

Prospect of Tourism Sector in Bangladesh: A Case Study

NIRMAL CHANDRA BHAKTA¹
HASAN TAREQ KHAN²
AMITABH CHAKRABORTY³

Abstract

In recent years tourism has become a major element in the balance of payments of many countries. In this situation Bangladesh is not a good position to attract the international tourists. Bangladesh accounts for only 4.5% of all international tourists visiting South Asian countries, and almost two-thirds of foreign tourist arrivals in Bangladesh are from India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries. The majority of visitors from the UK and USA are ethnic Bangladeshis, who used to come to visit relatives and friends. Almost 60% of foreign tourist arrivals are for business or official purposes, and the number of leisure tourist arrivals is insignificant. Among the reasons for this are the inadequate role of the National Tourist Organization (BPC) in developing the touristic image of Bangladesh, the absence of essential infrastructural systems and facilities needed by tourists, identify the target and potential markets, and unplanned development and construction projects. This study analyses the present condition of Bangladesh tourism potential, and puts forward some suggestions and recommendations for turning the country into a potential tourist destination.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a country of vast, largely unknown and unspoiled natural beauty and reserves, which are simply unique and fascinating. These natural phenomena

1. Authors are General Manager & Assistant Directors of Bangladesh Bank respectively. Opinions expressed in the paper are their own, and in no way reflect the official position of Bangladesh Bank.

are composed of hills and vales, forests, rivers, lakes, sea and Beaches, and the evergreen landscape embracing the country is situated in the northeastern side of the South Asia sub-continent. The topography is mainly flat alluvial plain, criss-crossed by the world's three mighty river systems, the Padma (Ganges), the Jamuna and the Meghna and their innumerable tributaries. The east and the northeast of the country joins India, and the southeastern part, adjoining Myanmar, is mainly hilly with dense forest. This area comprises Chittagong and the three Hilly Districts (as they are known) of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachori, with an average elevation of 610 m. These folded ranges run parallel to each other in the north-south direction and the hill slopes are generally enveloped by dense virgin forest. In the south and southwest, alongside the coast of the Bay of Bengal, lies the Sundarbans, better known as a swampy tropical mangrove forest, the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger. These areas are all ideal for the expansion of ecotourism in the country. The climate of Bangladesh is subtropical with a hot and humid summer and cool and dry winter. Annual rainfall ranges from 160 to 400 cm. The best period to visit Bangladesh is November to March, when the temperature ranges between 13.3 and 26.5 Celsius.

2. Literature Review

A substantial number of works on tourism as a subject has been done throughout the world. But a relatively few works and literatures on the development of tourism worldwide have been found as yet. Similarly, enough literatures on the same area of tourism industry in Bangladesh are not available. However, a few articles and research reports addressing the marketing issues and dealing with the problems of the tourism industry in a skin-deep manner have been available to the researcher. As a consequence, literatures reviewed for this study include only a handful of papers and the few research reports.

3. The Research Gap

The literatures reviewed earlier section clearly indicates that there has been a considerable expansion of tourism activities worldwide. It is understood that a relatively little attention has been given by the professionals and researchers to the issues of tourism development. Therefore, the study on the development of tourism industry has been largely unexplored. As such, literatures on tourism development throughout the world are not enough.

Bangladesh tourism industry, being at its infant stage, is of no exception from this. No comprehensive literature covering the same area has yet been available to the present researchers. Researchers in Bangladesh also do not seem to have much

attention to the studies on the development of tourism industry. Therefore, no comprehensive and worthy paper, research monograph, or research report on this issue of tourism industry in Bangladesh has yet been available. The very few literatures available in Bangladesh have tried to suggest the ways and means in the present context of the country for the development of the industry. These existing literatures on Bangladesh tourism are also with inadequate justification and skin-deep analysis. Therefore, these offer little help in developing a framework for further studies by the researchers. As a result, Bangladesh tourism industry has to take necessary steps to search the way to attract a sizeable number of foreign tourists, motivate them to stay longer, obtain better performance of the industry, and thus ensure sustained growth and development of the industry.

4. Objectives of the Study

- a. To discuss about historical background of Cox's Bazar and other tourism spot Bangladesh and its nearer potential tourism products;
- b. To analyze the present position as well as performance of tourism industry of Bangladesh in general;
- c. To analyze the potentiality of various types of tourism in comparisons to county like Bangladesh;
- d. To evaluate development initiatives and investment opportunities for developing tourism infrastructure with international competitiveness;
- e. To identify various constraints and challenges of tourism industry in Bangladesh and finally to suggest some pragmatic and realistic policy measures for meaningful tourism development in Bangladesh

5. Methodology

Present study is a descriptive one drawing on empirical data and a wide range of literature from a variety of disciplines, based on extensive search from various sources. The desk research method has been followed to review the existing literature on the aforesaid area. Secondary materials, like Report of Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation; Tourism Statistics of Bangladesh, 2008; Asian Development Outlook; UNWTO, WTTC Report; the daily news papers; seminar papers; UNCTARD Report; online databases produced by both academicians, consulting firms and institutions were used to develop the theoretical frame work regarding economic prospects of Bangladesh Tourism Industry and its existing constraints and challenges. Besides, informal interview method was followed to discuss with the administrative officials of some service providing organization in various tourist spot.

6. Potential for tourism in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is located conveniently on the east-west air-corridor making it a gateway to the Far East. It is endowed with resources and the potential for a tourism industry. In the south-east the country has a 120 km long beach of soft silvery sand, perhaps the world's longest, in a Riviera-like setting with crescent-shaped low hills overlooking the Bay of Bengal. The range of the hills clad in lush green thickets are treasured locations for eco-tourists and wildlife watchers. At the head of this terrain is Cox's Bazaar which is as romantic as its name is to the outside world. The Hill Districts to the north and north-east of Cox's Bazar nestle the Kaptai and Rangamati lakes, a 840 sq.km body of crystal clear water lying in sylvan shadows not far from where a dozen hill tribes follow their traditional lifestyles. The Tea District of Sylhet in the far north-east of the country has prospects of tourism, as does the Sundarbans, a large mangrove forest in the south which is home of the Royal Bengal tiger; remains of palaces of old principalities and archaeological sites of Buddhist monasteries, Shrines and holy places, mosques and temples, particularly in the northern part of the country, are among the tourist treasures of Bangladesh.

We may consider the tourism prospect of Bangladesh from four aspects

- Beach Tourism
- Eco-tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Religious tourism

6.1. Prospect of Beach Tourism

Bangladesh is the blessing of Bay-of -Bangle. The southern side of the country is fully surrounded by the blue sea with flat and sandy sea beach. Bangladesh is situated on the lap of Bay-of-Bengal with 712 kilometer costal line. Along its 712 km of coastline, Bangladesh boasts of a number of beautiful beaches. The tranquil environment with abundant greenery around is just perfect to relax and refresh the drained mind and body. Lie on the smooth sandy beaches and soak the warmth of the sun or simply take a quiet walk barefooted on these beaches. The calming effect will easily penetrate deep into your body. The vast stretches of sea water have a unique ability to carry away all our worries and heartaches along with its waves. We can also watch the sun rise and set far in the horizon and appreciate the beauty that is reflected as a reflection in the water.

Major Beach Tourism Destination in Bangladesh

- Cox's Baza Sea Beach (Largest sandy sea beach of the world)
- Kuakata Sea Beach
- Teknaf sea Beach

6.1.1 Coxes Bazar

Miles of golden sands, towering cliffs, surfing waves, rare conch shells, colorful pagodas, Buddhist temples and tribes, delightful sea-food—this is Cox's Bazar, the tourist capital of Bangladesh. Having the world's longest (120 kilometers.) beach sloping gently down to the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal, Cox's Bazar is one of the most attractive tourist sport in the country. There are also a few very old wooden Buddhist temples at Ramu, a few kilometers from Cox's Bazar, well worth visiting. Located at a distance of 152 km. south of Chittagong, the leading seaport of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar is connected both by air and road from Dhaka and Chittagong. A drive to Teknaf, which is the southernmost tip of the mainland of Bangladesh, is a memorable journey. A day trip to either Moheshkhali or Sonadia, the deltaic islands nestled among the gentle waves of the Bay of Bengal, will also be really interesting. Other attractions for visitors are conch shell market, tribal handicraft, salt and prawn cultivation. Besides, the longest sea-beach, Cox's Bazar and its adjoin areas have a lot of things to see and places deserve visit by the tourists.

Major attraction

Himchari: It is about 32 km. South of Cox's Bazar along the beach, a nice place for picnic and shooting. The famous "Broken Hills" and waterfalls here are rare sights.

Inani: It is about 32 km. South of Cox's Bazar and just on the beach, with the sea to the west and a background of steep hills to the east. Inani casts a magic spell on those who step into that dreamland. It is only half an hour's drive from Cox's Bazar and an ideal place for Sea-bathing and picnic.

