



The Kuakata sea beach has seen a considerable increase in tourists ever since the opening of Padma Bridge. However, local officials feel there is great potential to enhance people's visits by implementing various measures, such as introducing a cruise.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Tap into ocean tourism in Kuakata: experts

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The number of people who go on vacation in Kuakata has increased exponentially ever since Padma Bridge was opened in June this year.

Known for its panoramic sea beach that provides a great place to watch the sunrise or sunset, Kuakata attracts local and foreign tourists alike on public holidays and weekends.

However, there is huge potential to open a new horizon in tourism centring the seaside town under Latachapl union of Patuakhali by implementing the blue economy, according to officials.

For example, a cruise can be organised from Kuakata to the Kachikhali and Katka sea beaches in the Sundarbans so that the trip is more enjoyable for both foreign and local tourists.

Also, jetties could be set up at scenic locations alongside Kuakata beach so that travellers can use them for sightseeing, they said, adding that initiatives such as these would help enhance the country's tourism sector while also earning a handsome amount of foreign currency.

As such, the administrative bodies of Barishal division and Patuakhali district have made separate proposals to the shipping ministry for opening this new avenue in ocean-based tourism.

Md Kamal Hossain, the deputy commissioner of Patuakhali, sent their proposal in this regard through an official letter on November 6 while Mohammad Aminul Ahsan, commissioner of Barishal division, had done the same on October 20.



Establishment of fish landing stations such as this would help implement the blue economy, which relates to sustainably harvesting marine resources.

In his letter, Ahsan noted that Kuakata beach has been bustling with tourists following the inauguration of Padma Bridge.

"Tourists come here to enjoy the beach's natural beauty but also seek additional thrills and excitement," he said.

So, it would be possible to meet these needs of tourists if a trip from Kuakata beach to those in Kachikhali and Katka can be arranged by means of a well-equipped ship or launch with accommodation and dining facilities, Ahsan added.

The letter also mentioned that Kuakata's macroeconomy would improve

as a result of such initiatives.

In a separate letter, Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner Hossain said the district has a few scenic tourist spots near Kuakata beach, such as Sonar Char, Kalagachia Char, Tufania Char and Jahazmara Char in Rangabali upazila.

These chars, rising as islands in a beautiful natural environment near the lap of the sea, are located approximately 50 kilometres (km) away from the mainland and have areas ranging from three to five kilometres.

Sonar Char is a 10-km island built on the shores of the Bay of Bengal with hundreds of small and big canals in the

midst of a vast forest land.

The island, which was named Sonar Char as it glistens like gold in the morning sun, is home to a variety of animals such as monkeys and tigers. Meanwhile, the 5 km long Jahazmara Char features red crabs that make the entire beach look like it's covered in glitter.

Kalagachia Char and Tufania Char also have long beaches, where tourists would have a great spot to watch the sunrise and sunset.

Located about 90 km from Patuakhali town and about 50 km from Galachipa upazila, these chars are located in the sea but are difficult to reach due to the lack of boat jetties, which is limiting development of the local tourism industry.

"So, to develop the tourism industry by exploiting these potentials of Patuakhali, the Ministry of Shipping is requested to set up a jetty at a convenient place in these chars and islands," the letter read.

Contacted, Hossain said that they sent this proposal to the relevant ministry as a part of the Prime Minister's directive to create an exclusive tourist zone in the area around Kuakata, including the pastures of Patuakhali.

"Apart from this, the recommendations of the divisional Commissioner have also been sent. If these proposals are implemented, a new horizon of tourism will be opened in Patuakhali," he added.

Similarly, Motaleb Shari, general secretary of the Kuakata Hotel-Motel Owners Association, said more tourists would be visit the area if new and exciting attractions are added according to their needs.

The floor price dilemma

M SHAHRIAR AZAD BHUIYAN

On July 28, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) reimposed floor prices on all shares to contain the free fall of listed securities after the key index dropped below the 6,000-point mark.

The positive impact of the floor price is that it protects investors from buying a security at an excessively low price. This is important because if investors were allowed to purchase securities at any price, unscrupulous sellers could take advantage of them. The floor price ensures that investors are not taken advantage of and receive a fair price for the securities they purchase.

The negative impact of the floor price is that it can limit the price at which a share can be sold. This can be a problem for investors who need to sell their shares quickly and at any price. This is designed to protect investors from losing too much money quickly.

Due to the floor price, there is a liquidity crisis in the market, and the seller could not sell the shares for the absence of the buyer. It's not the right tool to implement in the stock market. We can't even control the commodity market by setting a ceiling. How could we then control the artificial prices in the financial markets?

Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bangladesh's economy is under tremendous pressure. Because of the instability in the foreign exchange market, foreign investors predicted the devaluation of the taka against the US dollar long ago. As a result, stock brokerages face massive sell pressures and struggle to sell off shares due to oversupply.

For the first time, we have seen a changing exchange rate significantly affect the value of transnational stock deals. Due to the fluctuation of the currency exchange rates and shortage of the US dollar, foreign clients tend to sell off shares. As a result, many blue-chip companies' shares are trading at the floor price. As such, the regulator didn't find any other tool except floor price to prevent such an unanticipated financial crisis.

