

## 15-year tourism masterplan in focus, says Minister

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Dhaka: The government has taken up a comprehensive 15-year tourism masterplan aimed at transforming the sector into a key driver of economic growth, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroz Khanam Rita told the Parliament during a question-and-answer session on April 29.

Responding to a query from lawmaker AE Sultan Mahmud Babu, the Minister said, the proposed Tourism Masterplan (2026-2040) will provide a detailed roadmap to attract private investment, expand infrastructure, and generate large-scale employment.

She said, the government considers tourism a “major engine of economic growth” and has already initiated a range of policy supports and incentives to encourage private sector participation.

According to the Minister, the masterplan sets an ambitious target of

attracting 55.7 million tourists by 2040 and creating around 21.94 million jobs in the sector. To facilitate investment, the government is prioritizing public-private partnerships (PPP) in tourism infrastructure development, alongside updating the National Tourism Policy (2025) to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive industry.

The Minister also highlighted measures to ease financing for small and medium entrepreneurs, noting that banks are already offering loans on favorable terms for tourism ventures, with plans to expand such facilities further. In addition, a one-stop service (OSS) is being planned to streamline support for investors and improve services for tourists.

Emphasizing human resource development, she said, thousands of individuals have already received training in recent years, including tour operators, guides, street food vendors, and tourism volunteers, to build a skilled workforce for the expanding industry.

Among major projects, the Minister mentioned the development of an Exclusive Tourist Zone (ETZ) at Sabrang in Teknaf, being implemented through the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) with private sector involvement. Public-private partnership projects are also being pursued on land owned by the Bangladesh Tourism Corporation in Cox's Bazar.

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