Maheshkhali: An island off the coast of Cox's Bazar. It has an area of 268 square kilometers. Through the centre of the island and along the eastern coast line rises a range of low hills, 300 feet high; but the coast to the west and north is a lowlying treat, fringed by mangrove jungle. In the hills on the coast is built the shrine of Adinath, dedicated to siva. By its side on the same hill is Buddhist Pagoda.

Ramu: This is a typical Buddhist village, about 16 km. from Cox's Bazar, on the main road to Chittagong. There are monasteries, khyangs and pagodas containing

images of Buddha in gold, bronze and other metals inlaid with precious stones. One of the most interesting of these temples is on the bank of the Baghkhali river. It houses not only interesting relics and Burmes handicrafts but also a large bronze statue of Buddha measuring thirteen feet high and rests on a six feet high pedestal. The wood carving of this khyang is very delicate and refined. The village has a charm of its own. Weavers ply their trade in open workshops and craftsmen make handmade cigars in their pagoda like houses.

Sonadia Island: It is about seven kilometer of Cox's Bazar and about nine square kilometer in area. The western side of the island is sandy and different kinds of shells are found on the beach. Off the northern part of the island, there are beds of window pane oysters. During winter, fisherman set up temporary camps on the island and dry their catches of sea fish.

The Aggameda Khyang, Cox's Bazar: Equally elaborate in plan, elevation and decoration is the Aggameda Khyang near the entrance to the Cox's Bazar town which nestles at the foot of a hill under heavy cover of a stand of large trees. The main sanctuary-cum-monastery is carried on a series of round timber columns, which apart from accommodating the prayer chamber and an assembly hall, also is the repository of a large of small bronze Buddha images—mostly of Burmese origin— and some old manuscripts.

Beyond the main khyang to the south there is an elevated wooden pavilion and a smaller brick temple with a timber and corrugated metal roof. Apart from bearing an inscription in Burmese over its entrance the temple contains some large stucco and bronze Buddha images.

6.1.2 Kuakata

Kuakata, locally known as Sagar Kannya (Daughter of the Sea) is a rare scenic beauty spot on the southernmost tip of Bangladesh. Kuakata in Latachapli union under Kalapara Police Station of Patuakhali district is about 30 km in length and 6 km in breadth. It is 70 km from Patuakhali district headquarters and 320 km from Dhaka. At Kuakata excellent combination of the picturesque natural beauty, sandy beach, blue sky, huge expanse of water of the Bay and evergreen forest in really eye-catching.

The name Kuakata have originated from Kua-Well dug on the sea shore by the early Rakhine settlers in quest of collecting drinking water, who landed on Kuakata coast after expled from Arakan by Moughals. Afterwards, it has become a tradition of digging Kua-Well in the neighbourhood of Rakhaine homestead for collection water for drinking purpose and general use.

Major Attractions

Kuakata is one of the rarest places which has the unique beauty of offering the full view of the rising and setting of crimson sun in the water of the Bay of Bengal in a calm environment. That perhaps makes Kuakata one of the world's unique beaches. The long and wide beach at Kuakata has a typical natural setting. This sandy beach has gentle slopes into the Bay of Bengal and bathing there is as pleasant as is walking or diving.

Kuakata is truly a virgin beach-a sanctuary for migratory winter birds, a series of coconut trees, sandy beach of blue Bay, a feast for the eye. Forest, boats plying in the Bay of Bengal with colourful sails, fishing, towering cliffs, surfing waves everything here touches every visitor's heart. The unique customs and costumes of the 'Rakhyne' tribal families and Buddhist Temple of about hundred years old indicate the ancient tradition and cultural heritage, which are objects of great pleasure Kuakata is the place of pilgrimage of the Hindus and Buddhist communities.

Innumerable devotees arrive here at the festival of 'Rush Purnima' and 'Maghi Purnima'. On these two days they take holy bath and traditional fairs are held here. All these additional offers to panoramic beauty make the beach more attractive to the visitors. One should visit Kuakata and discover the lovely grace of Bangladesh.

6.1.3 Teknaf

Southernmost tip of Bangladesh, Teknaf situated on the Naaf river and just at the end of the hilly regions of the district. Myanmar is on the opposite bank of Naaf river. Wild animals and birds are available there but the most interesting thing is a journey on the river. Wide sandy beach in the backdrop of high hills with green forests is an enchanting scene never to be forgotten.

Major Attraction

One of the major attractions of Teknaf is a cruise by boat or sampan. The town and its surrounding areas provide visitors an opportunity to see the people and culture of the Arakan and Rakhain communities. Teknaf beach is an attractive tourist spot. Besides, there is another beautiful beach at Shahpari dwip at the farthest end of this upazila.

6.2. The prospect of eco-tourism

Bangladesh enjoys a unique position, being easily accessible from many popular destinations in South Asia. This is a real advantage, and particularly true of the

Chittagong Hill Tracts that provides a truly pristine and exciting destination for travelers. According to the Lonely Planet Bangladesh profile, three destinations worth visiting are the Govinda Shiva and Jagannath Temples at Puthia, Rajshahi, St. Martin's Island, and Rangamati and Kaptai Lake in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The country is home to the Royal Bengal Tigers, leopards, Asiatic elephants, monkeys, langurs, gibbons (the only ape in the subcontinent), otters and mongooses. Reptiles include the sea tortoise, mud turtle, river tortoise, pythons, crocodiles, gharials and a variety of snakes. There are more than 600 species of birds, including the Paradise Flycatcher and the most spectacular kingfishers and fishing eagles (IUCN, 2000). The climate of Bangladesh is subtropical and tropical and there are six main seasons: Grishmo or summer, Barsha or Monsoon, Sharot or fall, Hemanto or fall, Sheit or winter and Bashonto or spring. The Bengal region has a multi-faceted folk heritage, enriched by its ancient animist, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim roots. Weaving, pottery, and terracotta sculpture are some the earliest forms of artistic expression. The World Heritage Committee has included in the World Heritage List and the Sundarbans (which is in the list of World Heritage Sites).

Major Eco-Tourism Destination in Bangladesh

- The Sundarbans (Largest Mangrove Forest)
- Hill tracts Districts (Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachori)
- The Saint Martin's Island (Coral Island)
- Nijhum Deep (Sea queen Island)
- Srimongol Lawachera rain forest & Tangua Hoar

6.2.1 The Shundarbans

Sundarbans is the world biggest mangrove forest. In Bangladesh tourism, Sundarbans plays the most vital role. A large number of foreigners come to Bangladesh every year only to visit this unique mangrove forest. Besides, local tourists also go to visit Sundarbans every year. The area of great Sundarbans is approximately 6000 sq. km.

Major Attractions

Wildlife photography including photography of the famous Royal Bengal Tiger, wildlife viewing, boating inside the forest will call recordings, nature study, meeting fishermen, wood-cutters and honey-collectors, peace and tranquility in the wilderness, seeing the world's largest mangrove forest and the revering beauty. The Sundarbans are the largest littoral mangrove belt in the world,

stretching 80km (50mi) into the Bangladeshi hinterland from the coast. The forests aren't just mangrove swamps though; they include some of the last remaining stands of the mighty jungles, which once covered the Gangetic plain. The Gangetic River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) is common in the rivers. No less than 50 species of reptiles and eight species of amphibians are known to occur. The Sundarbans now support the only population of the Estuarine, or Salt-Water Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in Bangladesh, and that population is estimated at less than two hundred individuals. Here land and water meet in many novel fashions, Wildlife presents many a spectacle. No wonder, you may come across a Royal Bengal Tiger swimming across the streams or the crocodiles basking on the riverbanks. With the approach of the evening herds of deer make for the darkening glades where boisterous monkeys shower Keora leaves from above for sumptuous meal for the former. For the botanist, the lover of nature, the poet and the painter this land provides a variety of wonder for which they all crave. Its beauty lies in its unique natural surrounding. Thousands of meandering streams, creeks, rivers and estuaries have enhanced its charm. Sundarbans meaning beautiful forest is the natural habitat of the world famous Royal Bengal Tiger, spotted deer, crocodiles, jungle fowl, wild boar, lizards, these monkey and an innumerable variety of beautiful birds. Migratory flock of Siberian ducks flying over thousands of sail boats loaded with timber, golpatta (round-leaf), fuel wood, honey, shell and fish further add to the serene natural beauty of the Sundarbans. This is indeed a land for the sportsmen, the anglers and the photographers with its abundance of game, big and small, crocodile, wild boar, deer, pythons, wild-birds and above all the Royal Bengal Tiger, cunning, ruthless and yet majestic and graceful, For the less adventurously inclined, there are ducks and snipes. herons and coots, yellow-lags and sandpipers. It is also the land for the ordinary holiday makers who desire to rest or wander around at will to refresh their mind and feast their eyes with the rich treasure that nature has so fondly bestowed.

6.2.2 Hill Track

This is the most prospective tourism area of Bangladesh situated at the south east corner of the country. This tourist zone is a combination of hill, lake, forest, river, sea, fountain and many other temples. As Chittagong is the important commercial town of the country the communication and infrastructure facility is good enough up to Chittagong.

