

New community-based tourism initiative in Jaflong's Khasi Punjee

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 05 May, 2025



Dhaka: The Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), launched a new community-based tourism project in the attractive Khasi Punjee area of Jaflong.

The move is part of ILO's Canada-funded ProGRESS Project, aimed at fostering sustainable livelihoods while safeguarding the unique cultural heritage of indigenous communities, according to a release.

Sylhet's Jaflong is popular for its breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity, and the vibrant traditions of the Khasi indigenous people.

The newly launched CBT model introduces tourism that is both community-led and eco-friendly — designed to create income-generating opportunities, particularly for women and youth, through skill

development, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation.

The launch event, held in Jaflong, was attended by Dr KM Kabirul Islam, Secretary of the Technical and Madrasah Education Division, as the chief guest. Fatema Rahim Veena, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, attended as the special guest, while Tuomo Poutiainen, ILO Country Director, was present as the guest of honor.

As part of the launching, guests visited four participating Khasi villages offering designated homestays, each capable of hosting up to four visitors.

Attendees experienced local hospitality, traditional Khasi cuisine, and cultural performances by both the Khasi and tea garden communities. They also participated in cycling adventures and explored the community restaurant established as part of the initiative.

Tourists can experience several activities such as boating and fishing on the Piayan River, cycling through picturesque tea gardens and trails, trekking in Mokam Punjee through forests, waterfalls, and betel nut groves.

Tourists can enjoy culinary delights, traditional Khasi dishes such as Ja Doh, Doh Kleh, and Khasi tea, all prepared with fresh, local ingredients. Evening storytelling engages with Khasi elders as they share oral histories, legends, and customs is a part of enjoying this place.

• T