

Three tigers, two lions, sloth bear dead in 24 hours!

BANGLORE: If the "natural causes" theory for the beggars' death at the Beggars Colony shook you, here's more from the wild.

In the past 24 hours, as many as seven animals, including three tigers, two lions, a herbivorous nilgai and a sloth bear have died at the Bannerghatta National Park here due to "natural causes," as the officials' explain.

According to forest department officials, a post-mortem was conducted only on a four-year old tiger, Divya, at the Government Veterinary College in the City.

Taking note of the serious nature of the deaths, the Veterinary College is sending an investigation team of doctors to the National park.

The National Park officials who examined the bodies of these seven animals suggest that all the animals died due to "natural causes" and most likely due to a bacterial infection.

While the first five animals died at the rescue centre inside the National park, the nilgai succumbed within the sanctuary. Meanwhile, initial reports suggest that Divya had died due to jaundice.

"Two of the three tigers, named Shankar (24) and Lakshmana (20) were already old and could not be revived," said a forest official. Another Siberian tiger, named "King" died due to kidney failure. King was suffering from the kidney prob-



One of the dead tigers at Bannerghatta National Park. DH PHOTO

lems for the past 78 days. According to the officials, the animals were all rescued from circuses and captivity.

B K Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden adding to this said that the post-mortem conducted on the animal has not revealed any suspicions. "The change in colour in some of the vital organs shows that the chances of poisoning is less, but according to them it might have died due to gastroenteritis," he said.

Mentioning that the three-and-a-half-year old tiger's blood sample has been detected with infection, he said that the same infection has spread to other sibling too, which is now battling for life. He said that since the experts have stated that the death may be due to contaminated water, the park is now

getting potable water from Bangalore City.

Sloth bear

A sloth bear has been killed by the speeding Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation. This according to the department is first such incident, where a tourist vehicle has killed an animal.

Nilgai

In another first on the same day, a nilgai has been killed by a leopard in herbivorous safari.

"I was told that the leopard jumped the stone wall barricade and killed the animal," he said. He said that though the leopard was frequently sighted at this point, this is the first time the animal has breached the wall. The safari houses over a dozen nilgais.

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