

Tourism to supplement govt's rural development efforts: Mahbub Ali

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Dhaka: Tourism initiatives would further enhance Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's several rural development efforts to provide urban amenities in the villages, said M Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism at a virtual conference today.

“We are working relentlessly to create tourism friendly environment as well as involve marginalised community in the hospitality sector to promote community-based tourism in the country,” he said.

Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) organised the discussion celebrating the World Tourism Day today with the global theme ‘Tourism and Rural Development’.

The state minister mentioned that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already taken a number of epoch-making steps for rural development like electrification, setting up community clinics, internet availability, building houses for the homeless, providing LPG gas and road communications.

Ali said his ministry has also been facilitating training programmes on community based and home-stay tourism for rural people so that villages can be further developed with modern amenities while offering hospitality and leisure for both domestic and international tourists.

The state minister further added that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had established Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) for flourishing the country's tourism while her able daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formed Bangladesh Tourism Board to explore all tourism potentials.

"Now time has come to realise their dreams on tourism development into reality," he urged.

R A M Obaidul Muktadir, Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism ministry, spoke as the special guest while M Mohibul Haque, senior secretary of the ministry presided over the conference.

Muktadir laid emphasis on developing special zones for tourism across the country. He urged all concerned to flourish village tourism without damaging the country's rural culture, heritage and tradition.

Saying that tourism's contribution to the country's GDP is still much less compared to its potentiality, Haque assured that the government is working sincerely to create tourism-friendly environment across the country that is pre-requisite for proper development of the sector.

Zabed Ahmed, CEO, BTB and Ram Chandra Das, Chairman, BPC also took part in the discussion among others.

No rally or public gathering was held on the day of celebration this year due to the pandemic whereas all 64 district administrations organized virtual meetings with local tourism related stakeholders and arranged art and essay competitions on this year's theme.

Marking the occasion, President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages wishing success of all the programmes of the day.

Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation has been celebrating World Tourism Day as an international observance on September 27. This date was chosen as on that day in 1970, the Statutes of the UNWTO were adopted.