

US to raise national park fees for foreign visitors

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Dhaka: The United States will impose steep new fees on foreign visitors to 11 major national parks from Jan. 1, 2026, a move the Trump administration says will fund maintenance while shielding Americans from higher costs.

Non-US residents will pay \$250 for an annual pass or \$100 per person on top of standard entry fees, which currently run \$30-\$35 per vehicle and, in Yellowstone's case, \$20 per person.

U.S. residents will see no change and will receive "patriotic fee-free" days on Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

The higher charges will apply at Acadia, Bryce Canyon, Everglades, Glacier, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Rocky Mountain, Sequoia & Kings Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite and Zion.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said the policy ensures U.S. taxpayers

“continue to enjoy affordable access,” while foreign tourists “contribute their fair share.”

Critics warn the measure could hurt a tourism industry already weakened since Trump took office, citing staff cuts of 25pc at the National Park Service and declining interest from Canadian, Mexican and other overseas travellers amid political tensions and stricter border advice.

Brian Yablonski of the Property and Environment Research Center estimates the \$100 levy could raise \$1 billion annually with only a 1pc drop in visitors.

But Sierra Club’s Gerry Seavo James called the fee “price gouging” and another blow to an underfunded park service.

Some hospitality operators near Glacier and Yellowstone say travellers may choose other destinations.

“A sure-fire way of discouraging people,” said Mark Howser, who runs the Whistling Swan Motel in Montana.

Despite concerns over a “Trump Slump” and past federal shutdowns, national parks drew a record 331 million visitors in 2024, up 18pc from 2019.

Industry watchers expect close scrutiny of next year’s numbers once the fees take effect.

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