

## Cox's Bazar always missing from regional best beaches rankings

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Tripadvisor's Travelers' Choice Awards: Best of the Best Beaches in Asia 2026 has highlighted the continent's most admired coastal destinations, based on global traveler reviews and ratings.

This year's list includes celebrated beaches such as Banana Beach in Phuket (Thailand), Kelingking Beach (Indonesia), Radhanagar Beach in Havelock Island (India), Palolem Beach (India), Mirissa Beach (Sri Lanka), White Beach in Boracay (Philippines), Bentota Beach (Sri Lanka), Railay Beach (Thailand), Nusa Dua Beach in Bali (Indonesia), and Pantai Cenang in Langkawi (Malaysia).

Yet notably absent is Cox's Bazar Beach, widely recognized as the longest unbroken natural sea beach in the world, stretching approximately 120 kilometers along Bangladesh's southeastern coast.

The omission has sparked renewed debate within the country's tourism industry. Despite its extraordinary natural length and domestic popularity, Cox's Bazar has struggled to position itself as a compelling international beach destination.

Over the years, authorities have undertaken initiatives to upgrade Cox's Bazar Airport into an international gateway, aiming to attract direct foreign arrivals and transform the beach town into a regional tourism hub.

Runway extensions and infrastructure improvements were introduced with high expectations. However, sustained international flight operations have yet to materialize in a meaningful way, and the broader vision of global integration remains largely unrealized.

Beyond connectivity, stakeholders acknowledge a more pressing challenge: the limited range of structured activities and experiences available to visitors.

Unlike many beaches on the Tripadvisor list, which offer water sports, marine excursions, nightlife, eco-tours, beach clubs, cultural programming, and curated leisure experiences, Cox's Bazar largely revolves around walking along the shoreline and basic seaside recreation.

Organized adventure tourism, high-quality water sports infrastructure, environmental interpretation centers, and evening entertainment options remain minimal or inconsistent.

"Today's global travelers seek experiences, not just scenery," a tourism analyst observed. "A beach must offer activities, safety, cleanliness, service standards, and diversified attractions. Natural length alone is not enough."

Environmental management, urban planning concerns, inconsistent hospitality standards, and limited destination branding further compound the challenge.

Until infrastructure, experience design, and international marketing align with global benchmarks, the destination risks remaining underutilized.

