

Bangladesh Tourist Police launches 24/7 helpline for travellers

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Dhaka: Bangladesh Tourist Police on September 25 launched a 24/7 helpline number 01320-222222/01887-878787 in an effort to ensure safety and security of local and international travellers visiting the tourism destinations of the country.

The helpline number was launched on the sidelines of a seminar titled “Combating Future Challenges in Tourism Security: Bangladesh Tourist Police Perspective” organised by Bangladesh Tourist Police at its headquarters in the capital.

Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, Inspector General of Police attended the seminar as the chief guest while Habibur Rahman, Additional Inspector General presided over the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, Inspector

General of Police, said, “Following the establishment of this special unit of Bangladesh Police dedicated to serve travellers, both domestic and foreign tourists feel safe to freely roam around at the country’s tourism destinations even late at night.”



IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun delivering his speech at the seminar—Photo: Monitor

While sharing some statistics, the IGP informed, after the formation of Tourist Police in the country, tourism’s contribution to GDP increased to 4.4pc (2021) vs 2.9pc (2013); employment in the tourism industry increased to 40 lac (2022) vs 17 lac (2015); tourism’s income in the revenue sector increased to BDT 2279cr (2021) vs BDT 613cr (2006); country’s position in global travel and tourism index rose to the 100th

spot (currently) vs 123th (2017); domestic tourist number rose to 4cr 25 lac (2022) vs 1cr 34 lac (2017); and foreign tourist number increased to 2 lac 14 thousand (till August 2023) vs 1 lac 37 thousand (2015).

Jabed Ahmed, former CEO of Bangladesh Tourism Board; Ashwani Nayar, General Manager of InterContinental Dhaka; Monowara Hakim Ali, Member of Bangladesh Tourism Board Governing Body; Professor Dr Santus Kumar Deb, Chairman, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Dhaka and Shiblul Azam Koreshi, President of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh were also present on the occasion as speakers while Dr Md Masudur Rahman, Professor, Department of Marketing, University of Dhaka presented the keynote paper.

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In their respective speeches, the speakers mentioned, the number of domestic travellers in the country has increased to 10 million currently due to the sense of safety they feel thanks to Bangladesh Tourist Police.

To thrive in today's era, Bangladesh Tourist Police must continue adapting technology and artificial intelligence to ensure better services to tourists at all the destinations of the country, urged the speakers.

It may be mentioned here that Tourist Police earlier launched an app called "Hello Tourist" as well as a facebook page titled "Tourist Police, Bangladesh" to promote their safety and security efforts dedicated to local and international travellers.

As the efforts of Tourist Police get further bolstered to ensure the security of travellers, it is high time Bangladesh was strongly promoted worldwide as a safe destination to visit, the speakers further stressed.

A training manual for Bangladesh Tourist Police was also inaugurated on the sidelines of the seminar.



Officials inaugurating a training manual for Bangladesh Tourist Police on the sidelines of the seminar—Photo: Monitor

However, the seminar addressed a number of future challenges that Tourist Police have to tackle in the coming days.

Tourist harassment as well as tourism infrastructure vandalism and environment pollution are some key aspects that Tourist Police have to combat.

Also it is important for Tourist Police to be multilingual to better communicate with foreign tourist arrivals.

There is no alternative to collaboration between stakeholders and regulators for the development of the industry.

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Furthermore, public and private partnership is key to further develop the safety and security aspects of tourists.

On the other hand, Tourist Police have to be alert about immoral and illegal activities conducted by travellers which might be negative for the environment or the reputation of a destination.

Frequent posting of officials before they could implement long-term sustainable solutions in the sector also comes in the way of development, claimed the speakers.

Lastly, the speakers stressed, even though vigorous efforts of Tourist Police are witnessed in popular destinations like Cox's Bazar, yet, the number of the officials is still poor to cover all the promising tourist sites of the country.

According to the speakers, the number of tourist police officials is 1394 compared to the 1498 tourist sites identified by the masterplan.

Md Abu Kalam Siddique, Deputy Inspector General, Tourist Police delivered the vote of thanks addressing the manpower issue. He said works are underway to increase the number of Tourist Police officials to cover all the tourism areas of the country.

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The DIG also expressed that Tourist Police has brought the country's most popular tourist destination, the world's longest sea beach—Cox's Bazar—under CCTV surveillance.

Now, efforts are underway to bring all the tourist sites of the country under CCTV surveillance to ensure tourists utmost security and safety, concluded the DIG, in his closing remarks.

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