

Int'l tourist arrivals doubled in 2022, to reach 95pc pre-pandemic levels in 2023

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Dhaka: International tourist arrivals doubled in 2022 over the previous year, and should reach near pre-pandemic levels in 2023, thanks to the lifting of travel restrictions, especially in China, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation said on January 17.

There were 917 million global tourist arrivals in 2022, up from 455 million in 2021, the Madrid-based UN tourism body said in a report, calling it "stronger than expected results".

While the number of international arrivals in 2022 was still just 63 per cent of the level posted in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the UN body predicts it could reach 80 per cent to 95 per cent in 2023.

"A new year brings more reason for optimism for global tourism," said the body's Secretary-general, Zurab Pololikashvili, in a statement.

The report said international tourism is set to consolidate its recovery in 2023, backed by pent-up demand, particularly from Asia and the Pacific as destinations and markets open up.

"In the short term, the resumption of travel from China is likely to benefit Asian destinations in particular," it added.

"At the same time, robust demand from the United States, backed by a strong US dollar, will continue to benefit destinations in the region and beyond. Europe, in particular, will benefit."

However, the UN body warned that high inflation and interest rates, fears of a global recession and the "uncertainty derived from the Russian aggression against Ukraine" could hamper the recovery of the sector in 2023.

"Tourists are expected to increasingly seek value for money and travel close to home in response to the challenging economic environment," it added.

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