

TOAB demands tourist spots reopening, incentive

A Monitor Report

Date: 16 June, 2021



Dhaka : Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) on June 10 demanded reopening of tourist spots at half capacity in compliance with health safety measures to save millions involved in the sector, as it incurred losses amounting to BDT 20,000 crore in the last year following the pandemic.

"Since the government has opened transport, shops and everything else on condition of complying with the health rules, we demand to reopen the tourist spots on the condition of complying with the health rules and standard operational procedure," said TOAB President Md Rafeeuzzaman at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Rafeeuzzaman, also a member of the governing body of Bangladesh Tourism Board, said tourism added 4.4 per cent to the GDP in 2019.

"After the first wave of Covid-19, Bangladesh's tourism industry was trying to recover some damage through domestic tourism, but due to the second wave of coronavirus, Bangladesh's tourism industry again fell into serious uncertainty," he said.

Rafeeuzzaman said TOAB members incurred a loss of BDT 5,700 crore in the last year.

"If the current situation is extended till December this year, the loss [to TOAB members] could be more than BDT 9,000 crore," he added.

The TOAB President said many tour operators are frustrated due to this sorry state

and have been forced to leave their businesses.

"We have been demanding incentives for tour operators and everyone involved in the tourism industry since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic last year, but the government did not respond to our demand," said the TOAB president.

He said in his budget speech, the Finance Minister spoke about development of tourism industry but did not give any direction on how to get the sector out of the financial crisis following this pandemic.

Rafeeuzzaman made a five-point demand to save the country's tourism industry. The demands include reopening of tourist spots as soon as possible on condition of operating at 50 per cent tourism capacity.

He also strongly demanded incentives for tour operators. "Otherwise, several lac people involved in this industry will become unemployed. As a result, the tourism industry will suffer a terrible loss," he claimed.

The TOAB boss also demanded that trade license renewal fees for next year be waived.

Other two demands of TOAB include vaccination for all tour operators and establishment of a separate ministry for tourism.