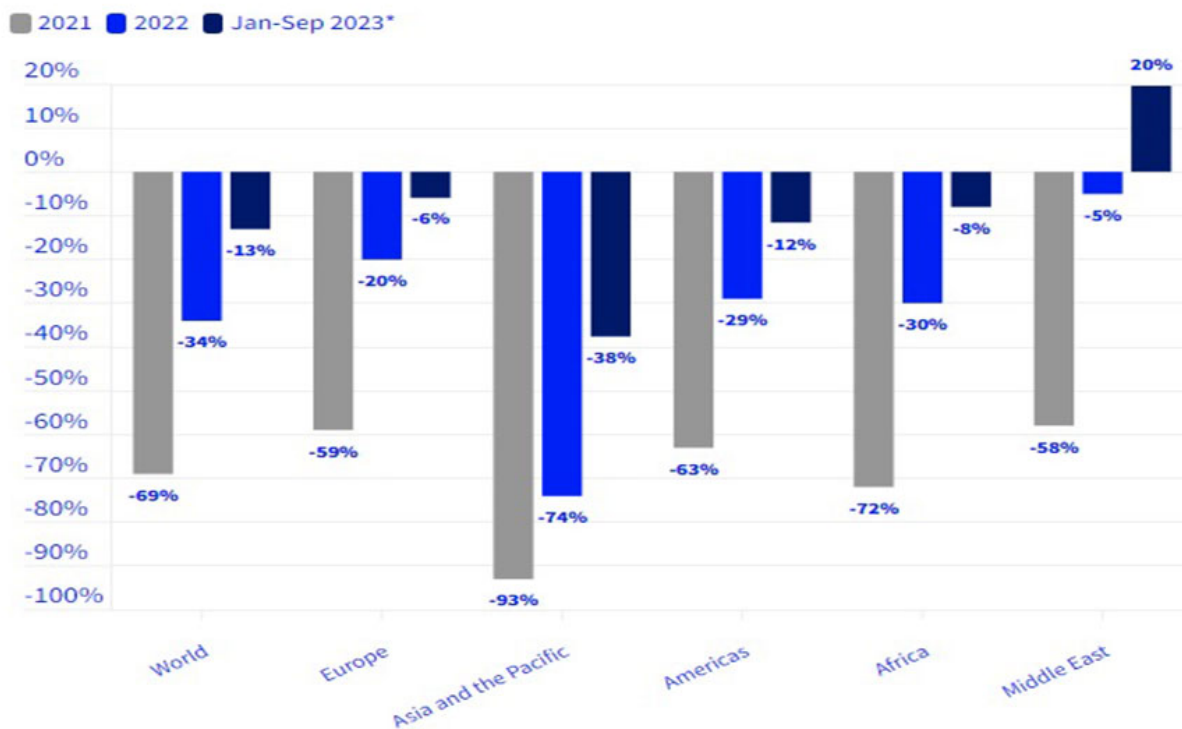


Int'l tourism nears 90pc pre-pandemic levels by 2023 end

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: International tourism is on track to recover almost 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels by 2023 end. As per the latest data from World Tourism Organisation, an estimated 975 million tourists travelled internationally between January and September 2023, an increase of 38 per cent on the same months of 2022.

The newest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer also shows that world destinations welcomed 22 per cent more international tourists in the third quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022, reflecting a strong Northern Hemisphere summer season.

On the development, Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UNWTO said, "The latest UNWTO data shows that international tourism has almost completely recovered from the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 with many destinations reaching or even exceeding pre-pandemic arrivals and receipts. This is critical for destinations, businesses, and communities where the

sector is a major lifeline. "

International tourist arrivals hit 91 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in the third quarter, reaching 92 per cent in July 2023, the best month so far since the start of pandemic.

Overall, tourism recovered 87 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in January-September, 2023. That puts the sector on course to recover almost 90 per cent by 2023 end.

International tourism receipts could reach USD 1.4 trillion in 2023, about 93 per cent of the USD 1.5 trillion earned by destinations in 2019.

ME, Europe, Africa leading recovery

The Middle East continues to lead the recovery by regions in relative terms, with arrivals 20 per cent above pre-pandemic levels in the nine months through September 2023. The Middle East remains the only world region to surpass 2019 levels this period. Visa facilitation measures, the development of new destinations, investments in new tourism-related projects and the hosting of large events, help underpin this performance.

Europe, the world's largest destination region, welcomed 550 million international tourists over the period, 56 per cent of the global total. That represents 94 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. The rebound was supported by robust intra-regional demand as well as strong demand from the United States.

Africa recovered 92 per cent of pre-pandemic visitors this nine-month period and arrivals in the Americas reached 88 per cent of 2019 numbers this period, as the region benefitted from strong US demand, in particular to Caribbean destinations.

Asia and the Pacific reached 62 per cent of pre-pandemic levels this period due to slower reopening to international travel. However, performance among subregions is mixed, with South Asia recovering 95 per cent of pre-pandemic levels but North-East Asia only about 50 per cent.

Tourism spending strong

Strong demand for outbound travel was reported by several large source markets this period, with many exceeding 2019 levels. Germany and the United States spent 13 per cent and 11 per cent more respectively on outbound travel than in the same nine months of 2019, while Italy spent 16 per cent more through August.

The sustained recovery is also reflected in the performance of industry indicators. Drawing on data from IATA (the International Air Transport Association) and STR, the UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker details a strong recovery in air passenger numbers and tourist accommodation occupancy levels.

Against this backdrop, international tourism is well on track to fully recover pre-pandemic levels in 2024 despite economic challenges such as high inflation and weaker global output, as well as important geopolitical tensions and conflicts.

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