

Sundarbans closed to tourists until August over wildlife breeding protection

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 03 July, 2025



Dhaka: In a move to safeguard its delicate ecosystem, the Forest Department announced the annual closure of the Sundarbans mangrove forest to all tourist activity from June 1 to August 31, 2025. The decision is aimed at protecting the breeding season of native wildlife, including the critically endangered Royal Bengal Tiger, spotted deer, crocodiles, and various bird species.

The shutdown affects the Bangladesh portion of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, spanning the coastal districts of Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira.

This seasonal ban helps reduce human interference during a critical time for wildlife reproduction, according to experts, and requires cooperation from tour operators and visitors to ensure long-term ecological stability.

Tourism sector hit but supportive

Local tour operators and lodge owners, though impacted financially during the usually active monsoon tourism window, largely support the move.

Even if they lose business during these three months, still they understand the necessity. A boat tour operator in Mongla said, it is their responsibility to protect the forest that feeds them.



Over 300,000 local and foreign tourists visit the Sundarbans each year, generating crucial income for nearby communities. However, increasing footfall has raised concerns over habitat disturbance, littering, and stress on wildlife during breeding months.

Environmentalists applaud the ban

Conservationists have long advocated for stricter seasonal controls. According to the Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS), human activity—particularly boat noise and tourist encampments—can severely disrupt nesting and feeding behavior.

It is a science-based decision. Even a few weeks of undisturbed nesting can boost tiger cub survival rates, according to a wildlife biologist of BEDS.

Alternative destinations promoted

In response to the closure, the Bangladesh Tourism Board is encouraging visitors to explore lesser-known eco-tourism sites like Tanguar Haor, Ramsagar National Park, and Ratargul Swamp Forest.

They are working to diversify the country's tourism offerings so that conservation efforts like this do not leave the industry idle, said a spokesperson for the board.

What next

Authorities will resume issuing permits for forest visits from September 1, with strict monitoring of visitor numbers and behavior. A new set of eco-tourism guidelines—focused on sustainability and community participation—is also expected to be released later this year.

Sundarbans at a glance

Area: ~6,000 sq km (Bangladesh portion)

Main Attractions: Royal Bengal Tiger, spotted deer, mudflats, tidal rivers

Entry Points: Mongla, Khulna, Satkhira

UNESCO Status: World Heritage Site since 1997