

## Outbound travel on rise : Visa changes, new destinations, year-end travel boom set stage for 2026

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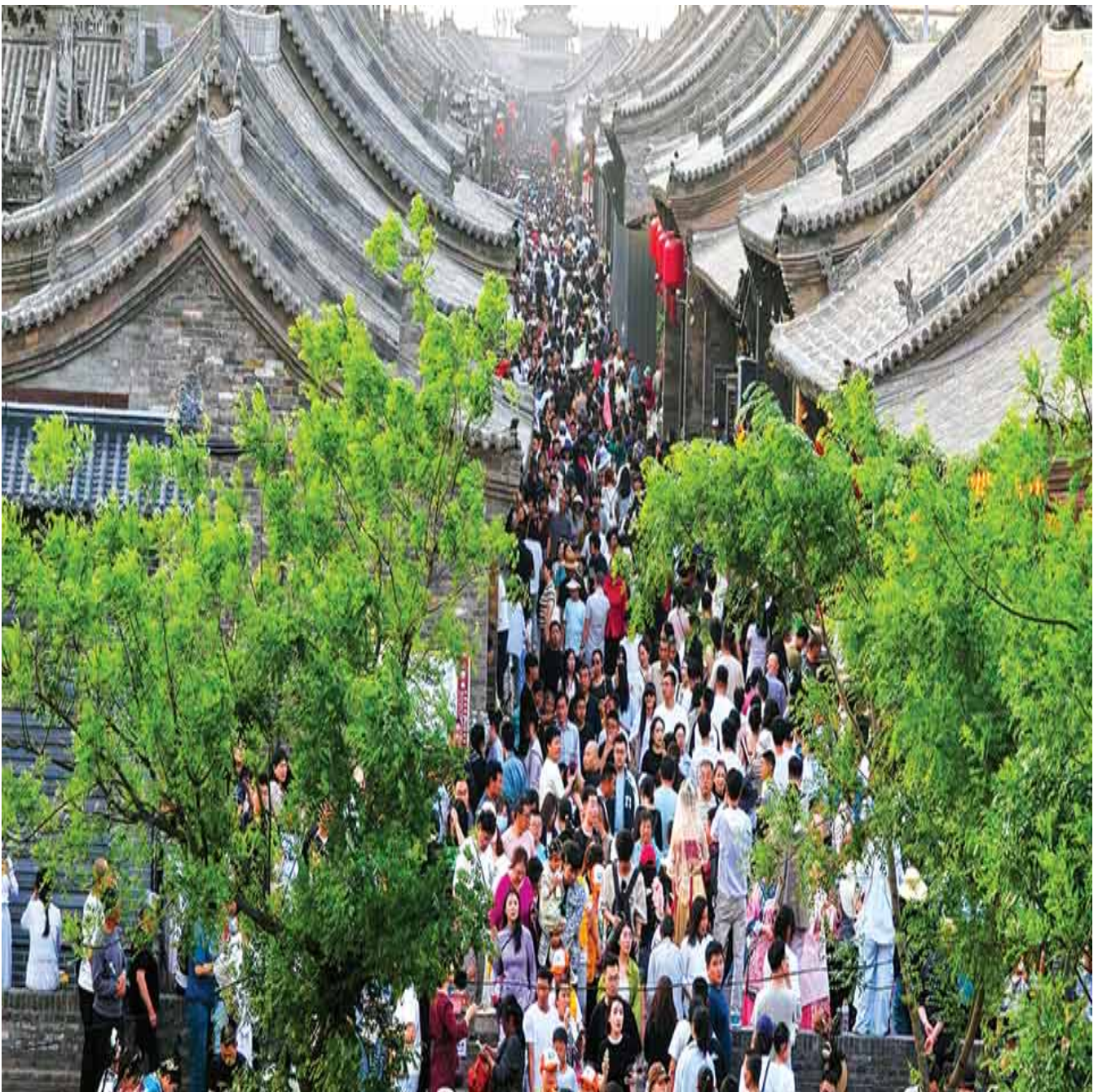
Dhaka : Bangladeshi travelers are entering a pivotal period for international travel, as new visa policies, emerging destinations, and a surge in year-end bookings signal a potential boom in outbound tourism for 2026. With increasing disposable income, changing travel preferences, and greater awareness of global destinations, the country's outbound travel market is poised for rapid growth.

