

Int'l tourist arrivals reach 96pc of pre-pandemic levels by July 2024

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Dhaka: International tourism bounced back to 96 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in the seven months till July 2024 end. The growth was driven by strong demand in Europe and the reopening of markets in Asia and the Pacific.

According to the latest report by UN Tourism, around 790 million tourists travelled internationally in the first seven months of 2024, about 11 per cent more than in 2023 and only 4 per cent less than in 2019.

The data is in line with UN Tourism's projection of a full recovery in international arrivals in 2024 despite ongoing economic and geopolitical risks.

With increased air connectivity and visa facilitation supporting the recovery in international travel, the data shows all world regions have

recorded a strong year so far.

The Middle East remained the strongest-growing region in relative terms, with international arrivals climbing 26 per cent above 2019 levels in the first seven months of 2024.

Africa welcomed 7 per cent more tourists than in the same months of 2019.

Europe and the Americas recovered 99 per cent and 97 per cent of their pre-pandemic arrivals respectively during these seven months.

Asia and the Pacific recorded 82 per cent of its pre-pandemic tourist numbers (-18pc versus 2019) reaching 85 per cent in June and 86 per cent in July.

Regarding international tourism receipts, 47 out of 63 countries with available data had recovered pre-pandemic values in the first six months of 2024, many reporting strong double-digit growth compared to 2019 (in local currencies and current prices).

Among the best performers through June or July 2024 were Albania (+128pc) and Serbia (+126pc) where receipts more than doubled (compared to the same period of 2019), followed by Tajikistan (+85pc), Pakistan (+76pc), Montenegro (+70pc), North Macedonia (+60pc) and Portugal (+57pc).

Data on international tourism expenditure reveals strong demand for outbound travel in January-July 2024, especially from large source markets such as the United States (+32pc), Germany (+38pc), and the United Kingdom (+40pc through March), compared to the same period of 2019.

Revised data for 2023 shows export revenues from international tourism reaching USD 1.8 trillion (including receipts and passenger transport), virtually the same as before the pandemic (-1pc in real terms compared to 2019).

Tourism direct GDP also recovered pre-pandemic levels in 2023, reaching an estimated USD 3.4 trillion, equivalent to three per cent of global GDP. In 2019 tourism directly contributed to four per cent of global GDP.

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