

SriLanka holds B2B session with Bangladeshi MICE delegates for tourism revival

A Monitor Report

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Colombo : Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) together with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Bangladesh and SriLankan Airlines organised a familiarisation tour for a seven-member delegation from Bangladesh in Sri Lanka on November 19-24, 2022.

In the last few years, the popular tourist destination Sri Lanka suffered as it underwent great hurdles one after another such as the Covid-19 pandemic, economic crisis and political uprising.

However, even amid such turmoil, in the first ten months of this year, the country earned over USD 1 billion tourism earnings showing the great strength of its third largest source of foreign exchange -- travel trade -- to keep the country's economy afloat.

Hence, Sri Lanka believes tourism will be the key driver of the country's economic revival. In this regard, the country has chosen MICE, apart from the usual leisure tourism, to lead the revival of the country's tourism and in turn its economy.

While Sri Lanka takes various initiatives to promote itself as a premier MICE destination, the country organised a familiarisation tour for five Bangladeshi MICE agents and two media representatives.

The purpose of the tour was to showcase MICE and leisure tourism facilities of Sri Lanka as well as strengthen travel between the two friendly countries as Sri Lanka sees Bangladesh as a potential source market.



From November 19-23, the MICE delegation from Bangladesh explored MICE facilities, hotels and tourism features of the country in popular destinations such as Bentota, Beruwala, Galle and Colombo during their visit in Sri Lanka.

On November 23, a B2B meeting between the two countries' MICE representatives was held at the iconic MICE centre Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo.

The B2B session began with a welcome address by Krishantha Fernando, General Manager, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau followed by two audio visuals, one of Sri Lankan Airlines and another of Sri Lanka as a destination for transformative travel.

Afterwards, the five MICE agents of Bangladesh and around 30 local agents of Sri Lanka carried out the B2B session where they discussed joint initiatives to boost MICE tourism between the two countries with attractive packages and offers.

"We have MICE facilities that were the first to be developed in the South Asian region. BMICH, for instance, is the first purpose built venue for MICE. We are a compact destination for MICE. We have great facilities and attractions for the incentive market and meeting market. Also, we have all the branded hotels in Sri Lanka," Paddy Paul, Managing Director, Golden Isle Travels, one of the DMCs in Sri Lanka that participated in the B2B session.

"Also the close proximity from Bangladesh to Sri Lanka and back as well as the

availability of daily direct flights between the two countries should help develop the MICE industry in Sri Lanka by Bangladeshis," she added.

The seven-member delegation from Bangladesh included five MICE agents Md Bahauddin Miah, Group Executive Director and CEO, Bengal Travel and Tours Ltd; Md Moinul Islam, Manager, Outbound Tour, Discovery Tours and Logistic; Md Ayaan Faris, Manager, Business Development, Innoglobe Travel and Tours Ltd; Shorna Das, Assistant Manager, Sales, SriLankan, Saimon Holidays; Md Akhtaruzzaman Himu, Senior Executive, Holidays, Marketing and Sales, International Travel Corporation Ltd and two media representatives.

One of the Bangladeshi MICE delegates Md Moinul Islam, Manager, Outbound Tour, Discovery Tours and Logistic, said, "Sri Lanka is definitely a MICE tourism friendly country. They offer attractive rates for MICE events. They are now working towards catering to the Bangladesh MICE visitors to increase the volume of business by adding special experiential features. Even the hotel rates are very reasonable."

At the B2B session, the Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan MICE agents agreed to cooperate with joint initiatives to offer attractive packages with hopes to increase MICE arrivals between the two countries.