, an Indian daily reported.

Following the consent of the relevant ministries of the two countries, the ferry service to Colombo from Tuticorin is expected to begin in two months, The Hindu reported, citing the Chairman, Tuticorin Port Trust, G. J. Rao.

Earlier this month, the India's Union Cabinet approved a proposal for a passenger ferry service between the two countries.

India's Ministry of Shipping has directed the Tuticorin Port Trust to build the infrastructure necessary to begin the ferry service.

According to the Port official, the passenger reinforcements will be completed by the end of this month and adequate arrangements, including waiting room, counters for immigration, customs, cabins for officials and Port Health Officer, and others were being made to ensure facilities for the passengers.

A passenger ferry that can accommodate 500 passengers is expected to be used for the 12-hour journey between Colombo and Tuticorin.

India has improved the infrastructure facilities at the passenger terminal at a cost of nearly 50 million Sri Lankan rupees and has established screening equipment for increased surveillance at the Port.

Officials from India's Immigration, Customs, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Police and the intelligence agencies have met recently and extended their cooperation to the Port authorities to enhance security, The Hindu reported.

India also plans to revive the ferry links between Thalaimannar in Sri Lanka's northwest coast to Rameswaram in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Initially, the ferry service between Tuticorin and Colombo will be started and the Thalaimannar to Rameswaram service will be added later. The old pier at Thalaimannar will be rebuilt with the Indian assistance.

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