

Vacationing without a visa

Holidays nowadays are a lot different from holidays that used to be and given a long run of vacation days, our plans tend to become bolder. Many families, now opt to spend their vacations abroad, rather than going back to their hometowns, as was the old norm. It is a way to de-stress themselves and taste a different environment.

As easy as it is to want to go places, equally difficult is the red tape involved with international travel. The allure of relaxing at a beautiful and exotic destination is matched by the recoil felt for the hassles of visa processing. The little hassles here and there for visa seem to be unavoidable and a Bangladeshi passport tends to make things a little more, "adventurous".

Many countries offer on-arrival visas, and considerably long stay allowance, to help boost their tourism sector. Among them is our mountainous neighbour Nepal. Hike through its craggy mountains or cycle on its gentle slopes, visit the historical temples and strut down its monasteries.

Visit one of the friendliest countries in the world to taste popular hoppers and kottu rotti, and surf in the Arugam Bay, in Sri Lanka!

Visit the monastery that hangs on a cliff surrounded by enchanting forests - Tigers Nest Monastery - in Bhutan, which is one of the greenest countries in the world, and tops the happiness index. Also, do not miss the country's most beautiful Dzong, Punakha Dzong.

If that is not enough, the number of breathtaking destinations Indonesia has is uncountable, and if you are feeling brave, visit Mount Bromo to take a live peek at what a natural



active volcano looks like, or take a dive into the Bunaken, Indonesia's most famous diving site. All these countries are easily accessible, as they provide on-arrival visas for Bangladeshi passport holders.

Also, cost of travel plays a major part, so here is a tentative list, to help you plan.

A three-night-and-four-day trip to Bali, Indonesia would cost around Tk30000-69000; about Tk30000-50000 for Nepal, around Tk32000 for Bhutan and approximately Tk70000 for Sri Lanka - depending on the type of accommodation you pick.

Travel agencies such as Travel Cook Ltd and Jaas Travels Pvt would provide you with similar packages and deals or ones similar to it.

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Jaas Travel Corporation Ltd., Plot #01, Road #17, Flat #A5, United Benison (5th floor), Banani C/A, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh. Phone: +880-2-9822351, +880-2-9822352,

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Happy vacationing!

By Anisha Hassan

CHECK IT OUT

Sweet and Savoury revolution at Peyala!

Ever since the start of its journey, Peyala Cafe has been enchanting our taste buds with a range of mouth-watering sweet and savoury items. The café recently introduced some new flavours to its wraps and salads menu, including the tandoori chicken, beef rendang and palak paneer.

The chunks of hot and smoky tandoori chicken and the blend of spinach with paneer and the delicious beef work perfectly with both wraps and the salad. The palak paneer is a very good option for those who want to avoid meat items and want something vegetarian. The aroma of the tandoori chicken will instantly take people on a tour back to the Mughal era and the juicy meaty flavours of beef rendang to the scenic Indonesia!

To satisfy those sweet-tooth cravings, Peyala introduced an array of new desserts. Customers can try out the delicious and chocolaty Boston Brownie at only Tk 120. The Mocha Crème Caramel is also available, promising that classic taste with a twist; and there is also the new and incredible, Brownie-o-trifle which consists of multiple layers of brownie, chocolate pudding, whipped cream and Oreos!



Asian Nadi Festival in Shillong



The two-day Asian Confluence Nadi Festival 2016 was held in Shillong, India recently, with participants from Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal. High level delegations from the countries participated in the event, which hosted policy dialogues, thematic discussions as well as cultural and product display.

The festival focused on 'river, road, rail and people: business, tourism, and the role of rivers in international relations' as its main theme. Here, Lipi Khandaker, managing director of Bibiana Bangladesh showcased her Khadi, silk and needlework products, while Shahid Hossain Shamim, managing director of Aziar Tourism, displayed his exclusive product of Indigo Dyeing technique. Six young designers also took their products to the festival, exposing Bangladesh's potential to the regional bigwigs present.

The showcase was inaugurated by Pu Thanhawal, chief minister of Mizoram of India. Rashed Khan Menon, civil aviation and tourism minister of Bangladesh, also visited, along with other ministers and high officials from India.

Lipi Khandaker said the festival had let them get exposure with a lot of Indian businesses, many of whom have expressed interest to order items from Bangladesh soon.