Main attraction

The Hills : The Hill Tract is divided into four valleys surrounded by the Feni, Karnaphuli, Sangu (Sankhu) and Matamuhuri rivers and their tributaries. The

ranges or hills of the Hill Tracts rise steeply thus looking far more impressive than what their height would imply and extend in long narrow ridges. The highest peaks on the northern side are Thangnang, Langliang and Khantiang while those on the southern side are Ramu, Taung, Keekradang, Tahjindong (4632 ft, highest in Bangladesh), Mowdok Mual, Rang Tlang and Mowdok Tlang.

The Forests : The valleys of the Hill Tracts are covered with thick-planted forests. The vegetation in semi-evergreen to tropical evergreen dominated by tall teak trees. The natural vegetation can be seen best in the Rain-khyong valleys of the Bandarban district. This district provides valuable wood which is used for various purposes, besides supplying wood and bamboo for the Karnaphuli Paper Mills and the Rayon Mills situated at Chandraghona. Here a tourist may be lucky to see how huge logs of wood are being carried to the plain by the tamed elephants.

Kaptai Lakes : Famous Kaptai Lake, the largest “man-made” lake, spreading over 680 sq. km. of crystal-clean water flanked by hills and evergreen forests lies in the Rangamati Hill District. The lake was formed when the Karnaphuli river dam (153 feet high, 1800 feet long crest) was built for the purpose of hydroelectric power project at Kaptai. The old Rangamati town was submerged under lake water and a new town had to be built later. The lake is full of fish and provides facilities for cruising, swimming and skiing. There are also facilities for angling and short trip by Sampan, local name for country boats.

Rangamati : If you don't visit Rangamati you will not discover a big portion of natural beauties of Bangladesh. From Chittagong a 77 km. road amidst green fields and winding hills will take you to Rangamati. It is also connected by waterway from Kaptai. Parjatan holiday complex is the best place to stay in Rangamati. There are other hotels in Rangamati where you can stay. Boating is the prime attraction in Rangamati. You can go to Kaptai and also by Karnaphuli River you can go deep in side the hill areas where on the way you will find lots of natural waterfalls. If you wish you can take shower in the waterfall or you can swim in the river. By boat you can visit the tribal villages, King Chakma's (tribal) Palace that is called Chakma Rajbari, Rajbonbihar pagoda, Tribal museum etc. You can also enjoy the tribal handmaid crafts if you go for shopping in the local market.

Bandarban : Lots of hills and hilly areas, waterfalls, River Sangu, Lakes and the tribal culture are the main attraction of Bandarban. You can go to Bandarban from Chittagong by road. Chimbuk hill is one of the major attractions of Bandarban. You can enjoy the journey to Chimbuk Hill by jig jag hilly roads. It's the third

highest mountain in Bangladesh of approx. 3000 ft height. Reach Chimbuk by jeep or microbus from Rangamati. A beautiful Rest house is there on the top of Chimbuk hill. If you are lucky then you can feel the clouds touching your whole body. If you take the prior permission from Roads and Highway Department you can spent a night in the rest house on the top of Chimbuk hill. If you stay there a night, you will remember your stay for your whole life with the calmness of nature hearing sometimes the wild animals squalling.

Khagrachari : Khagrachhari is the natural wild beauty of Bangladesh. Here you can visit the tribal lifestyle of Chakmas' in Khagrachari. You can also visit Alutila hill. Approximately 100 meters long a very dark Cave is the mysterious beauty of Alutila hill.

Matai Pukhiri Lake-It is a lake at 1500 feet above the ground at Nunchhari in Khagrachari. According to Tripura tale, water of this lake is never up or it turns dirty that is why it is called Lake of God.

Patenga sea beach: This sea beach is in the Chittagong district. The main attraction of this sea beach is sand and sun. The sea beach is well communicate with the Dhaka and Chittagong.

6.2.3 Nijhum deep

The Nijhum Deep, an island with forest and deep blue water of the Bay of Bengal in the south of Bangladesh attracts hundreds of tourists during the winter season and many are interested to visit the island.

Major attraction

Four decades ago, the island was under deep water. But, the alluvial island surfaced over the period and in 1972 the forest department began afforestation programmes in the island. Later, the government declared the Nijhum Deep as a 'national garden'. The Bay waves that irrigate the forest more than once a day helped grow quickly the planted Keowra, Geowra, Bain and Kakra and other valuable trees. Wild animals -the spotted deers, monkey, buffalo, snakes and 35 species of birds— made the island attractive for the tourists. In the winter, thousands of guest birds migrate to this island to add more to its beauty. In 1978, four pair of spotted deers were released in the forest and now the number of deer has increased to around 6000. The visitors can easily watch these attractive animal. The island has 20 kms long sandy and grassy beach that may attract thousands tourists annually if facilities and services are made available there.

Oysters of various nature and snails are can be easily seen in the island. The tourists in the island can enjoy sunrise and sunset from the island. To pay a visit in the Nijhum Deep is a bit adventurous and enjoyable. Tourists from Dhaka can avail the motor launches plying between Sadarghat and Hatia Tamorddi to reach the island. From Chittagong tourists can avail sea-truck to go Hatia. From Hatia the tourist can get transport to go Jahajmara Bazar and from there, they can go to Amtalighat or Katakhalighat by rickshaw. Boats are available there to reach the island.

6.2.4 Srimongol

Srimongol is famous for the largest tea gardens of the world covered by lush green carpet. One can have a look into the spectacular tea processing at Tea Research Institute. Bangladesh produces and exports a large quantity of high quality tea every year. Most of the tea estates are in Sremongol. It is called “The land of two leaves and a bud”. It is also called camellia, green carpet or Tea Mountain. There are a lot of tea estates including the largest one in the world. The terraced tea garden, pineapple, rubber and lemon plantations form a beautiful landscape. It is known as the tea capital in Bangladesh. Just after entering into the tea estates the nice smells and green beauty will lead you many kilometers away.

Lawacherra Rain Forest: Lawacherra Rain Forest is one of the important & well-reserved forests in Bangladesh. Here visitor may see gibbons swimming through the trees and birds like bee-eater owls parrot. It is a good habitat of Deer, leopard, wild chicken, squirrel, and python. The terrain is hilly and vegetation is fairly thick. Only one rare Chloroform tree of Asia is here and a prime attraction of tourist. Kasia & Manipuri is two important ethnic-tribe live here. Manipuri is famous for its rich culture especially for dancing & singing. They are also famous for their traditional weaving. You can buy their handicrafts exquisitely woven woolen. Shawls, Sharee, Napkin, bed-cover and some should a bags. It is known as colorful community. Kasia tribe is famous for their betel leaf cultivation. They make their villages high on hilltop in deep forest and so far from town. It is like “ a Piece of paradise”. Certainly it will please you. Pineapple cultivation in numerable rows of Pineapple cultivation covering largest area is very amazing and fascinating. Largest quantity of pineapple grown here of Bangladesh. It is also sweetest and best quality. Pineapple is really a greatest offer of summer but now it is cultivated all the year round. So, you can enjoy the juicy summer fruit in any time coming to its real field. Just after entering into pineapple plantation. It can be highlight for you in Sremongol.

Madhabkunda: Madhabkunda surrounded by lush tea estates and full of waters lilies is a unique one. Magurchara ruined gas & Oil reserved field, which was blasted while digging 3 years ago and was burning an 500-feet height for more than 3 months. A lot of burnt trees now carrying the symbols of digester. Ever where a lot of rubber & lemon plantation form a beautiful landscape. And you can have a visit to Madhobkundo water fall.

6.3. Prospect of Cultural & Historical tourism

Bangladesh is a country considerably rich in cultural and archaeological wealth, especially of the medieval period both during the Muslim and pre-Muslim rules, though most of it is still unexplored and unknown. In archaeological fieldwork and research this area was very much neglected for a long time for various reasons, not the least of which are its difficult geography and climate and remoteness from the main centers of the subcontinent.

Major areas of the cultural & historical Tourism

- Culture & Cultural activities
- Archaeological places

6.3.1 Culture and Cultural activities

The multi dimensional cultural heritage of Bangladesh encompasses within itself the cultural diversity of different social and religious groups of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has a composite culture, in which the influences of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam have been assimilated. It is manifested in various forms, including music, dance and drama; arts and crafts; folklore and folktales; literature, philosophy, fairs and festivals as well as in a distinct cuisine and culinary tradition. The indigenous communities of Bangladesh have their own culture and tradition full of colorful diversity. The reverie landscape and the monsoon climate are intimately related to the cultural practices of this country. This site is an endeavour to focus on the country's noteworthy cultural features including the lifestyles and culture of the indigenous people.

Major attraction of cultural tourism

Baishakhi Mela : Baisakhi Mela is the mirror of our traditional culture. It is presumed that it was started about 600 years back. The number of Baisakhi Melas celebrated in different parts of Bangladesh is around 300-350.

Though Baisakhi Melas are organised in a planned way in almost all cities of the country, originally they were very much rural based. Traditional handicrafts, hand-made cakes, special kinds of food stuff, sweets, potteries, bangles, pitchers and cane products are the main exhibits.

