

## St Martin's tourism to be unharmed by restrictions: MoCAT Adviser Ariff

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Dhaka: Country's popular leisure destination St Martin's Island will be unharmed by the recently imposed government restriction on tourist arrivals and stay.

Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism Adviser AF Hassan Ariff said this to the media on November 22, while speaking at the 'Asia International Trade Fair' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center.

According to him, controlling tourist numbers is a common practice in many countries to preserve the environment and ensure sustainability at popular tourist destinations.

"St Martin's is the only coral island in Bangladesh, and like any other tourist spot, it has a specific capacity," he claimed.

"Imagine a 10-bed hotel trying to accommodate 30 guests—everything

would be chaotic, from the washrooms to the kitchens.”

“Likewise, St Martin’s Island has suffered due to overtourism. Hence, limiting the number of visitors will help prevent further damage,” he added.

Ariff highlighted that the excessive number of tourists, along with the rise in plastic waste, has taken a toll on the island’s corals, which are now at a critical stage.

He assured that the government is committed to preserving the island by investing in renovation efforts and imposing limits on tourist numbers to ensure the island’s long-term viability.

The move is part of a broader effort to balance tourism growth with environmental sustainability, ensuring that St Martin’s remains a vibrant destination for future generations.

Additionally, Hassan Ariff suggested that those involved in tourism operations should conduct a survey to assess the island's capacity before bringing in tourists

He emphasised that simply bringing large groups without considering the island's limits would not contribute to sustainable tourism.

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