

Inbound tourism: The economic boost Bangladesh keeps ignoring



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Cox's Bazar, the darling of tourist destinations in Bangladesh, would greatly benefit from the inclusion of more entertainment alternatives after the sun sets, and the beach's appeal subsides.

Raxy Dominic Gomes, Senior Manager, Sales & Marketing at Mermaid Eco Tourism Ltd, shares his opinions on the matter.

"Cox's Bazar has a strong global appeal, being the longest unbroken beach in the world, and we see that in the number of tourists that visit here. Plus, the Marine Drive road joins the ranks amongst some of the most beautiful roads in the world, because on one side, you have hills, and on the other, the sea. However, once night falls, activities that tourists can take part in drop sharply. At Mermaid Beach Resort, we try to alleviate this with movie nights, games, and more importantly, our Full Moon Parties, where guests can enjoy themselves by the seaside with music."

"We also feel that if there was a mall or movie theatre, foreign guests wouldn't be so bored once night falls here, because these tourists are used to such facilities in other countries they visit. It only seems to be lacking here."

GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT BANGLADESH

In this day and age, having a great online presence is essential for drawing foreign tourists. To establish itself as a distinctive vacation destination, Bangladesh needs a well-coordinated marketing plan. Our traditional cuisine, natural beauty, and cultural festivals can be promoted on social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Working together with famous travel-focused influencers to produce interesting content can blow up online and become trending all over the world.

"For further promotion to a worldwide audience, we must take a more proactive presence at international travel fairs like ITB Berlin and WTM London, both of which, we attended last year to great fanfare," says Wahid.

The Sundarbans Mangrove Forest, the Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara, and the historic mosque city of Bagerhat are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a fact oblivious to many Bangladeshis and the global audience. We can also pull in eco-conscious tourists if we focus on much-needed sustainable tourism practices, while history buffs may be drawn to heritage tourism. Creating guided tours that visit, say, Dhaka's Old Town, or perhaps, Paharpur's historic ruins, and even Sylhet's tea fields and waterfalls, could result in unforgettable experiences.

STEPS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

The government can do a lot to improve the influx of inbound foreign travellers to Bangladesh.

"The government, more precisely, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism could maybe take the initiative of distributing promotional materials, such as brochures and leaflets listing attractions and shopping destinations, to public transport like taxis and ride-shares that are parked near hotels," remarks Shehrina Wahid. "This practise has already been implemented in Thailand, and we could take a page out of their book. This would help out guests when they board these vehicles."

"We also have a good Tourist Police force, but despite that safety remains a prevalent concern, especially when you factor in foreign tourists. Safety is the top concern for many foreign visitors. No matter how attractive a destination is, visitors need to feel secure. Our security force is often underutilised in less popular, but equally stunning locations. That also needs to change," she adds.

We also have a cleanliness issue. A walk down our beach, trekking through a hillside, or even visiting our many beautiful waterfalls will show you the amount of littering we do, and just how much disregard our citizens have towards cleanliness or preservation. This requires

an in-depth involvement by the government, first by educating the masses, and secondly, by maintaining an active cleaning programme.

"It's crucial to maintain these spots," Shehrina Wahid notes. "Improved clean-up processes and environmental policies are essential to preserving our country's beauty for future visitors."

Additionally, if the government created an interactive, bilingual tourism website with detailed itineraries, virtual tours, and safety recommendations, it would make it simpler for foreign visitors to plan their vacations.

The tourist industry of Bangladesh is both an unrealised opportunity and a challenge. We can develop our tourism into a substantial economic contributor by making infrastructural investments, rebranding our country in the eyes of potential foreign tourists, and marketing our ecological and cultural riches.

Besides the economic benefit, inbound tourism shall take Bangladesh to the world, showcasing all its beauty, hospitality, and rich cultural heritage. The country has the potential to become the leader in tourism in South Asia with governmental, corporate, and local sector cooperation. Now is the time to do it because everyone who visits this nation, takes back home more than memories — they carry a piece of a country ready to welcome the world.

By Intisab Shahriyar
Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel
Location: Mermaid Beach Resort



The Daily Star
CONGRATULATION ON THE 34th ANNIVERSARY

Building a Stronger Bangladesh

With a commitment to innovation, Concord has delivered iconic infrastructure and architectural feats for half a century. From constructing National Martyrs' Monument to landmark commercial high-rises & First Satellite City of the country, Concord leverages the nation's best engineering talent to manifest definitive landmarks.

By consistently raising benchmarks and embracing new frontiers, Concord sets the pace for the future of business – and lives – to be built.



1972
Re-constructed 6 bridges of DHK-CTG Highway damaged in the great liberation war



1980-83
Crafted the skyline of Motijheel C/A by building Shilpa Bank Bhaban, Jibon Birna Tower & Janata Bank HQ



1980
Constructed Main Passenger Terminal of HSA



1990
First Concrete Batching Plant of Bangladesh was set up by Concord



1984
Constructed Telecom Building in Singapore



1982
Constructed National Martyrs' Monument in only 89 days



1998
First commercial production of Concrete Blocks in Bangladesh were started by Concord in 1998



2000
First satellite township of Bangladesh, Lake City Concord was built at Khilkhet with over 4000 apartments, shopping & commercial blocks, school, mosques, landscaped gardens and all other lifestyle facilities



2006
Introduced Top Down Construction Method in Bangladesh through construction of WTC in Chattogram



2005
Developed Foy's Lake Amusement World in the picturesque hill area of Chattogram



2002
First international standard amusement park, Fantasy Kingdom was established



2008
Constructed iconic Police Plaza Concord on the bank of Hatirjheel, a leading shopping & lifestyle destination of Dhaka



2010 & BEYOND
Building its reputation as Bangladesh's most trusted developer of luxury residences and iconic commercial spaces, setting the benchmark for quality and service