The Baisakhi Mela is an ancient form of Bengali folk festival that continues to thrive in the modern age. It continues for three days, one week or even as long as one month.

Dubla Rash Mela : Dubla Rash Mela is not only a big fair for Bagerhat, it is undoubtedly one of the biggest fairs in the country. At the centre of the festival are twenty thousand temporary fishermen who are engaged in catching and drying fish on Dubla and nearby islands. In the Bangla month of Agrahayan every year, the fair continues for 5-7 days during full moon time.

Dubla island stands on the Bay of Bengal and is a part of the Sundarban Forest. The fair on the Dubla island was started in 1923 by Hari Bhajan, a disciple of Thakur Hari Chand. The life of Hari Bhajan was very extraordinary. During his stay in Sundarbans for twenty four years, he lived on the fruits of the forest. He had many disciples in nearby villages. One of his notable works was to start the Dubla Rash Mela during the Rash Purnima. To celebrate the occasion and keep alive the memory of Thakur Hari Chand, the devotees, especially the fishermen of the Sundarbans, organise this five-day fair.

This has become a grand occasion for many foreign tourists visiting the Sundarbans and people come from India as well. Around 40-50 thousand people join the celebrations every year. Handicrafts and precious wooden items are put on sale.

Tribal life : The inhabitants of the Hill Tracts are mostly tribal. Life of the tribal people is extremely fascinating. Majority of them are Buddhists and the rest are Hindus, Christians and Animists. Despite the bondage of religion, elements of primitiveness are strongly displayed in their rites, rituals and everyday life. The tribal families are matriarchal. The women are more hardworking than the males and they are the main productive force. Boats that visit the villages leave from Rangamati. Bring your swimming gear because you can take a plunge anywhere. The tribal people are extremely self-reliant, they grow their own food, their girls weave their own clothes and generally speaking, they live a simple life. Each tribe has its own dialect, distinctive dress and rites and rituals. The common feature is their way of life, which still speaks of their main occupation. Some of them take pride in hunting with bows and arrows. Tribal women are very skilful in making

beautiful handicrafts. Tribal people are generally peace loving, honest and hospitable. They usually greet a tourist with a smile.

Manipuri Dance: An interesting feature of Sylhet region is the aboriginal tribes such as the Tipperas, the Monipuris, Khasis and Garos who still live in their primitive ways in the hills, practising their age-old rites, rituals, customs and traditions. During festivals such as, Rash Leela (Full-moon night in February) and Doljatra, the attractive young girls dressed in colorful robes, dance with the male members of their choice & love. The Monipuris perform their famous dance, based on allegorical love themes of the ancient mythology.

6.3.2 Archaeological places

The earlier history of Bangladesh reveals that Buddhism received royal patronage from some important ruling dynasties like the great Pala rulers, the Chandras and the Deva Kings. Under their royal patronage numerous well-organized, self-contained monasteries sprang up all over the country.

Major attraction of Archaeological places

Paharpur - Largest Buddhist center of learning: Paharpur is a small village 5 km. west of Jamalganj in the greater Rajshahi district where the remains of the most important and the largest known monastery south of the Himalayas has been excavated. This 7th century archaeological find covers approximately an area of 27 acres of land. The entire establishment, occupying an quadrangular court, measuring more than 900 ft. externally on each side, has high enclosure-walls about 16 ft. in thickness and from 12 ft. to 15 ft. height. With elaborate gateway complex on the north, there are 45 cells on the north and 44 in each of the other three sides with a total number of 177 rooms. The architecture of the pyramidal cruciform temple is profoundly influenced by those of South-East Asia, especially Myanmar and Java. A small site-Museum built in 1956-57 houses the representative collection of objects recovered from the area. The excavated findings have also been preserved at the Varendra Research Museum at Rajshahi. The antiquities of the museum include terracotta plaques, images of different Gods and Goddesses, potteries, coins, manuscripts, ornamental bricks and other minor clay objects.

Mahasthangarh-The oldest archaeological site: The oldest archaeological site of Bangladesh is on the western bank of river Karatoa 18 m. north of Bogra town beside Bogra-Rangpur Road. The spectacular site is an imposing landmark in the area having a fortified, oblong enclosure measuring 5000 ft. by 4500ft. with an

average height of 15 ft. from the surrounding paddy fields. Beyond the fortified area, other ancient ruins fan out within a semicircle of about five miles radius. Several isolated mounds, the local names of which are Govinda Bhita Temple, Khodai Pathar Mound, Mankalir Kunda, Parasuramer Bedi, Jiyat Kunda etc. surround the fortified city

This 3rd century archaeological site is still held to be of great sanctity by the Hindus. Every year (mid-April) and once in every 12 years (December) thousands of Hindu devotees join the bathing ceremony on the bank of river Karatoa. A visit to the Mahasthangarh site museum will open up for you wide variety of antiquities, ranging from terracotta objects to gold ornaments and coins recovered from the site. For visiting Paharpur and Mahasthangarh, the visitors may enjoy the hospitality of Parjatan Motel at Bogra. Mahasthangarh and Paharpur are only 18 km. and 75 km. respectively from Bogra town.

Rajshahi is famous for pure silk. Silk processing industry of the Sericulture Board is just ten minutes walk from Parjatan Motel at Rajshahi. Besides the Sericulture Board, a visit to Varendra Research Museum at the heart of the City for archaeological finds, would be most rewarding.

Maimamati : An isolated low, dimpled range of hills, dotted -with more than 50 ancient Buddhist settlements of the 8th to 12th century A.D. known as Mainamati-Laimai range are extended through the centre of the district of Comilla.

Salban Vihara almost in the middle of the Mainarnati-Lalmai hill range consists of 115 cells, built around a spacious courtyard with cruciform temple in the centre facing its only gateway complex to the north resembling that of the Paharpur Monastery.

Kotila Mura is situated on a flattened hillock, about 5 km north of Salban Vihara inside the Comilla Cantonment is a picturesque Buddhist establishment. Here three stupas are found side by side representing the Buddhist "Trinity" or three jewels i.e. the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Charpatra Mura is an isolated small oblong shrine situated about 2.5 km. north-west of kotila Mura stupas. The only approach to the shrine is from the East through a gateway which leads to a spacious hall.

Mainamati Museum has a rich and varied collection of copper plates, gold and silver coins and 86 bronze objects. Over 150 bronze statues have been recovered mostly from the monastic cells, bronze stupas, stone sculptures and hundreds of terracotta plaques each measuring on an average of 9" high and 8" to 12" wide.

Mairiamati is only 114 km. from Dhaka City and is just a day's trip by road on way to Chittagong.

Lalbagh Fort: The capital city Dhaka predominantly was a city of the Mughals. In hundred years of their vigorous rule successive Governors and princely Viceroys who ruled the province, adorned it with many noble monuments in the shape of magnificent places, mosques, tombs, fortifications and 'Khatras' often surrounded with beautifully laid out gardens and pavilions. Among these, few have survived the ravages of time, aggressive tropical climate of the land and vandal hands of man. But the finest specimen of this period is the Aurangabad Fort, commonly known as Lalbagh Fort, which, indeed represents the unfulfilled dream of a Mughal Prince.

It occupies the south western part of the old city, overlooking the Buriganga on whose northern bank it stands as a silent sentinel of the old city. Rectangular in plan, it encloses an area of 1082' by 800' and in addition to its graceful lofty gateways on south-east and north-east corners and a subsidiary small unpretentious gateway on north, it also contains within its fortified perimeter a number of splendid monuments, surrounded by attractive garden. These are, a small 3-domed mosque, the mausoleum of Bibi Pari the reputed daughter of Nawab Shaista Khan and the Hammam and Audience Hall of the Governor. The main purpose of this fort, was to provide a defensive enclosure of the palatial edifices of the interior and as such was a type of palace-fortress rather than a siege fort.

Sonargaon: About 27 km. from Dhaka, Sonargaon is one of the oldest capitals of Bengal. It was the seat of Deva Dynasty until the 13th century. From then onward till the advent of the Mughals, Sonargaon was subsidiary capital of the Sultanate of Bengal. Among the ancient monuments still intact are the Tomb of Sultan Ghiyasuddin (1399-1409 A. D), the shrines of Panjpirs and Shah Abdul Alia and a beautiful mosque in Galdi villaae.

Shatt-Gumbujj Mosque: In mid-15th century, a Muslim colony was founded in the inhospitable mangrove forest of the Sundarbans near the sea coast in the Bagerhat district by an obscure saint-General, named Ulugh Khan Jahan. He was the earliest torch bearer of islam in the South who laid the nucleus of an affluent city during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (1442-59), then known as 'khalifatabad' (present Bagerhat).

Khan Jahan adorned his city with numerous mosques, tanks, roads and other public buildings, the spectacular ruins of which are focused around the most

imposing and largest multidomed mosques in Bangladesh, known as the Shait-Gumbuj Masjid (160' x 108'). The stately fabric of the monument, serene and imposing, stands on the eastern bank of an unusually vast sweet-water tank, clustered around by the heavy foliage of a low-laying countryside, characteristic of a sea-coast landscape.

