

Business, quarantine travellers key guest segments in pandemic era

A Monitor Report

Date: 16 September, 2021



Dhaka : Business travellers and quarantine guests have kept Long Beach Suites Dhaka occupied during the pandemic from January 2020 till August 2021. During this period, the hotel, with 89 rooms, has seen 70-100 per cent occupancy on most days due to the bulk groups.

Gerald Rebei-ro, Operation Manager, Long Beach Suites Dhaka said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor recently at his office in the capital.

In January 2020, Long Beach welcomed a Russian business traveller group, officials of a project taking place in the country. Before going to their project site, they used to stay at the hotel for three nights. Likewise, before flying back to their country, the group came to the hotel and spent three nights again. Twice a month the hotel saw arrivals of such groups which helped it survive the pandemic.

Similarly, they were followed by quarantine groups from Saudi, Oman, Qatar, and Malaysia.

However, even though the hotel remained full most of the time, the revenues were half the amount of pre-pandemic levels, said the Rebeiro, adding, "as we had to keep the rates low for our hardworking expatriate labor brothers."

Moreover, it will take many years for the rates to come back to pre-pandemic levels, said the manager. "It is a competitive market now and there is more capacity but

less demand. Hence, the rates will remain low for many years to come," he added. On the other hand, from this August, since the government has relaxed hotel quarantine for travellers from many countries, at the moment, Long Beach Hotel is not getting any quarantine guest, further adding to the hotel's worries.

"Nevertheless, we are eyeing to welcome groups of business travellers, who are soon to come to work on many mega projects happening across the country," the manager hoped.

For the next two years, this segment will remain the biggest hope, he added.

On the other hand, to attract the locals, Long Beach Suits Dhaka is currently offering a package called Netflix and Chill at BDT 8000 for two. It includes couple stay at premium room, breakfast, lunch and dinner with early check in and late check out. This particular offer has become quite popular among local couples, mentioned the operation manager.

Speaking of F&B, Rebeiro mentioned that it is currently doing better than room, with 35 per cent capacity. Since they can only operate the restaurant at 50 per cent capacity anyway in compliance with government directives, 35 per cent is quite well, claimed Rebeiro.

Their signature restaurant is currently offering buffet dinner at BDT 6400 with over 70 multi-cuisine mouth-watering items. Buy One Get Three free offer is available.

Amid the pandemic, the hotel also opened many of their facilities - spa, steam bath, sauna, gym, and swimming pool.

Currently a swimming pool package is available which has garnered quite a response from local couples. Under the package, a couple will get to use the swimming pool for two hours and enjoy snacks like sandwiches and mocktails at BDT 2000.

The hotel is also offering gym memberships to limited guests.

As vaccinations are being rolled out rapidly, soon there will be less travel restrictions to and from Bangladesh. This will lead to an influx of business travellers in the coming days since plenty of mega projects are underway across the country, said the operation manager, based on his foresight of post-pandemic travel trends.

Also, as soon as the government contains the virus spread in the country and so does the global world, many international flights will reopen, which is a key measure to bring the travel rebound, claimed Rebeiro, adding, even pent-up travel will also start taking place.

Business travel could occur less in volume due to zoom meetings taking over, sighed Rebeiro, yet the manager hoped, it would still be the key driver of travel to and from Bangladesh as in-person on-site work will always be necessary.

"And most of the business travellers prefer to stay at boutique hotels," expressed Rebeiro.