

NTCA to hold review meeting on Tiger protection strategy

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In a view to review tiger protection strategy in national parks the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has decided to convene a meeting of wildlife officials at Ramnagar.

The three-day long meeting would held at Ramnagar in Uttarakhand starting on April 10.

Chief wildlife wardens and field directors will attend the meet in which they would discuss the way and means to ensure the safety of tigers in protected parks and sanctuaries.

The meeting which would be presided over by the NTCA member secretary came after prime minister expressed concerns over frequent tiger deaths across the country. Over 14 tigers died in the last three months in different parks. Four tiger deaths were reported from Corbett Tiger Reserve only.

Earlier, union government has already warned that as many as 18 reserves in the country threatens to go the Panna and Sariska way from where big cats were wiped out by the poachers. In wake of alarming increase in the tiger deaths, this meeting has much importance as officials would try to plug the loopholes which are being exploited by poachers.

Asked for comment on the tiger deaths in Corbett Tiger Reserve, Principal Conservator of Forest, Raghu Bir Singh Rawat claimed in a press conference in Dehradun today that the postmortem reports sug-

gested that the tigers died due to natural causes.

Two of them had died in struggle to each other, one died after completing its age of survival while one die of natural poisoning.

He however added poaching, infighting and conflict with villagers cause serious threat to the endangered big cats and other wild animals and the efforts on part of forest department were going on to curb any such activity if exist.

It may be recalled a tiger died in Tarai West, Ramnagar in Uttarakhand on March 15. During the same month, three tigers died each one in Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar, Ranthambore National Park and Wayanad in Kerala and a tiger cub was found dead in Bandipur Tiger reserve in Karnataka.

Last year, 60 tiger deaths were reported from across the country.