The mosque roofed over with 77 squat domes, including 7 chauchala or four-sided Pitched Bengali domes in the middle row. The vast prayer hall, although provided with 11 arched doorways on east and 7 each on north and south for ventilation and light, presents a dark and sombre appearance inside. It is divided into 7 longitudinal aisles and 11 deep bays by a forest of slender stone columns, from which springs rows of endless arches, supporting the domes. Six feet thick, slightly tapering walls and hollow and round, almost detached corner towers, resembling the bastions of fortress, each capped by small rounded cupolas, recall the Tughlaq architecture of Delhi. The general appearance of this noble monument with its stark simplicity but massive character reflects the strength and simplicity of the builder.

Kantanagar Temple: The most ornate among the late medieval temples of Bangladesh is the Kantanagar temple near Dinajpur town, which was built in 1752 by Maharaja Pran Nath of Dinajpur. The temple, a 50' square three storied edifice, rests on a slightly curved raised plinth of sandstone blocks, believed to have been quarried from the ruins of the ancient city of Bangarh near Gangharampur in West Bengal. It was originally a navaratna temple, crowned with four richly ornamental corner towers on two storeys and a central one over the third storey.

Unfortunately these ornate towers collapsed during an earthquake at the end of the 19th century. In spite of this, the monument rightly claims to be the finest extant example of its type in brick and terracotta, built by Bengali artisans. The central cell is surrounded on all sides by a covered verandah, each pierced by three entrances, which are separated by equally ornate dwarf brick pillars. Corresponding to the three delicately cusped entrances of the balcony, the sanctum has also three richly decorated arched openings on each face. Every inch of the temple surface is beautifully embellished with exquisite terracotta plaques, representing flora fauna, geometric motifs, mythological scenes and an astonishing array of contemporary social scenes and favourite pastimes. Besides, there are many other monuments which incite tourist interest.

AhsanManzil: On the bank of river Buriganga in Dhaka the Pink majestic Ahsan Manzil has been renovated and turned into a museum recently. It is an epitome of

the nation's rich cultural heritage. It is the home of Nawab of Dhaka and a silent spectator to many events.

Today's renovated Ahsan Manzil a monument of immense historical beauty. It has 31 rooms with a huge dome atop which can be seen from miles around. It now has 23 galleries in 31 rooms displaying of traits, furniture and household articles and utensils used by the Nawab.

World War II Cemetery : In a well-preserved cemetery at a quiet and picturesque place within the city lie buried in eternal peace over 700 soldiers from British, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, Myanmar, East and West Africa, The Netherlands and Japan who laid down their lives on the Myanmar front during the World War II.

6.4. Religious tourism

Bangladesh is a multi religious country with huge number of religious structure. More over the 2nd largest assembly of Muslim held here in each year. More over the other historical religious structure found across the country. If we implement the tourism philosophy in this area like India it may be a high potential area to attract the tourist.

6.4.1 Tongi Estema

In each year more than 1 million religious Muslim assemble in tjis estema and this is second largest Muslim assemble in the word. The estema held on the bank of Turag river in Tongi under the district of Gazipur. So the place has special religious values to the all Muslim of the word.

6.4.2 Star Mosque

A very beautiful mosque of the city is situated at Mahuttuly on Abul Khairat Rd; just west of Armanitola Govt. High School. Architecturally faultless (Mughal style) is a five-dome mosque with hundreds of big and small twinkling stars as surface decorations. The stars have been created by setting pieces of chinaware on white cement. Seen from the front and from far it looks as if shining above the surface of the earth.

The inside of it is even more beautiful that the outside, lovely mosaic floor and excellent tiles with many floral patterns set on the walls, are all in complete harmony. The sitara Masjid was built originally with three domes in early 18th century by Mirza Ghulam Pir, a highly respectable Zamindar of Dhaka.

6.4.3 Baitul Mukarram Mosque

Baitul Mukarram Mosque is situated at Purana Paltan east of Bangladesh Secretariat and north of Dhaka Stadium. Largest Mosque in the city, three storied and built after the pattern of the Kaba Sharif. Very beautiful and costly decorations in the interior. Long lawn, garden and rows of fountains to the south and east. The mosque is on a very high platform. Lovely flight of stairs lead to it; from the south, east and north. On the east is a vast varanda which is also used for prayer and Eid congregation. Below in the ground floor is a shopping centre.

6.4.4 Chhota Sona Mosque:

One of the most graceful monument of the Sultanate period is the Chhota Sona Masjid or Small Golden Mosque at Gaur in Rajshahi Built by one Wali Muhammad during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519). Originally it was roofed over with 15 gold-gilded domes including the 3 Chauchala domes in the middle row, from which it derives its curious name.

6.4.5 Mosque of Baba Adam

Of a slightly later date the elegant 6-domed mosque (43' x 36') of Baba Adam in Rampal near Dhaka was erected by one Malik Kafur during the reign of the last Ilyas Shahi Sultan, Jalauddin Fateh Shah in 1483 A.D. It displays the same characteristic features of the period such as the faceted octagonal turrets at 4 corners, the curved cornice, the facade and 3 mihrabs relieved richly with beautiful terracotta floral and hanging patterns.

6.4.6 The Shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal

Among the several places of historical interest in Sylhet town is the shrine of Saint Hazrat Shah Jalal. Even today, more than six hundred years after his death, the shrine is visited by innumerable devotees of every caste and creed, who make the journey from far away places. Hazrat Shah Jalal is credited with the help extended to the Muslim army which conquered Sylhet in 1303 A.D.

6.4.7 Shrine of Sultan Bayazid Bostami

Situated on a hillock in Nasirabad, about 6 km. to the north-west of Chittagong town, this shrine attracts a large number of visitors and pilgrims. At its base is a large tank with several hundred tortoises. Tradition has it that these animals are the descendants of the evil spirits (genii) who were cast into this shape because they incurred the wrath of the great saint who visited the place about 1,100 years ago.

6.4.8 Shrine of Shah Amanat

The shrine of Shah Amanat is another place of religious attraction. Located in the heart of the town, the shrine is visited by hundreds of people everyday who pay homage to the memory of the saint who lived in the 19th century.

6.4.9 Tomb of Sultan Bayazid Bostami : Situated on a hillock at Nasirabad, about 6 km. to the north-west of Chittagong town, this shrine attracts a large number of visitors and pilgrims. At its base is a large tank with several hundred tortoises. Tradition has it that these animals are the descendants of the evil spirits (genii) who were cast into this shape because they incurred the wrath of the great saint who visited the place about 1100 years ago.

6.4.10 The Shrine of Shah Amanat: It is another place of religious attraction, located in the heart of the town, the shrine is visited by hundreds of people everyday who pay homage to the memory of the saint.

7.0 Present status of our Tourism business

As per The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 **Bangladesh** is ranked 25th in the region and 129th overall, down two places since last year. As with India, Bangladesh is well assessed for its natural resources (ranked 40th) and cultural resources (65th), with many World Heritage sites, both natural and cultural in the country. Bangladesh also has a reasonable ground transport infrastructure (ranked 60th). However, some aspects of its tourism infrastructure remain highly underdeveloped (ranked 125th), with very few hotel rooms per capita by international comparison and low ATM penetration as well as rental car facilities. Further, despite government and industry efforts to promote the country abroad (Bangladesh is ranked 62 with regard to tourism fair attendance) but the exposure given to recent promotional campaigns, the assessment of marketing and branding to attract tourists remains below average (ranked 124th). Another area of concern is the policy environment, ranked 108th, with much time and cost for starting a business, bilateral Air Service Agreements that are not assessed as open, and visas required for most visitors. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness index is given below in details-

The Travel & Tourism (T&T) Competitiveness Index in detail of Bangladesh

1st pillar: Policy rules and regulations

1.01 Prevalence of foreign ownership	93□
1.02 Property rights	114□
1.03 Business impact of rules on FDI	56□

1.04 Visa requirements*	101	□
1.05 Openness of bilateral Air Service Agreements*	109	□
1.06 Transparency of government policymaking	108	□
1.07 Time required to start a business*	120	□
1.08 Cost to start a business*	88	□

2nd pillar: Environmental sustainability

2.01 Stringency of environmental regulation	125	□
2.02 Enforcement of environmental regulation	111	□
2.03 Sustainability of T&T industry development	126	□
2.04 Carbon dioxide emissions*	16	□
2.05 Particulate matter concentration*	128	□
2.06 Threatened species*	106	□
2.07 Environmental treaty ratification*	52	□

3rd pillar: Safety and security

3.01 Business costs of terrorism	114	□
3.02 Reliability of police services	121	□
3.03 Business costs of crime and violence	104	□
3.04 Road traffic accidents*	121	□

4th pillar: Health and hygiene

4.01 Physician density*	106	□
4.02 Access to improved sanitation*	108	□
4.03 Access to improved drinking water*	100	□
4.04 Hospital beds*	125	□

5th pillar: Prioritization of Travel & Tourism

5.01 Government prioritization of the T&T industry	124	□
5.02 T&T government expenditure*	95	□
5.03 Effectiveness of marketing and branding	124	□
5.04 T&T fair attendance*	62	□