### **New travel opportunities unlocked**

One of the most notable developments comes from China. More accessible pathways for Bangla-deshi tourists seeking both leisure and shopping trips to China are opening up. Travel agents in Bangladesh report an uptick in inquiries for multi-city China tours, particularly to cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. They are expecting a surge in bookings as people see more affordable options for

long-haul trips.

At the same time, travelers must remain cautious about stricter entry policies in certain countries. The United States has increased visa scrutiny for South Korea, Japan, China, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh amid a crackdown on birth tourism and visa misuse. While this may impact some travelers, most industry experts suggest it primarily affects high-risk visa categories rather than standard tourist visas.



*Number of Bangladeshi tourists seeking both leisure and shopping trips to China increasing*

## **Malaysia emerges as key destination for Bangladeshis**

While traditional destinations like Thailand continue to draw Bangladeshi tourists, Malaysia is fast becoming a top choice, particularly for long-stay and medical tourism. In the first eight months

of 2025, over 185,000 Bangladeshis visited Malaysia, a number expected to grow as travel packages and marketing campaigns specifically target Bangladeshi consumers.

Malaysia offers a unique combination of leisure, medical, and educational tourism. Travelers can explore cultural sites, shop for branded goods, or even undergo medical procedures at internationally accredited hospitals, all in one trip.

Malaysia's government and tourism boards are promoting packages that combine healthcare services, sightseeing, and shopping, making it increasingly attractive to middle-class families and young professionals from Bangladesh - eyeing to bring 3,00,000 Bangladeshi travelers in 2026.

### **Holiday travel demand surges ahead of year-end**

Industry data indicates that overseas bookings for December have surged by 25 percent compared to last year, reflecting strong interest among Bangladeshis for short-term international holidays. Popular destinations include South-east Asia, the Middle East, and East Asia.

Travel agencies in Dhaka and Chatto-gram are seeing record inquiries for January-February travel, as many families and professionals aim to capitalize on school holidays and long weekends. Early-bird packages are selling out quickly, especially for Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and China, with multi-destination itineraries gaining traction among urban travelers.



*Malaysia becoming top choice for outbound travel currently*

According to Bangladesh Tourism Board statistics, outbound travel has grown steadily at an average of 12-15 percent per year over the last five years. Analysts believe that 2026 could surpass previous years due to a combination of favorable visa policies, diversified destinations, and increased purchasing power among urban travelers.

### **Rise of medical, wellness tourism**

Beyond leisure, medical tourism is becoming an increasingly important segment for Bangladeshi travelers. Countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore are gaining attention for cost-effective and high-quality healthcare services, ranging from elective surgeries to wellness retreats.

Previously, India dominated medical tourism for Bangladeshis. Now, travelers have more choices, and Malaysia's hospitals with international accreditation are offering competitive packages. This trend is expected to continue growing in 2026.

## **2026 as landmark year for outbound travel**

With a growing middle class, increasing global connectivity, and a surge in interest for diversified international experiences, Bangladesh's outbound travel market is poised for one of its most dynamic years yet. Tour operators, airlines, and hotels are already gearing up with tailor-made packages to capture this rising demand.

Bangladeshi travelers are more adventurous and informed than ever before. Next year, it is anticipated not just more travelers going abroad, but also a shift in how they experience international destinations - blending leisure, culture, shopping, and healthcare into a single journey.

If trends hold, 2026 may well mark the year Bangladesh establishes itself as a major source market for outbound travel in South Asia, with new destinations, visa opportunities, and high-value experiences driving both tourism growth and regional connectivity.