

Tourism in Bangladesh and Image Building Mechanism

By Fuad Ahmed

Tourism is one of the most promising and aggressive form of thriving factor to build up socio-economical balance sheet, image building mechanism and in the end its potential contributing powers to nation building power in any country in the world.

As a Bangladeshi Expatriate with Australian citizenship status, I always have an admire and passion to play a little part to facilitate and find out the relevant causes to expose our Beautiful country Bangladesh to the outside world especially in Australia in a way to build up a positive image and respected portfolio. Eventually during last one year, I extensively try to research to correlate all the necessary facts and difficulties comparing with our neighbouring countries like India, Nepal, and Bhutan and even recently built democratic country Myanmar. In this process of journey, I opened a tourism company "Ausbangla Tourism Pty Ltd" and launched a website www.ausbanglatourism.com.au for small step forward for that long journey. Eventually Ausbangla Tourism Pty Ltd successfully organised a Tourism night styled "Bangladesh tourism night" in Sydney on 23rd November, 2013 with the kind consent of Bangladesh Tourism Board and Bangladesh High commission, Australia to introduce Bangladesh with utmost dignity and respectful manners.

Recently, a comprehensive survey have been published in Australia about potential Tourism hub for Australian citizen in the next 4 years of time. It has been conclusively declared that their main preferences for the country of next destination choice are Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Cambodia in South East Asia region. Sadly, there is no mention of Bangladesh in that whole survey. Now I'll try to evaluate and give some obvious reasoning for the above tourism related facts and the probable causes why we are going behind in this important competitive race.

There are not a single analysis has been correlate and properly explained why Myanmar is the first choice for Australian for next potential destination country. It is notable that Myanmar only became a democratic country in last 2 years' time without having any proper tourism infrastructures or its related facilities have been build up during last decade. Only explanation that can be substantiated that the great leader of democracy Aung Sun Suu Kyi is the determining factor who won the heart of the Australian people and the rest of the world. On the other hand, Bangladesh built up lot of infrastructures including luxury hotels and tourism building facilities in different part of region. Also Bangladesh produce some wonderful achievers like Professor Yunus who won Nobel Prize in recent years. Again if we do some modest compare of Sri Lanka and Cambodia's fragile socioeconomic structure and their political turbulence during last decade, it can easily assume that both countries had history of instability and overall uncertainty to travel safety issues which they slowly overcome in the course of short period of time.

In real fact, Bangladesh is suffering a potential negative image building scenario in the outside world even though our democracy has started more than 40 years ago. Of course we have some limitations in resources and environmental turmoil persist temporarily and it's become our part of life. But Bangladesh economy is thriving in positive way with 6.5% growth average which is now become one of the role model in some sectors like garments, disaster management mechanisms, microcredit economic system to alleviate peoples earning and reduction of poverty and so on during last decade. Now it is a real time to ask ourselves why Bangladesh is missing out of huge revenue earnings from

Tourism sector from outside world and fail to act to introduce our beautiful country in a positive and honourable way.

There are some instability in political sectors which is hampering our image building process. But it is not the real picture to represent Bangladesh and its big hearted citizen. There are some strategically and practical measures to be taken to build up Bangladesh image in positive way in the course of time. It is not easy ride but nobody have a luxury to sit idle and give up to establish this noble cause. It is a real fact if we can't build up our image positively to outer world, it would be difficult and hard to build sustainable, long term tourism sector in Bangladesh. This image building process is a huge task which cannot be done by a single person or a single organisation. It must be a sincere combination of dedication and tireless effort by "public, private partnership (PPP)" procedures. It is the real time to stand firm, show up some real guts and patriotism to build up this unbelievable, ever growing economic thriver, the Tourism in Bangladesh. In future, this will represent our identity, our culture and destiny.

Considering the geopolitical history of Australia and climate similarities and historical assimilation factors, Australians are always eager to travel to South East Asian countries like India and so on. To capture the little chunk of tourists diverted to Bangladesh, it is now the time to establish a real plan for strategic tourism manifesto and eventually appoint a tourism ambassador from respected Australian Sports portfolio who can work alongside with a disciplined body of "Tourism Promotion Committee" based in Australia. This committee will work with the direct coordination with Bangladesh government and Bangladesh prominent business/private sector body. End of the day, it is all about our beautiful country Bangladesh and little payback from real heart and patriotism.

Fuad Ahmed

Director: Ausbangla Tourism Pty Ltd

Website: www.ausbanglatourism.com.au