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Business

'Blue Flag' to promote tourism in coastal areas

Star Business Report

The Department of Environment is going to introduce the 'Blue Flag' programme, a special international programme to promote eco tourism in the country's coastal areas.

The Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label certification programme that is sponsored by the Foundation of Environmental Education (FEE), a Denmark based international non-governmental organisations representing 59 countries.

A feasibility study will be conducted in a couple of months to design a project proposal for the country's coastal areas, which is to be funded by the UN environment programme.

Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project (CWBMP) under the Department of Environment organised a national workshop yesterday to introduce the Blue Flag programme in the country. Representatives from the environment and forest ministry, civil aviation and tourism ministry, FEE and South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) attended the workshop at the IDB Bhaban.

At the workshop, speakers said more tourists are attracted to beaches where the Blue Flag programme was introduced earlier. Under this programme, properly planned and well-managed tourism is promoted, which can minimise the impacts on coastal environments and serve as a driving force for sustainable development of local communities, speakers said.

The programme is designed to raise environmental awareness, increase environmental good practices as well as safety among tourists and local people. It has been awarded to over 3,200 beaches and marinas in 38 countries across the world since 1988.

SACEP has taken the initiative to introduce the Blue Flag programme in different countries in this region.

Prof Dr Ainun Nishat, senior adviser of Climate Change, IUCN, Dr Mohammad Zafar of the Institute of Marine Science at Chittagong University, Dr R Venkatesan of Regional Coordinator of SACEP and Alison Kelly from FEE, South Africa, also spoke at the workshop.