

SPOTLIGHT



Dhakaites have been complaining for a very long time that we don't have enough recreational activities or holiday places in our city. Other than going to the so called amusement parks or hopping between restaurants, we face a moral dilemma on how we can utilise the weekend. The going gets tougher when one is faced with short holidays. Yes, there are places such as Cox's Bazar, Sri Mangal, Rangamati etc. but there are some alternatives worth exploring. If you wake up one day and feel the need to escape this traffic stricken, noise polluted city of ours than these are the places you can visit.

One of the nearest and popular places for a day trip is Gazipur. This place may not look like much but it is considered to be a favourite go-to place for Dhakaites. One of the major attractions this harbours is the country's biggest safari park. Established in the year 2011, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park has been quite an attraction to the public. The park is based on 3690.0 acres of land and is beautifully decorated with 63 types of trees. The park itself contains 220 types of animals that roam free. "The park was created to preserve the exotic animals in their own natural habitat so that people can see how the



FOR A TRANQUIL EID

APURBA JAHANGIR

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

animals function in the wild," says Sib Prasad Bhattacharya, officer in charge of the park. After entering through the gate, one will get to see miles and miles of greenery. At the end of it, there are secure jeeps that will take you through the safari were animals including white lions, bears, tigers and buffaloes can be witnessed in their natural habitat. The

safari itself is 25 to 45 minutes in length following a variety of animal sanctuaries to explore.

The park has all kinds of resources one needs to spend a day with family or friends. The guest house can be booked from the office of Bangladesh Forest Department, located in Begum Rokeya Avenue. "We get over 25000 visitors around the holidays. We are expecting to get 30000 visitors this Eid," says the OC. "Right now the park has a team of 45 staffs which include one veterinarian. We are talking with higher officials to get more staffs." The entire trip will cost around 1000 per person including food and transportation.

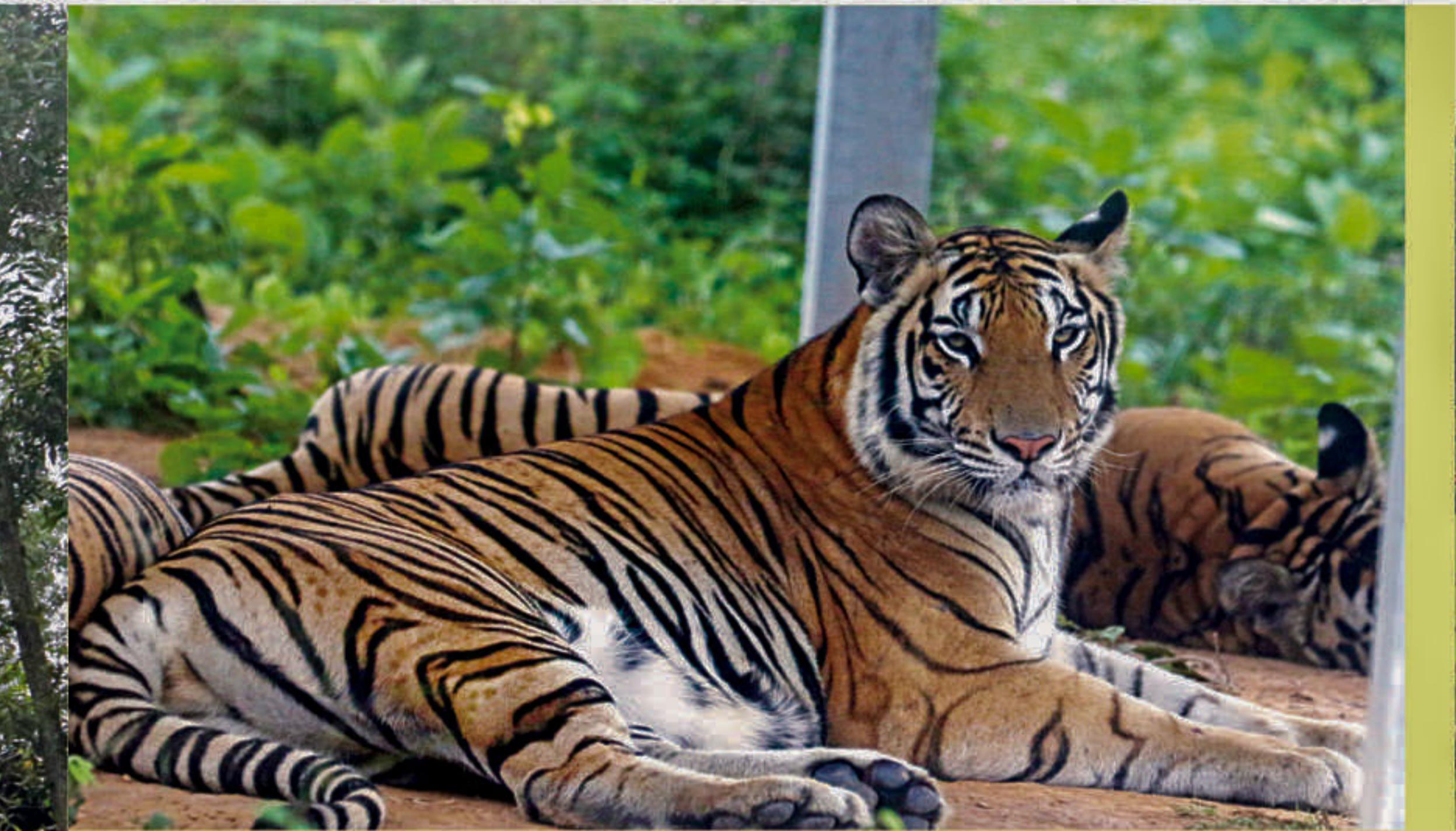
If one is fond of history, Gazipur offers the famous Bhawal Temple, located in Joydebpur. The temple was established