6th pillar: Air transport infrastructure

6.01 Quality of air transport infrastructure	118	□
6.02 Available seat kilometers, domestic*	58	□
6.03 Available seat kilometers, international*	61	□
6.04 Departures per 1,000 population*	123	□
6.05 Airport density*	132	□
6.06 Number of operating airlines*	69	□
6.07 International air transport network	84	□

7th pillar: Ground transport infrastructure

7.01 Quality of roads	93	□
7.02 Quality of railroad infrastructure	67	□

7.03 Quality of port infrastructure	121□
7.04 Quality of ground transport network	100□
7.05 Road density*	17□

INDICATOR RANK/133

8th pillar: Tourism infrastructure

8.01 Hotel rooms*	125□
8.02 Presence of major car rental companies*	122□
8.03 ATMs accepting Visa cards*	120□

9th pillar: ICT infrastructure

9.01 Extent of business Internet use	122□
9.02 Internet users*	132□
9.03 Telephone lines*	123□
9.04 Broadband Internet subscribers*	127□
9.05 Mobile telephone subscribers*	116□

10th pillar: Price competitiveness in the T&T industry

10.01 Ticket taxes and airport charges*	87□
10.02 Purchasing power parity*	12□
10.03 Extent and effect of taxation	50□
10.04 Fuel price levels*	17□
10.05 Hotel price index*	28□

11th pillar: Human resources

11.01 Primary education enrollment*	93□
11.02 Secondary education enrollment*	111□
11.03 Quality of the educational system	107□
11.04 Local availability of research and training services	130□
11.05 Extent of staff training	132□
11.06 Hiring and firing practices	29□
11.07 Ease of hiring foreign labor	124□
11.08 HIV prevalence*	1□
11.09 Business impact of HIV/AIDS	73□
11.10 Life expectancy*	104□

12th pillar: Affinity for Travel & Tourism

12.01 Tourism openness*	132□
12.02 Attitude of population toward foreign visitors	77□
12.03 Extension of business trips recommended	116□

13th pillar: Natural resources

13.01 Number of World Heritage natural sites*	40□
13.02 Protected areas*	116□
13.03 Quality of the natural environment	128□
13.04 Total known species*	44□

14th pillar: Cultural resources

14.01 Number of World Heritage cultural sites*	65□
14.02 Sports stadiums*	129□
14.03 Number of international fairs and exhibitions*	101□
14.04 Creative industries exports*	64□

Source: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 © 2009 World Economic Forum

If we analyze the T&T Index of Bangladesh we will observed that we have comparative advantage only in 10 areas among the 73 different tourism indicator. So we have a lot to develop this sector. In comparison to Bangladesh India have only 13 more advantage. But their overall ranking is 61. In various areas where Bangladesh is not enjoying the competitive advantage is recoverable, if we give minimum attention.

8.0 Comparative position of tourism with three counties (India, Malaysia & Thailand) in Asia

India is ranked 11th in the region and 62nd overall, in 2008, up three places since last year. As with China, India is well assessed for its natural resources (ranked 14th) and cultural resources (24th), with many World Heritage sites, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, and strong creative industries in the country. India also has quite a good air transport network (ranked 37th), particularly given the country's stage of development, and a reasonable ground transport infrastructure (ranked 49th). However, some aspects of its tourism infrastructure remain somewhat underdeveloped (ranked 73rd), with very few hotel rooms per capita by international comparison and low ATM penetration. Further, despite government and industry efforts to promote the country abroad (India is ranked 1st with regard to tourism fair attendance) and the exposure given to recent promotional campaigns, the assessment of marketing and branding to attract tourists remains average (ranked 53rd). Another area of concern is the policy environment, ranked 108th, with much time and cost for starting a business, bilateral Air Service Agreements that are not assessed as open, and visas required for most visitors.

Malaysia is ranked 7th regionally and 32nd overall, in 2008, with its rich natural resources (ranked 21st) and good ground transport infrastructure (ranked 28th). The country also benefits from excellent price competitiveness (ranked 4th), with low comparative hotel and fuel prices, low ticket taxes and airport charges, very competitive hotel prices, and a favorable tax regime. Malaysia's policy environment is assessed as highly conducive to the development of the sector (ranked 9th), and the country is prioritizing Travel & Tourism; it markets the country at many international tourism fairs (ranked 1st) and also has an excellent

evaluation for its destination-marketing campaigns (ranked 12th). With regard to weaknesses, health and hygiene indicators lag behind those of many other countries in the region, with, in particular, a low physician density (placing the country 94th).

Thailand is ranked just behind Malaysia in the region at 8th place and 39th overall, in 2008, up three places since last year. It is endowed with rich natural resources and a strong affinity for Travel & Tourism (ranked 24th and 22nd, respectively), with a very friendly attitude of the population toward tourists (ranked 13th). This is buttressed by the sector's strong prioritization by the government (ranked 12th) with, similar to Malaysia, excellent destination-marketing campaigns and good price competitiveness. However, some weaknesses remain: despite the prioritization of the sector by the government, some aspects of the regulatory environment—such as stringent foreign ownership restrictions, visa restrictions for many travelers, and the long time required for starting a business in the country—are not particularly conducive to developing the sector (ranked 62nd). In addition, given the importance of the natural environment for the country's tourism, environmental sustainability should be a greater priority (ranked 99th).

9.0 Constraints and Challenges of Tourism Sector of Bangladesh

From the findings of the present study, it is seen that tourism sector of Bangladesh has been

facing multisided problems. It mainly lacks proper planning, infrastructure facilities etc. However, according to the findings of this study and previous researches, the following are main barriers of tourism development of Bangladesh:

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities** : Existing infrastructure facilities is not modern and developed in Bangladesh. For this reason in spite of the presence of many tourism potentials, Bangladesh's share of income from tourism is very poor. With poor infrastructure, little marketing sense and direction, and a national carrier too busy serving the labor traffic, tourism potentials of Bangladesh is far remained unexploited. One of the key aspects of infrastructure is the availability of monetary funds during travel. Even until recently, the ATMs outside Dhaka aren't connected to the international network, and traveler's cheques are very difficult to cash. Due to counterfeiting, many stores accept only "beautiful" (crisp and clean) bills.

2. **Lack of Modern and Adequate Recreation Facilities :** Although Cox's Bazar Spot is treated as a tourism capital of Bangladesh, its recreation facilities yet to developed. Existing recreation facilities are not modern and sufficient according to the demand of the tourists especially for foreign tourists. For example, boating, wind surfing, horse racing and other modern playing instruments with local recreation facilities etc. are not available in the Cox's Bazar and other tourism spots of Bangladesh.
3. **Negative Impact of Security and Safety:** Social security and safety have great impact on tourism development in any region like Bangladesh. Security system is yet to develop in the main cities of all tourists spots of Cox's Bazar. The condition of security and safety are very disappointing in the roadsides for tourists coming especially from Chittagong to Cox's Bazar and other spots. Due to kidnapping and hijacking issues, foreign tourists are reluctant to stay longer period in Cox,s Bazar (Amin , 2006, Siddique, 2006). This issue leads to loss huge foreign currencies of the country. Moreover, due to lack of sufficient security foreign tourists seldom stay in the beach area after evening time to enjoy the rare natural beauty (during sunset) without any anxiety.
4. **Country's Poor Image:** Bangladesh, whose image abroad tends to revolve round its being one of the poorest countries in the world and prone to natural calamities like flood and cyclone, is not an obvious tourist destination. The tourism industry has also suffered significantly due to the bomb attacks in the year 2005. In addition to this, negative image of the country in the international tourism market has not helped change the view of the West for Bangladesh
5. **Lack of trained Human Resources in different Parjatan Sector:** Trained human resources play vital role to develop tourism in any region like Bangladesh. In this regard Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has established National Hotel Tourism Training (NHTTI) in 1974. A two-year diploma course on Hotel-Management has been started in 2002. However, the above initiatives of BPC are not sufficient to meet needs of all tourist spots in the country. Besides, some recent research findings (Siddiqui 2006, Rahman 2007, and Parveen 2008) prove that still there are acute shortage of tourism experts in most hotels and motets of tourist areas in Bangladesh.
6. **Visa Problems :** Visa policy of government is one of the main reasons behind the foreign tourists' unwillingness to visit Bangladesh. If the government lifts visa restrictions for visitors from Europe, USA and other

western countries, around 20 lakh foreign tourists will come to Bangladesh in a couple of years. Now it requires about 15 to 20 days for a Bangladeshi visa even for a European citizen (The Daily Star, May 29, 2008).

