

Travel sales surpass pre-pandemic numbers by triple amount

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 16 June, 2022



Dhaka : After terrible crisis in tourism sector induced by the pandemic, the country's travel trade sector got a revival chance in the form of an international tourism fair titled Triplover Dhaka Travel Mart-2022.

The two-year long horror of the Covid-19 pandemic left the country's travel trade sector with immeasurable losses of BDT 60,000 crore, said a recent study by BIDS. However, as the coronavirus crisis has improved with time and thousands of visitors flocked to the three-day long tourism fair concluded recently, the industry was able to find light in the end of the tunnel hoping to bounce back this year with a staggering sales of over BDT 15 crore.

This year sales have even surpassed pre-pandemic numbers of BDT 5 crore in 2019. After a hiatus of two years amid the pandemic, the 17th edition of the long-awaited international tourism fair was organised on June 2-4 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital, for the sole purpose of accelerating the recovery of the travel trade sector in these new normal times by the premier travel trade publication The Bangladesh Monitor.

The fair welcomed thousands of visitors each day, while a total of about 75 organisations, representing national tourism organisations, airlines, tour operators, hotels, resorts, travel agencies, online travel agencies, healthcare service providers

from home and abroad participated.

"The travel sales surplus follows the huge response the fair got from thousands of travel enthusiasts, tired of staying at home for two years and itching to travel now finally, as the coronavirus situation has been contained globally," said Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor.

To the delight of the visitors, attractive special promotions and discounts on travel packages, air tickets, and hotel accommodation, among others, were offered by the participating organisations during the fair. These promotional offers encouraged visitors further to jump onboard bringing smiles on the participants' faces, worn out for the last two years due to the pandemic crisis, with the highest ever sales in DTM's history.

The holiday packages to Cox's Bazar and Maldives by the Co-sponsor of the fair US-Bangla Airlines have been a big hit during the fair. The biggest private carrier of the country offered two nights stay free on purchase of couple air tickets to Cox's Bazar and Maldives. During the fair, the airline saw over 200 room sales in Cox's Bazar under the package and over 10 in Maldives, said Abdullah Al Mamun, Managing Director of US-Bangla Airlines.

Also, the airline offered 10 per cent discount on any domestic and 20 per cent on any international flight in its network, he added.

NOVOAIR, another leading private carrier of the country, also offered visitors the same promotional package but to only Cox's Bazar. "Leading five star hotels were available for the free stay of two nights upon purchase of two couple air tickets. Hence, we witnessed plenty of sales during the fair, said Mofizur Rahman," Managing Director of NOVOAIR.

Airline partner, the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines was not behind. The airline offered 15 per cent discount on all international air tickets and also 20 per cent discount on six particular routes including Kathmandu, Delhi, Kolkata and Bangkok, among others, said Md Zahid Hossain, Director (Additional Secretary), Sales and Marketing, of Biman.

Domestic travel was seen to be the biggest interest of the visitors, he claimed, adding, international promotions also got many sales as outbound travel is exponentially rising with other countries lifting of their respective travel restrictions.

Title Sponsor of the fair, one of the leading OTA of the country Triplover offered 5 per cent cash back for B2B clients.

Furthermore, attractive door prizes were offered through a raffle draw. Visitors won couple air tickets to several popular international and domestic tourism destinations including Male, Singapore, and Cox's Bazar, sponsored by US-Bangla Airlines; Sharjah by Biman Bangladesh Airlines; Delhi by Vistara; Dubai by Jazeera Airways, and Kolkata by NOVOAIR.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Md Mahbub Ali formally inaugurated the fair as the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural speech, the State Minister said, "After a hiatus of two years following the pandemic, this fair comes as a sigh of relief to the travel enthusiasts of the country with attractive offers for travel to their favourite destinations across the country and abroad."

"At the same time, the fair will serve as the best platform to the stakeholders of the travel industry to promote and sell their products and kick start their revival from the devastating losses amid the two-year pandemic crisis," he added.

As part of efforts to revive the country's travel sector, the State Minister further mentioned, the government is taking up various projects that will take the country's

tourism to new heights.

"We are planning to bring cruise ships. We have immense potential for it. Immigration will take place onboard. It is essential to use all our resources for the growth of tourism in these post pandemic times," said the State Minister.

At the inauguration ceremony, Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam, Chairman (Senior Secretary), Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) was present as the Special Guest and Md Jashim Uddin, President, FBCCI as the Guest of Honour.

"To recover the losses induced by the pandemic and shine in the days ahead, massive development is required in the industry. First and foremost, the quality of the services at the gateways of the country - the airports - must be bettered," said Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam in his speech.

Md Jashim Uddin, President, FBCCI, agreed and said, "In addition to the development of the airports, tourism facilities and attractions must be further strengthened to generate more travel across and to the country. Hospitality services should be further upped. There should be more activities in tourism sites. Coastal tourism should not be neglected and sports tourism should be prioritised."

"To make the journey of travellers to Bangladesh more seamless, the government is working on launching e-visas. Also, to play pivotal role in regional tourism which is the way forward in these post-pandemic times, we are carrying out B2B initiatives with our neighbouring countries," said Abu Taher Muhammad Zaber Acting CEO, Bangladesh Tourism Board.

"We must utilise our natural resources if we wish to see our tourism industry flourish. Also, backward linkage should be bolstered and information gap must be met," said Md Ali Kadar, Chairman, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.