

We think globally but act locally : Amari Dhaka GM

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : With their "Think global but act local" attitude, the popular city hotel Amari Dhaka, is showing great momentum towards reaching pre-pandemic levels with a current occupancy rate of 70-80 per cent.

"Everything is in the stage of recovery in these post-pandemic times. The hospitality sector is getting close to pre-pandemic figures. Still, people are nervous about travelling. There have been restrictions from other countries. But, in a whole, we can see a very good trend specially for the end of the year."

Christopher Baker, General Manager of Amari Dhaka said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office at the hotel premise recently.

"Every time we see us gathering speed, something comes along and hampers it. For instance, once the coronavirus pandemic finished, people started talking about monkey pox. Fortunately, that has not affected us," he said.

"However, Covid-19 is rising again in many countries. It is not so much related to Bangladesh as it is related to the countries that travellers are coming from. For instance, the Japanese market is slowing down because of this. We can see that affecting us," he added.

Amari Dhaka is having a good guest mix currently. People are now travelling after being stuck for two years. Specially after Eid, the hotel has been seeing good momentum and stabilisation.

The business is growing month on month. In July, Amari had 65 per cent occupancy

which increased to 70-80 per cent in August.

"On weekends, we see the domestic market wanting to get out and have a nice dinner, enjoy at the rooftop, stay the night and have breakfast after waking up the next day," mentioned Christopher, saying they would have more of such domestic guests in the days ahead.

Christopher further mentioned, the F&B across the city is going up and Amari Dhaka is doing relatively well.

"Especially after when we changed the concepts, like in Amaya, we do not offer the same menu throughout the week. We bring in variations every day and we have multiple cuisines," said Christopher.

Still, Christopher sees many people opting for takeaways. So, F&B has not come back to the full extent as before, he claimed.

Nevertheless, Deck 41, Amari Dhaka's one-of-a-kind signature rooftop garden restaurant with panoramic views of the city, is doing great, mentioned Christopher.

"It is a beautiful location. People want to come and enjoy the views of the city. We have introduced more green in the deck so it is more like a rooftop garden now. It is a really nice place to relax," he noted.

The country's development overall is bringing more hotels and competition along. New hotels are in the pipeline to open. There should be more business coming into the state and the city. Hence, the growth of the country is bringing the growth of the hotel industry at the same time," said Christopher.

However, even though Marriot has many hotels in the city, none of them compete with one another, instead, they complement each other.

"Marriot has something for everybody. Also, their reward programme is impeccable. Everybody looks for reward programmes in airlines and hotels. We get more traction from Southeast Asia because we are predominant here," said Christopher.

Christopher foresees that in December 2022 the demand of rooms will be a lot higher. When new hotels open further, it will be more so.

The garment industry drives a lot of movement in Bangladesh. If that transpires to buyers coming into the country, it will develop the hotel business, mentioned Christopher.

As for Amari Dhaka, Christopher said, they are going to get even better in the future with hard work and more effort to balance between the internal or local market that is here and the external or international market that comes in, said Christopher.

To cater to that, Amari Dhaka has had quite a lot of changes in the last 12 months.

"We have great ideas for the end of the year when we foresee that demand will be higher. Amari Dhaka has different new products coming in. This way, we keep refreshing ourselves," concluded the General Manager of the hotel.