

## Fast vaccination needed for global tourism recovery

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Speakers at a webinar emphasised the urgency of fast vaccination and called upon all nations to work alongside to fight the ongoing coronavirus pandemic for the recovery of global tourism.

Covid-19 has caused a significant impact on the tourism industry in South Asia and governments and private sectors of this region must work together to keep tourism alive and going for the global economy, they added.

The call was made at an online seminar titled 'Tourism for Global Recovery: A South Asian Perspective' organised by the regional office of the Bonn-based Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF South Asia), said a press release.

The webinar discussed the obstacles to the tourism industry caused by the pandemic and how to recover it on a global scale from a South Asian perspective.

Country representative of FNF Bangladesh Najmul Hossain moderated the event while founder and chief executive of Journey Plus in Bangladesh Taufiq Rahman and CEO of Simdi Group in Maldives Mariyam Shakeela spoke on the occasion.

Frank Mýller-Rosentritt, member of Bundestag (Germany's lower house of parliament), was the keynote speaker.

Frank gave a statistical view on how this pandemic severely affected this industry. He stated, "World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that 100 million jobs in the sector are at risk and 62 million jobs are already lost." Therefore, the situation is now quite critical.

Moving onto the panel discussion, Najmul presented his first question to the panellists and asked, "What can be done to prevent this job loss and businesses shutting down and other economic losses."

Mariyam firstly shared how badly the pandemic affected the Maldivian tourism industry. As for countermeasure, she said, "Our Government responded promptly to mitigate the effects of pandemic with several health and economic meshes."

"The situation in Bangladesh is not like in Maldives. Unfortunately, tourism is not at all the priority sector from the government." Taufiq said adding that the private sectors of Bangladesh are trying to convince the government that tourism can be greatly beneficial to the economy of the country.

Focusing on the topic domestic tourism, Najmul asked Taufiq, "What is the status of Public-Private Partnership on promoting domestic tourism during this pandemic?"

"In Bangladesh the domestic tourist market in these four or five years has increased a lot. Almost 97.4 per cent of income is coming from the domestic market. The tourist spots are getting overcrowded so the domestic market is booming."

"Because of the Covid-19 situation the Government has closed down a lot of spots. Also because of the new Indian variant Covid-19 virus, it's going to be very hard to restart tourism in Bangladesh," Taufiq added.