

Environment Ministry Has a Master Plan for Saint Martin's Island: State Minister Sheikh Farid

State Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Sheikh Faridul Islam has said that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has a comprehensive master plan for protecting the environment and ecosystem of Saint Martin's Island.

"We have received a recommendation from the interim government regarding Saint Martin's Island. We have to do everything necessary to protect the island's ecosystem and environment and to ensure its survival. We want to implement the plan involving all stakeholders," he said.

The state minister made the remarks while briefing journalists after inaugurating a tree-planting programme on the island by planting fruit-bearing saplings at the Coast Guard Station Ground in Saint Martin's Island at around 5:30pm on Saturday (August 8).

Sheikh Faridul Islam said the people living on Saint Martin's are an integral part of the island and their interests must be given due consideration.

"They are the ones who have nurtured and sustained the island. It can be said that they have developed a deep emotional attachment to the island. Despite facing many challenges, they continue to live here," he said.

The state minister said Saint Martin's Island is one of Bangladesh's unique natural resources and an important reservoir of biodiversity.

“Those who live here are an important part of the island. They have a deep bond with it and have continued to live here despite various adversities,” he said.

He added that as an elected government, ensuring the fundamental rights of the people while protecting nature and biodiversity is also the government’s responsibility.

“Everyone has a moral responsibility to come forward from their respective positions to keep the island clean and protect its nature, rather than depending solely on the government,” he said.

Sheikh Faridul Islam stressed the importance of local people’s participation in protecting the island from the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental pollution.

“Tree plantation and the removal of plastic waste require active participation from the local community. Simply planting trees will not be enough; proper care and protection of the planted trees must also be ensured,” he said.

He called for coordinated efforts by the government, local communities, private development organisations and all relevant stakeholders to keep Saint Martin’s Island clean, green, safe and sustainable.

“Everyone must work together in a coordinated manner to protect the island’s environment and biodiversity and ensure its sustainable future,” the state minister said.