

Dhaka Regency achieves 90pc annual budget in 2023 : Executive Director

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Dhaka : Due to political unrest during Q4 2023, hospitality business was slow in the bustling capital. Nevertheless, Dhaka Regency Hotel and Resort managed to achieve 90pc of its annual budget owing to good business rest of the year.

Shahid Hamid, Executive Director, Dhaka Regency Hotel and Resort said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office in the capital's hotel premise.

From October-December 2023, the political unrest largely impacted room, banquet, F&B and MICE business at the hotel. It led to early check-outs even. Till mid-January 2024, the situation is expected to remain the same, informed Shahid Hamid.

However, apart from that, following the Covid-19 pandemic, hospitality

business, overall, has been growing year on year since 2022.

Currently, the hotel is welcoming business travellers, layover passengers, airline crews and local guests. The latter is a new segment that emerged following the Covid-19 pandemic, he further mentioned.

On average, we sell 25-30 rooms to local guests a month, claimed the Executive Director, adding, domestic staycation packages have been a hit since the pandemic.

Covid-19 led to some changes in customer behaviour, attitude and preference. It appears these changes are here to stay as new normal trends in the-post pandemic times.

The pandemic forced travel enthusiasts to practice enjoying domestic staycations as they could not travel abroad during the crisis. Hence, the hotel industry of the capital now regularly witnesses domestic guests opting for staycations during weekends or festivals for recreational purposes, something the sector did not see much in the city prior to Covid-19, Shahid Hamid expressed.

Also, even though, the number of star hotels in the capital is ever-increasing, all the hotels, Shahid Hamid believes, are getting their fair share. This is due to the fact that guest numbers are also increasing proportionately with the number of hotels.

Years ago, there were 6000 available rooms per night in the city, now the number must be higher with new or recent hotel entrants in the capital, stressed the hospitality industry veteran.

Besides the political unrest, the recent inflation has also impacted the hospitality business with profit margin taking a hit, he further informed. In recent times, the sector witnessed the cost of food ingredients increasing 30 per cent, energy 35 per cent, dollar devaluation of 40 per cent and salary increase of 15 per cent.

Hence, brand hotels in the city are having to increase their menu and buffet price, but not the room rates, since with the latter they have to remain competitive.

It may be mentioned here that Shahid Hamid is also the Chairman of Pacific Asia Travel Association Bangladesh Chapter.

About Bangladesh's tourism growth, he sighed, it will never flourish unless and until Bangladesh Tourism Board starts participating in international travel fairs like JATA, ITB and WTM to brand the country as a promising travel destination.

Urging to follow the footsteps of Sri Lanka, Nepal or India, he called on the government to carry out roadshows in source destinations worldwide to bring inbound tourists and foreign remittance.