Retail or institutional investors have the right to liquidate their assets at the right price. If the investors value liquidity more than the right price, they should be allowed to sell off their shares.

The floor price is a temporary solution. If it continues for a longer period, it will negatively affect the market

Some investors may speculate that it's the right time to buy the shares due to the lower price and expect a high percentage of capital gain in the future. That's how the demand supply is created in the market, and the stock market runs.

In Bangladesh, most of the foreign funds come through foreign asset management companies (AMCs), and the AMCs are bound to comply with rules while investing in a frontier market like Bangladesh.

The BSEC is in a dilemma because it can neither withdraw the floor price nor continue it for an infinite time due to its negative impacts. Yet, for the betterment of the investors, it needs to address the issue urgently.

The floor price is a temporary solution. If it continues for a longer period, it will negatively affect the market as no investors are willing to purchase the shares at the floor price. Thus, the liquidity of the market will be squeezed.

Simultaneously, it will also affect the turnover and overall growth of the industry. The stock regulator immediately needs to find an alternative to ensure the market's liquidity and the fair values of the stock prices.

The author is head of internal control and compliance at UniCap Securities Limited. He can be reached at shahriar@unicap-securities.com. Views are personal.

Remittance transfer thru agent banks skyrockets

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Agent banking outlets are emerging as a major channel for the distribution of remittance among families of migrant workers thanks to their expanding network at the rural level.

Remittance disbursement through agent banking branches grew 178 per cent to Tk 106,628 crore in the July-September quarter of the current fiscal, up from Tk 38,335 crore during the same period two years ago, showed Bangladesh Bank (BB) data.

"Agent banking outlets perfectly fit the requirements of wage earners who send money from abroad to their families in rural areas. So, the distribution of remittance will grow in days to come," said Mohammad Ziaul Hasan Molla, deputy managing director of Bank Asia.

The private bank is the third largest distributor of inward remittance through its 5,400 agent banking outlets.

Bangladesh Bank said inward remittances distributed by the agent outlets increased 42.5 per cent year-on-year in the July-September quarter.

The distribution of remittances, one of the key pillars of Bangladesh's economy, increased nearly 10 per cent in last quarter from the previous April-June quarter.

"This remarkable increase of remittances channelled through agent banking seems to be a positive outcome of quick delivery of remittances to the doorsteps of beneficiaries," the central bank said in its latest quarterly report on agent banking.

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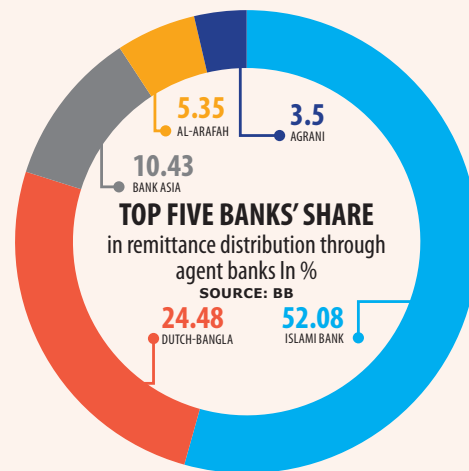
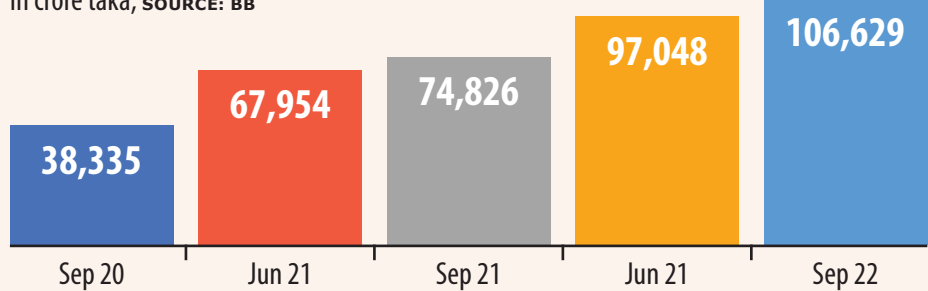


BITS AND BOBS

Banks having agent banking licence: 31
 Number of agents: 14,663
 Number of accounts: 16,780,576
 Deposits: Tk 306,63cr
 Loan disbursed: Tk 88,80cr

Remittance distribution through agent banks

In crore taka; SOURCE: BB



Runner, a2i to conduct research on automobiles

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Runner Automobiles PLC and a2i (Aspire to Innovate) have planned to jointly conduct research to develop a state-of-the-art automobile industry in the country and for the manufacture of environment-friendly vehicles.

Devan Muhammad Humayun Kabir, project director of a2i, and Hafizur Rahman Khan, chairman of the Runner, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this regard at ICT Tower in Agargaon of Dhaka yesterday.

Under the MoU, the duo will work to build a sustainable, eco-friendly and citizen-centric automobile industry in the country and promote a culture of innovation, according to a press release.

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