

DNCC Mayor announces to form consultative committee for development of city tourism in dhaka

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Dhaka : Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam announced to form a consultative committee for the development of city tourism in the capital, adding that, this committee should comprise industry experts and stakeholders from both public and private sectors. He informed about his plans to develop city tourism in Dhaka while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the 19th edition of the country's biggest tourism fair titled Biman Dhaka Travel Mart 2024 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka on February 8.

The DNCC Mayor inaugurated the fair as the chief guest, organised by the travel publication The Bangladesh Monitor. Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, in his inaugural speech at the opening ceremony, urged the DNCC Mayor to take the lead in bringing together tourism stakeholders for effectively launching sustainable city sight-seeing tour programmes.

"The capital lacks city sightseeing tours. There are plenty of attractions in Dhaka for foreign visitors, however, we are failing to showcase our attractions to them, hence, losing a good amount of earnings in foreign currency," stressed Kazi Wahidul Alam.

In response, Atiqul Islam, while addressing the event, mentioned DNCC's ongoing efforts to keep Dhaka an attractive, clean and fun destination including supporting largescale street food festivals in the capital's norther part. The DNCC Mayor also highlighted the necessity of accurate and effective branding of Bangladesh in global markets as an ideal destination to visit.

He urged more focus on marketing sports tourism globally. In reference, he mentioned that the sand of the country's popular beach destination Cox's Bazar is ideal for professional volleyball sport. That is why, the international governing body of volleyball FIVB is going to establish a volleyball stadium in Cox's Bazar soon, he announced, speaking on the occasion.

However, Bangladesh's rich history and culture should not be neglected while marketing the country abroad as a travel destination, stressed the DNCC Mayor. For instance, on an occasion like the International Mother Language Day on February 21, the country should market events centring it, he suggested. Visits to Shaheed Minar, Ekushey Book Fair and observing other cultural events across the city should be marketed as fun activities to enjoy during a trip to Bangladesh on the occasion, added the DNCC Mayor.

The inaugural ceremony was also addressed by Md Mokammel Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. In his address, the Secretary said, Bangladesh is gifted with tourism wonders. "It has its own unique geo-diversity that we need to present to the world effectively," he said.

Referring to Biman Dhaka Travel Mart 2024, the biggest tourism extravaganza of the country, the Secretary said, such international fairs are effective tools to showcase Bangladesh to the world. He also informed about the government efforts that are underway to develop the tourism industry further. However, he urged the private sector's cooperation to be able to fully tap the country's immense tourism potentials.

In his speech, Shafiul Azim, Managing Director and CEO, Biman Bangladesh Airlines said, the national carrier not only connects destinations but also people. As the flag carrier, Biman is putting Bangladesh on the map with frequent launch of new destinations. He also stressed that all concerned must work together for further exploration of the country's tourism industry. However, he urged to ensure that our unique culture remains intact while developing the country's tourism industry to international standards. Nevertheless, he promised Biman's efforts will continue in the coming days as always to promote travel to and from the country.



***A partial view of Biman Dhaka Travel Mart 2024 held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon
from February 8-10 - Photo: Monitor***

Mahbubul Alam, President, FBCCI also spoke on the occasion. In his speech, he highlighted that a travel fair like Dhaka Travel Mart helps the country reach its targets to promote travel. He called upon the private sector to step forward with investments in the tourism industry that has so much potential. However, he stressed, the government must facilitate the private stakeholders with policy, connectivity and infrastructure support for this purpose. There is no alternative to public-private partnership to develop the country's tourism industry, claimed FBCCI President.

While addressing the event, Saiful Hoque, Country Manager and CEO of Sabre Travel Network Bangladesh said, "It is possible to increase tourism industry's contribution to the national GDP to 12 per cent from the current four per cent. For this, we need to highlight the undiscovered tourism spots and potentials of the country and increase tourist services." He also ensured that Sabre will continue to power the country's aviation industry stakeholders to further compete with global airlines.

Abu Kalam Siddique, DIG, Tourist Police Bangladesh, in his speech, mentioned how they are ensuring security and safety of tourists across the country. He informed that they are currently working across 104 tourist spots of the country. They even brought Cox's Bazar under CCTV surveillance, he claimed. To better serve the tourists, the DIG announced that they have asked to take the number of their staff to 3000 from the current 1300.

Biman DTM 2024 concludes

The 19th edition of the biggest tourism extravaganza of the country Biman Dhaka Travel Mart 2024 welcomed about 15 thousand visitors and generated BDT 12 crore sales in total.

Over 80 organisations from home and abroad, representing airlines, hotels, resorts, travel agents, tour operators, training institutes, medical tourism agencies and other travel-related service providers showcased their products and services in over 100 booths and pavilions at the three-day international tourism fair that concluded on February 10.

Participating companies offered special discounts on airfares, hotel room rents, tour packages and others for the visitors.

A grand raffle draw on entry tickets was held on the closing day in front of visitors. Raffle prizes included complimentary return air tickets for Jeddah/Medina, the Maldives, Dubai, Bangkok, Delhi, Bombay, Kolkata, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Chattogram as well as hotel stays and dinner coupons for couples at various star hotels and resorts in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Bandarban and Kuakata.

The 19th edition of the fair was supported by Biman Bangladesh Airlines as the title sponsor, Bangladesh Tourism Board as the partner and leading Global Distribution System company Sabre as the technology partner.

It may be mentioned here that The Bangladesh Monitor introduced the first-ever tourism fair in Bangladesh as Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM) in 2002.