

Hotels empty over nationwide political instability

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Country's hotel industry is witnessing a drop in occupancy rates and withdrawals of bookings by travellers over the ongoing political unrest stemming from student protests, curfew and communication restrictions.

According to Bangladesh International Hotel Association, the average occupancy rates of star hotels are down to 10-15 per cent from the usual 60-80 per cent.

Luxury hotels across the country, including the tourism hub Cox's Bazar, witnessed cancellations of almost all reservations in the last two weeks of July and some in August.

As per industry insiders, new reservations from abroad remain halted for about a week since July 18 due to the internet blackout. Besides, several foreign countries have issued travel alert about Bangladesh and

foreign guests suspended their business tours.

BIHA representatives said, this time of the year, all hotels usually see satisfactory occupancy rates, however, the unexpected turmoil brought back memories of the Covid-19 era.

They are estimating the business losses would be no less than BDT 1,000 crore in registered star hotels combined.

According to BIHA, the country has 55 registered star hotels. Besides, there are around 2,000 luxury hotels which do not have any star ratings. Approximately one lac people working these establishments.

For instance, reports claimed, Intercontinental Dhaka, a five-star establishment with 226 rooms, is currently witnessing only 15-18 per cent occupancy.

Reports further claimed, another five-star hotel The Westin Dhaka is seeing a 20 per cent occupancy rate only.

Following the restoration of internet connection, the hotels expect more booking cancellations as the political instability still remains.

Meanwhile, hoteliers also lost a significant amount of revenue they could have earned from corporate events such as seminars and workshops. Foreign guests who were supposed to come to Dhaka for business meetings, are changing their destination to India's Kolkata, informed reports.