Chuti Resort



Safari Park



by the Bhawal Raja- Kalinarayan. It was built only for the royal family but after their deaths, it was opened for the public. The temple revolves around a mystery. There is a myth that says Prince Ramendra Narayan's body was to be cremated in this temple after he died, but the body disappeared and was never found. "Some people still say that they see the ghost of Ramendra Narayan in the temple, but that is just a story," says Taposh, one of the locals.

The major attraction of this temple is the architecture. The design on the red stone building makes one marvel at the creative genius of the ancient day

architects that built it. "A lot of people come to visit this historical place, but there is no one to maintain," says Taposh. "If the authority doesn't do something fast, we will be losing one of our country's most beautiful temples."

There are also places where one can just be one with nature and escape the hustle and bustle of city life. A few options of resorts are available a couple of miles outside of Dhaka. Resorts such as Jamuna, Arshinagar, Chuti, Nakhatrbari are quite popular amongst visitors. These resorts offer a series of packages ranging from one day stay to four days. "We came here mostly to get



Safari Park

away from the noise of the car horns," says Ishrat Zamman, one of the guests at Chuti Resorts. "It is fun for the whole family, I am here with my husband and kids and so far it has been really nice. The peaceful environment really acts as a boost to go back to the city life." The eco resorts offer activities such as boat rides, swimming, sports etc to make your visit worthwhile. The packages offered range from tk 3,500 to 7,000, based on the availability of rooms.

One of the most popular places which people, especially the young crowd visit during long weekends is the Mawoa Ghat. 35 km outside Dhaka, Mawoa

Ghat is considered to be one of the most popular places for a day out. Mawoa ghat is ideal for a memorable dining experience. "We come here every now and then with our motor bikes," says Saadi Rahman, student at North South University. "It is a good place to relax and the food is to die for."

Places such as Shonargaon, Ashulia, Comilla's Mainamati etc can also be visited during holidays. One may think it's not much but if you get to know a little bit about the places then it can surely be enjoyable. As our city life is getting busier day by day, these weekends will surely work as a life saver.

Bhawal Temple



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