

## Bangladesh to launch e-visas soon: BTB CEO

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : On May 17, Bangladesh resumed on-arrival visa services for select countries after a hiatus following the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, the government is now in the final stage to launch the long-awaited e-visas, said Abu Taher Md Jaber, CEO of Bangladesh Tourism Board.

To further drive growth of the country's tourism industry, the CEO of BTB said, they are now working on two key aspects.

The first focus of BTB now is preparing the long-awaited Tourism Master Plan by December 2022.

"We have identified 1051 destinations across the country, where we are currently working to develop the standard of tourism facilities," said BTB CEO.

"We have also identified 50 destinations where we will be driving architectural and infrastructure development. For this purpose, we are currently preparing an investment plan," added the BTB CEO.

"For these development works, we will approach both the public and private sectors," said Abu Taher Md Jaber.

BTB is also carrying out orientation works across the hotels of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation to increase the standard of service and behavior of the staff, added the Chief of BTB.

Taufiq Rahman mentioned how the coronavirus pandemic left the industry with a huge skill gap.

To tackle the issue, BTB is preparing the National Tourism Human Development Strategy by 2023, said the CEO.

Also, BTB has identified 12 subsectors of tourism and appealed to the Ministry of Industries to list tourism as an industry. The Ministry is incorporating it in its 2022 draft. In 2-3 months, BTB CEO expressed, tourism will finally become an official industry.

Community based tourism works are underway. In some areas, PKSF is also working with BTB in this regard. Monpura is a key example. The site has emerged as a popular tourist spot where many tourists go and stay in tents, said Aby Taher Jaber.

Moreover, the BTB CEO mentioned they are carrying out tourism branding in 36 districts and have identified 34 tourism products.

With UN Volunteers, BTB is also preparing tourism volunteers across the country through training to help tourists in their journeys.

Lastly, BTB CEO Abu Taher Md Jaber assured they have appealed to the Ministry for announcing officially that "Bangladesh is open for tourism and welcomes all tourists" - a long-awaited measure crucial to drive recovery of country's tourism in the post-pandemic times.