

Oh baby, you are so welcome

In a boost to conservation efforts, for the first time in India, translocated tigress gives birth

BHOPAL: In a major boost to efforts to revive the tiger population in Madhya Pradesh, a translocated tigress has for the first time given birth to three cubs in Panna reserve where the big cats had disappeared.

The translocated tiger had disappeared on November 26. After much effort, it was brought back to the park on December 25 last year. The cubs indicate that she has settled down in her new environment. The cubs are believed to be 20 days old and were spotted by forest offi-

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cialists when the tigress was taking them out of her den.

The tigress had been translocated from Bandhavgarh in the state in March last year, Panna Reserve Field Director R S Murthy said.

Panna had more than 30 big cats four years ago, but lost all of them by last year.

It is for the first time that a translocated tigress has given birth in the country. Two tigresses and a tiger were translocated to Sariska in Rajasthan in 2008 after the wildlife sanctuary lost its tiger population, but

the animals have not been able to breed.

In more good news from Panna, officials said that a second translocated tigress could also be expecting.

The reserve is spread over 543 sq km in Panna and Chhatarpur districts of eastern Madhya Pradesh. Security has been beefed up and entry of tourists banned. "We are barring tourists to ensure safety of the tigress and its cubs," Murthy said.

The government has plans to relocate at least six tigers to Panna.