

Govt to halt stone extraction leases in Jaflong

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Sylhet : Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said no more leases will be allotted for stone extraction in environmentally critical areas like Jaflong.

The government will consult stakeholders to explore sustainable eco-tourism models for these scenic areas, she said while talking to the media after visiting Jaflong in Sylhet on June 13.

She also said a comprehensive master plan will be developed to promote eco-friendly tourism in Jaflong and other tourist destinations in Sylhet, and the master plan will prioritize creating alternative livelihood opportunities for workers currently involved in stone extraction.

Rizwana said, the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Tourism; Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; and Environment, Forest and Climate Change; will work in coordination to implement this plan.

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said, due to the cessation of stone extraction in Jaflong the existing stone crushers in the area will be removed. "Unauthorized extraction activities will remain strictly prohibited."

Secretary of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division Mohammad Saiful Islam, Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Khan Md Rezaul Nabi, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Sher Mahbub Murad, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Divisional Forest Officer Md Humayun Kabir, and Director of the Department of Environment, Sylhet, Ferdous Anwar, were present also present during the visit.

Earlier, both advisers visited various sites in Jaflong by boat and discussed possible development plans. They also planted tree saplings at the Jaflong Stone Museum and Haripur Rest House.