

THREE-DAY BEACH CARNIVAL KUAKATA BEGINS

Airport to be built to attract tourists: Muhith

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The government will build an airport in Payra sea port area to ease communication for visitors in Kuakata sea beach, a tourist spot with immense natural beauty in the southern district.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith made the announcement yesterday morning while inaugurating as the chief guest a three-day 'Mega Beach Carnival Kuakata, 2017', aiming to make the area more popular among the tourists.

Making Kuakata more attractive along with development of communications by roads, river and air is needed to introduce it positively to tourists from both home and abroad, he said.

"We have a plan to develop Kuakata as an attractive tourist spot within two years. Now one can reach Kuakata from Payra port easily. The authorities of Payra port will hopefully take step for development of Kuakata sea beach area," he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had announced 2016 as "Tourism Year" and Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation

(BPC) and non-government tourism organisations will organise round-the-year events till 2018 as part of the Tourism Year's programmes to brand Bangladesh as a unique tourist destination, said Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon.

All three bridges on Patuakhali-Kuakata road have already been completed and construction work of a new bridge on the Payra river at Lebukhali is going on, he said.

After completion of the Padma Bridge, the number of tourists from home and abroad would rise in Kuakata and consequently, more employment opportunities will be created, he added.

Closing ceremony of the carnival will be held on the night of January 16.

Kuakata in the south of Patuakhali has an 18-kilometre-long and 3-kilometre-wide sandy beach. From the beach, one can have an unobstructed view of both sunrise and sunset over the Bay of Bengal.

In the three-day carnival, special entertainment facilities have been

arranged for the tourists, such as beach football, beach cricket, volleyball, kite flying, local games, water bike, ATB rides, boat rowing, beach lighting, camp fire, Kuakata-Sundarbans sea cruise etc.

Adventurous feats like ascending and descending, tree top activities, adventure gear shop, fire camp, BBQ, forest trekking, walking and cycle rally are being also organised there.

Besides eye-catching natural view of Kuakata, diversified lifestyles of the Rakhaine people, a historic well, boat of ancient period, and Buddhist and Hindu temples would be of special attraction for visitors.

Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad ASM feroz, lawmakers Md Mahbubur Rahman Talukder, AKM Jahangir Hossain, ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader and Shawkat Hasanur Rahman, National Board of Revenue Chairman Md Najibur Rahman and Local Government Division secretary Abdul Maleq addressed the grand opening ceremony chaired by BTB Secretary SM Ghulam Farooque.