7. Lack of FDI in Tourism Industry : A good presence of FDI is seen in many sectors (like IT, Garments, Medicine, Communications etc.) of Bangladesh except tourism. Government should provide special facilities to both local & foreign investors to invest in this industry considering its economic growth and development. For instance, Sri Lanka encourages, 100 % FDI in the tourism sector development of their country. Government may give Tax holiday to more and more development of tourism industry and set up hotels and restaurants in the tourist areas all over the country. As a result foreign investors will be interested to invest in this industry.
8. Lack of Proper and Updated Information: Cox's Bazaar definitely needs to be advertised properly on the popular tourist related web sites. There should be coordination of information and services between these websites and popular hotels, restaurants, shops and travel services of Cox's Bazaar and other tourist spots of Bangladesh. We need to take pragmatic steps to develop and update our websites to increase international tourist flow. For instance, Cambodia has its tourism websites in eight languages; Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia in 12 languages, and we have ours only in one language, English.
9. Proposed investment offers to develop Cox's Bazar and nearest tourism sites
 - Ras Al Khaimah royal family is interested to invest US\$2 billion to develop Sonadia Island as tourist resort as well as Cox's Bazar airport to facilitate movement of tourists
 - China is also interested in building a sort of China Town near Cox's Bazar for tourist coming from unning to use the beach as the nearest beach for them, which is 6,500 kilometers away (The Bangladesh Monitor, July 1 2008).
 - Bangladesh and China agreed to open a road link between the two countries through Myanmar to ease transportation of goods for further expanding bilateral trade. The two countries have also decided to swap air flights by their national airlines to boost business and tourist exchanges. The road link will connect Bangladesh with

China's southwestern Yunnan province, which is the closest in proximity between the two countries (SDNP, 2004).

- UNESCO like invest for Sundarban to protect it as world Heritage.

Like the above many other tourism companies is interested to invest in Bangladesh tourism sector but all of them stepped back due to law and order situation, huge social constraints and negative image.

10. Review of existing government initiatives and investment opportunities for the tourism development

Bangladesh possesses tremendous tourism potential, which has yet to be exploited. The Industrial Policy of 1999 included tourism as an industry and identified it as thrust Sector. In the national tourism policy framed in 1992, tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation has also been recognized. But in the later draft policy 2003-2007, tourism was not included as a thrust sector. All the governments of Bangladesh-past and present-transmitted strong signals about their seriousness to put tourism development on right-track and to secure for the country some benefits of current worldwide tourism boom. But all the promises and assurances were contradicted by not providing adequate funds for the development of tourism infrastructure and promotion of Bangladesh to dispel its negative image (Siddique 2006). Following the independence of Bangladesh, tourism development plans were prepared with foreign assistance. The latest five-year development plan and other perspective plans on tourism development were prepared with assistance from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

South Asian Sub regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Domestic private sector investments in the development of this industry have been made in an uncoordinated manner, so they have not achieved any remarkable progress (Khan 2001).

As recommended in keynote paper, Mahbub Jamil, Special Assistant to Chief Adviser, incharge of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism announced that law concerning formation of National Tourism Authority (NTA) is in final stage and the authority is likely to come next month (July).

He also told that the proposed NTA would be powerful and independent. In drafting the concerned law, structures of national tourism organizations of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Nepal and Sri Lanka have been studied. The proposed NTA would perform the job of regulator and facilitator.

- The business in tourism industry will be left for businessmen.
- The Special Assistant to Chief Adviser said the question of country branding would be taken up after the formation of NTA. Development of infrastructure would also be taken up according to short, medium and long-term plans.
- Policy of public private partnership (PPP) would be followed in developing tourism infrastructure.

He said that the government should take the lead in this building infrastructure and would leave the field jobs to the private sector. About the negative image of the country, Mahbub Jamil said, “We are greatly responsible for that.” He mentioned practice of security screening at hotels in Dhaka and said that this makes the visitors apprehensive without any valid reason.

However, the success of the effort rests on the final outcome and the ability of the proposed NTO/NTA to translate the vision behind its creation into reality. The past experience in this regard is bitter. We can recall the fate of current NTO-the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC). The vision and purpose behind creation of BPC as a corporation, was to free it from government control. But taking advantage of adequate legal protection, it was turned into an organization, worse than a government department. BPC enjoyed no freedom even to spend its own earnings, employ, promote or transfer its employees. Like government department it received no fund from revenue budget (The Bangladesh Monitor, July 1 2008). Besides, as a main and only government institution in tourism development, BPC’s existing initiatives are not up to the mark to meet global competition. It fails to attract foreign tourists due to some limitations (The New Nation, December 6 2006). Resource constraint may be one of the main limitations of government intervention to develop tourism sector widely in Bangladesh.

11. Review of Private Investment Opportunities

Bangladesh is a developing country, and therefore, its economy does not permit huge investments in the development of infrastructure facilities especially in identified areas for tourism development. Inadequate funding by the government in the tourism sector is also a major impediment to tourism infrastructure development. The government is therefore taking appropriate measures to attach due priority to the tourism sector so that economic benefits can be realized as has been done in other countries (Khan 2001). The Board of Investment in Bangladesh is working diligently to attract local and foreign investments in the private sector. From an analysis of recent statistical data, it is evident that 77

percent of the total investment in the national economy is coming from the private sector, which is playing a very significant role in the growth of GDP in the economy of Bangladesh (Embassy of Bangladesh, Stockholm 2007). To encourage more and more private investments in this sector, it is very important to ensure congenial investment environment in the country and government support is vital in this regard. Considering the aforesaid issues, at present, government has taken necessary measures to encourage the private sector to play a positive role in the development and diversification of tourist facilities and to promote domestic and international tourism in the country. Government has liberalized the industrial and investment policies in recent years by reducing bureaucratic control over private investment and opening up many areas. Major incentives are shown below:

1. Tax Exemptions: Generally 5 to 7 years. However, for power generation exemption is allowed for 15 years.
2. Duty: No import duty for export oriented industry. For other industry it is @ 5% advalorem.
3. Tax Law:
 - i. Double taxation can be avoided in case of foreign investors on the basis of bilateral agreements.
 - ii. Exemption of income tax up to 3 years for the expatriate employees in industries specified in the relevant schedule of Income Tax ordinance.
4. Remittance: Facilities for full repatriation of invested capital profit and divided.
5. Exit: An investor can wind up on investment either through a decision of the AGM or EGM. Once a foreign investor completes the formalities to exit the country, he or she can repatriate the sales proceeds after securing proper authorization from the Central Bank.
6. Ownership: Foreign investor can set up ventures either wholly owned or in joint collaboration with local partner.

Source: BOI Report, 2008 site available at: http://www.boi.gov.bd/invest_incentive.php

Due to taking some measures to open investment climate in Bangladesh, recently, some domestic private organizations like the Concord Group and others have seen coming forward. To establish and develop tourism in Bangladesh, Concord Group has taken some projects like Fantasy Kingdom, Water Kingdom, and Heritage Park etc., especially in Dhaka and Chittagong. But no foreign investment is seen

in this prospective industry in Bangladesh like other sector till today. However, recently, foreign investors have shown keen interest to invest in tourism development of Bangladesh

12. Recommendations

After observing all the issues it is clear that Bangladesh is highly potentials for tourism industries but we can't capitalize the opportunity due to lack of capital, social values and proper planning. With a view to overcome this constraints we may consider the following issues-

Recommendation -1: Passport Protected Tourism Investment Zone(PPTIZ)

Considering our EPZ experience we may introduce Passport Protected Tourism Investment Zone(PPTIZ) to promote tourism investment in Bangladesh.

The details of probable PPTIZ planning given bellow.

Geographical Location

Under PPTIZ program the major potential tourist areas may be divided into three PPTIZ respectively.

PPTIZ- 1 : We may bring 40 Km length at the side of sea beach and 4 Km wide to the side of mainland of Coxes Bazar under this zone. This Zone May be start from Him Chahari point to 40 Km of its east. This may be segmented by a good number of tourist spot or plot. This tourist Zone will cover sea, sand, hill and tribal culture at a time what will attract those investors who presently searching a investment zone for beach tourism in terms of sand bath, sun bath, beach volleyball, show biz business etc.

PPTIZ- 2 : Katka to Dublar char of Sunadarban may consider the PPTIZ-2 area. This zone will be a attractive to eco-tourism investors. The Shundarban forest and the Royal Bengal Tiger will be the main attraction to them. The prospective investment mode may be safari park, enjoyment and leaser resort etc.

PPTIZ- 3 : The entire Suvolong lake and its surrounding may consider this zone area. The lake view and seasonal waterfalls, Tertiary hills covering the lake will become the major tourism attraction to them who seeks place for ecotourism in Thailand and India.

Investment Planning for PPTIZ

PPTIZ - 1 & 3 are open only for the foreign investors which will limited by 120 investors as if the tourist get enough space.

PPTIZ - 2 allow foreign and local joint venture investment in addition to the investment planning of PPTIZ-1 which will be limited by 30 investors only.

In addition to that Bangladeshis are allowed for shopping molls, transport business and restaurants in the PPTIZ.

The foreign investors will get all types of investment facilities as the other foreign investors receive.

The investors will build their own resort and other establishment to attract their customers. Bangladesh govt. will be responsible for International Airport, Sea port, road infrastructure and utility service as well as the shopping molls and Super markets.

