



## Animals and Covid-19

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### Why in News

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Owing to a recent news report on a Tiger being infected with **Covid-19** in New York (Bronx Zoo), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued an advisory regarding the containing and management of Covid-19 in National Parks/Sanctuaries/Tiger Reserves.

- Also, a tiger in **Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh)** has died due to respiratory illness. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is investigating whether the tiger should be tested for the novel coronavirus disease.
- However, swabs from the throat and nose to test for **rhinotracheitis, a viral infection that afflicts cats and causes respiratory illness** were collected.

### Key Points

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- **Spread of Infection from humans to animals**
  - The Bronx Zoo case suggests that a zoo employee spread the virus to the tiger.
  - The virus came from an animal source and mutated; humans have since been infecting humans. Thus, it is **theoretically possible for the virus to mutate again** to survive in certain species after being transmitted by humans.
- **Advisory by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
  - It has asked all **Chief Wildlife Wardens (CWLWs)** of all States/UTs to take immediate preventive measures to stop the transmission and spread of the virus from humans to animals and vice versa, in National Parks/Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves.
  - The CWLW is the **statutory authority under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** who heads the Wildlife Wing of a State Forest Department and exercises complete administrative control over Protected Areas (PAs) within a state.

- **Guidelines issued by the NTCA and CZA**
  - Both the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and the NTCA have issued guidelines that require zoos to be on the “highest alert” and monitor animals on closed-circuit cameras 24/7 for “abnormal behaviour and symptoms.”
  - The CZA has also directed zookeepers to approach sick animals wearing personal protective equipment and isolate and quarantine them.

### Central Zoo Authority

- The CZA is a **statutory body** whose main objective is to enforce minimum standards and norms for upkeep and health care of animals in Indian zoos. It was established in **1992**.
- Zoos are regulated as per the provisions of **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and are guided by the **National Zoo Policy, 1998**.

### National Tiger Conservation Authority

- NTCA is a **statutory body** under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- It was **established in December, 2005** following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- It was constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it .

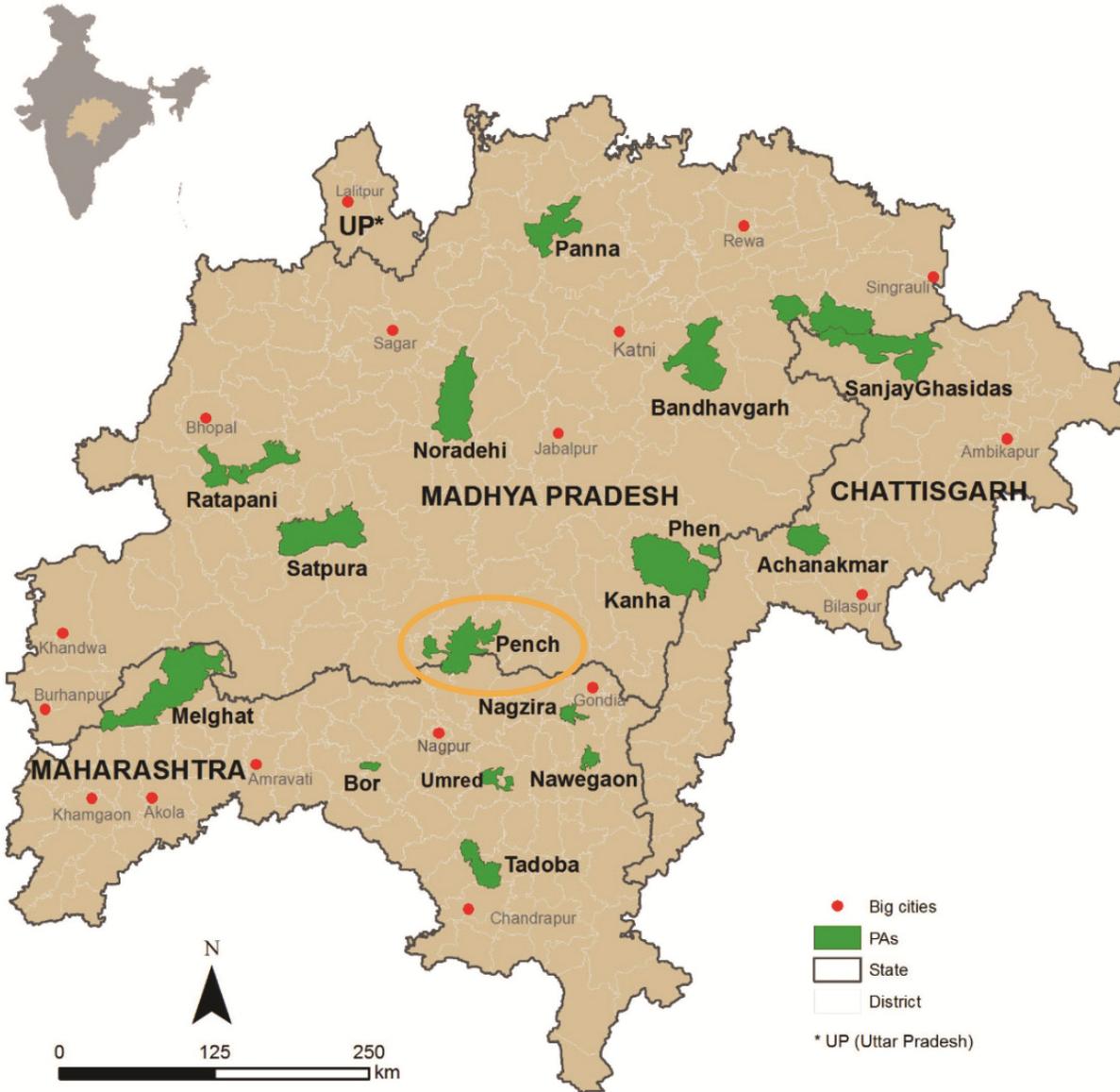
### Pench Tiger Reserve

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- Pench Tiger Reserve, **Seoni (Madhya Pradesh)** is one of the major Protected Areas of **Satpura-Maikal ranges** of the Central Highlands. It was **included in the Project Tiger in 1992-93**.
- It is among the sites notified as **Important Bird Areas** of India.
 

The IBA is a programme of Birdlife International which aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for conservation of the world’s birds and associated diversity.
- It has a **contiguous forest cover with Kanha Tiger Reserve and Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra)**.
- The area of the Pench Tiger Reserve and the surrounding area is the real story area of **Rudyard Kipling's famous "The Jungle Book"**.
- The **forests** found in Pench Tiger Reserve are divided **into three parts:** southern tropical wet dry forest, southern tropical dry deciduous teak forest and southern tropical dry deciduous mixed forest.

- The **major Carnivores** are Tiger, leopard, wild cat, wild dog, hyena, jackal, fox, wolf, weasel, among the vegetarian species, Gaur, Nilgai, Sambar, Chital, Chasinga, Chinkara, Wild Pig etc. are prominent.
- There are a **lot of migratory birds** seen in the cold season. Among the migratory birds, Ruddy shelduck, Pintail, Whistling Teal and Vegtel etc are prominent.



**Source: TH**