The investors of these zones will get land for building resort, hotel, casino, night club, bar, open stage and other entertainment establishment on rental basis. Besides this they have to pay zone tax yearly on their net income which will be fixed by PPTIZ Authority. The Bangladeshi businessmen who will do business inside the PPTIZ area will have to follow the same rules.

Access to PPTIZ

PPTIZ is exclusively open for the foreigners. No Bangladeshi inhabitants will allow to enter here except the Bangladesh businessmen who have ownership shops or transport company inside PPTIZ, Bangladeshi workers who have legal work permit, Bangladesh Army, Costal Guard, Special Police for PPTIZ and Law enforcing agencies. Except the law and enforcement agency's actual need none of them who are entitled to enter in the zone have no access to stay in the hotels or resort and completely forbidden to enter in the casino. In this case we may follow the rules and regulation of Malaysia, Indonesia or Egypt.

Law and order of PPTIZ

In this case we may get experience from Malaysia. But as the Zone areas will be filled by the foreign tourist so the law and order must ensure their safety and security.

Communication with main land to PPTIZ

The tourist come in the PPTIZ will allow entering in the main land but they are not allow to spend night there. They are allowed to come in the mainland only for shopping the Bangladeshi goods from the nearby markets or take Bangladeshi food from the nearby restaurants though all these will be available in the PPTIZ.

Visa system for PPTIZ

All the tourist want to go PPTIZ will directly enter in the zone through port visa after giving the port visa fee. County visa also allowed in this case they need not to pay port visa fee. In case of enter the main land they have to get another port visa which will not exceed 6 hours of day time.

Infrastructural development of PPTIZ

With a view to reach the tourist in the any one of PPTIZ the road, rail or water transport will have to developed as the tourist will enable to reach to the PPTIZ area within a shortest time. If possible an international standard air port will have to establish adjacent to the PPTIZ area as the govt. has full control on the airport. For the internal movement, well planed and sufficient roads will have to construct in the PPTIZ areas. For uninterrupted energy supply the govt. hast to ensure electric supply in all point of the PPTIZs. To do so establish special power station is a must. For internal car riding the PPTIZ area will abounded with sufficient petrol pump.

Disaster Management of PPTIZ

To protect PPTIZ the PPTIZ Authority will have to have proper disaster management planning.

Potentiality of PPTIZ

As per our experience we observed that Patiaya (Thailand), Goa (India), Dubai (Arab Emirate) and Malaysia are the major tourist receiving zone. All these spot attract the leisure tourist of developed countries. The slope and sand of Cox's Bazar beach is unique. Only for social constraints we can't sell our sand and sun to the European or American tourist. After constructing the PPTIZ this constraint will be removing. On the other hand at the law and order situation of these areas will be improve because the areas will be bordered by law and enforcement agency. So these tourist zone will become very attractive in comparison to those and to capitalize the opportunity a good many tourist company must come forward. If so the other tourist spot of Bangladesh will also get attention of the foreign tourist which will be a blessing for us.

Financial viability of PPTIZ

At present the proposed tourist zone receive very negligible leisure tourist what is almost nil. If we introduce these zone and able to attract the leading tourism

companies these zone will be packed with leisure tourist. If the average rent of per seq. meter land of these zone \$5 per annum. The PPTIZ-1 only earn \$700million in a year. The two spot will not receive revenue rent less than \$400million each per annum. The total rent of these three PPTIZ will become equal to our export earnings within a short time. but to get ready these zone govt. will need nearly \$2billion(approx.) which will be returned within five years undoubtedly. More over we will receive a handsome PPTIZ zone tax in each year. Besides these tow major source of income port visa fee, transport revenue.

Recommendation 2 : Promote religious tourism

As Tongi Estama is the 2nd largest assemble of Muslim Umma the Tongi Estema spot should be developed. The toal spot area should be designed under a single structural plan. In which the following establishment will be include-

- A big and spacious mosque on the Estama spot.
- Furnished rental buildings adjacent to the Estema area.
- Standerd and cheep restaurant.
- Medical centers.

Rationality of the recommendation

Religious assemble is also a major source of tourism. Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan and many other countries receive substantial amount of foreign exchange from this sector. If we can develop Tongi Estema spot as the other religious assemble spot more Muslims will attract to join in the Estema not only in the time Estema but also in various time of the year. It will increase the tourism income of Bangladesh. We should remember that income from Hajj was the main income of KSA before their petroleum income.

Recommendation -3 : Promote Cultural & heritage Tourism

As Bengali we have very rich culture and tradition i.e International Mother Language Day, Baishakhi Mela, Ras Utshab etc. Apart this tribal culture also lies with us. We also have a good number of heritage and historical place i.e. Maynamoti Bihar, Paharpur Bihar etc with grate tourism vanue. As the former Mugal state and British Colony we also have a good number of historical establishments which also can attract the tourist. If we consider all these things as tourism element we may get good result. To do so we have to take the following steps-

- Focus the programs of International Mother Language Day globally through electronic media and invite them to celebrate this day with us.

- Focus the programs of Baishaki Mela globally through electronic media and invite them to celebrate the Mela with us.
- Arrange Baishakhi Mela and programs in various tourist spot i.e. Potenga, Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, Dhaka and other areas where the foreigners will get tourism facility.
- Focus the tribal festible nationally and internationally.
- Develop the existing tourism companies product. Under this they will develop special & compound tourism package both for the foreigners and local people.
- Renovate the historical places, building and preserve the places for tourists.
- Develop the communication and residential facilities for the foreign tourists.
- Develop tourist guide profession.

Rationality of the proposal

In Malaysia each and every year a good number of tourist come to see the tribal life and there culture. In India the Mughal Establishment, Cultural life and Religious festible of Indian people is a great attraction to the foreigners. India receive more than one lack foreign tourist during the Durga Puja ceremony and to see the TAJMAHAL the number is more than trice. So, if we can promote the cultural areas of us as well as the historical places and heritage providing full tourism facility it will be possible for us to attract more tourist.

Recommendation-4: Ensure proper and timely development and modernization of tourism industry in Bangladesh

As per findings, the present study and policy guidelines of other recent researches, a number of suggestions, however, are made below that would help to ensure proper and timely development and modernization of tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Government may establish a have a high-powered independent tourism authority (National Tourism Board) to guide tourism development in the country. The authority must be the facilitator and promoter of tourism and perform all campaigning activities including infrastructure development. It can coordinate with the authority of hotel, motel and tourists for the organized development of tourism industry in Bangladesh. Under present organizational structure, BPC cannot function as regulatory and promotional body (The Bangladesh Monitor, July 1 2008),

For campaigning activities, government can employ trained manpower countrywide who continuously will work to include all scenic beauties, prospective tourism products, and update previous tourism sites including Cox's Bazar & Sundarbans.

Public and Private partnership may play vital role to develop and modernize Bangladesh tourism as per global competition. Government should address such issues as creating a conducive environment, providing investment incentives, introducing adequate and supporting legislation and building public sector capability for the formulation and prioritization of projects and negotiations.

Investment in convertible foreign currencies by foreign investors, and the option to establish public/private limited companies or sole proprietorship concerns, could be allowed.

To ensure better communications telex, fax and international dialing services, e-mail and Internet connections through a satellite system need to be made available in the tourist destination especially in the Exclusive Tourist Zones (ETZs) in Cox's Bazar and other important spots.

Adequate communication services especially railroads, and street in all tourism spots must be ensured. Roads from Dhaka to Chittagong, Chittagong to Cox's Bazar, and its other nearer spots need drastic improvement. As Govt. has resource constraints so, it should allow Travel Agents Association of Bangladesh to import luxury coaches at reduced tax to carry tourists in the important spots.

As stated earlier, visa policy of government is one of the main reasons behind the foreign tourists' unwillingness to visit Bangladesh. No tourism development will bring any good, if visa is not relaxed, Government may introduce an online visa tracking system by bringing all the land ports and airports connecting through internal network and can monitor visitor's entry and exit date and time automatically (The Daily Star, May 29, 2008).

BPC needs to be turned into a self-governed and self-controlled body if the government wants to turn the tourism industry into a profitable venture (The New Nation June 15, 2008).

Government should ensure proper security and safety system in the country in general and 2 Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs May 2007. tourism spots in particular. In this regard more strong involvement of joint forces)3 play vital role to control unwanted events (Hijacking or kidnapping tourists) occurring while coming from main city to tourism spots (Cox's Bazar and other spots). In

the remote areas and roads, involvement of ‘tourist police’/ joint forces to ensure security and safety will lead to increase more foreign tourists in Cox’s Bazar and other spots.

As the concept of economics has changed globally, we have to introduce public-private partnership in this industry. Moreover, as our govt. has resource constraints, only govt. initiatives are not adequate to develop tourism; rather public private partnership is a demand of the day to develop infrastructure and modern recreation facilities (like –boating, wind surfing, horse racing and other playing instruments as per international standard) as well as local cultural activities for the enjoyment of tourists.

To control unwanted situation as well as death hazards in the beach areas, it is very important to set up and develop weather forecasting (during sea bathing) system and like Yasir Life Guard, other institutions may set up for the rapid safety and security of the tourists.

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