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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
6309	14.09.2021	16.09.2021	Bathinda Punjab	www.hindustantimes.com/English https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/blackbuck-deaths-at-bathinda-zoo-due-to-poisoning-caused-by-bacterial-infection-reveals-autopsy-101631565692241.html
Title:	Blackbuck deaths at Bathinda zoo due to poisoning caused by bacterial infection, reveals autopsy, Punjab			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Bathinda, SSU- Punjab			

An analysis of viscera samples by experts at the Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), Ludhiana, have attributed the death of three blackbucks at a mini zoo in Bathinda's Bir Talab to 'toxemia' or poisoning due to bacterial infection.

Histopathology of all three has ruled out any external injuries on the young female antelopes that were found dead within a short span of time on August 19. While two were aged 3 and 4 months, the third one was three-year-old.

The development, however, has perplexed the wildlife authorities as they are unable to link the cause of poisoning in the deer safari which is closed for visitors since March last year in view of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Tests of feed and fodder samples by the Northern Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (NRDDL) has already ruled out any quality deficiency in the food given to zoo animals.

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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Swaran Singh Randhawa, in-charge, Animal Disease Research Centre, College of Veterinary Science, GADVASU, said toxemia is a condition of poisoning by toxins from bacterial infection.

“It is difficult to ascertain the source of such infections,” said Randhwa, who was not associated with the autopsy of antelopes.

Blackbuck is Punjab’s state animal and is covered under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Autopsy report says a panel of GADVASU experts studied heart, lungs, spleen, liver and kidney.

Experts have not found any symptoms of foot and mouth disease, which is common among cattle, or any factor other than toxemia. The adult antelope was not pregnant.

Zoo head and range officer Amarinder Singh said no animal in the safari was reported sick since the deaths of the three antelopes and a constant vigil is being maintained on behaviour of safari inmates.

He said experts are being consulted to understand toxic bacterial infection better.

Bathinda divisional forest officer Swaran Singh said the mortality due to infection among blackbucks in captivity is rare.

“The possibility of the blackbucks accidentally consuming something that was infected within their own ecosystem cannot be ruled out. The water supply network was thoroughly sanitised later on and the fodder supplier was changed. The entire feeding area was also cleaned and nothing suspicious has emerged so far,” he added.

In the wake of the blackbuck deaths, forest range officer Pawan Sridhar was removed as in-charge of the zoo. Services of the lone veterinarian, who was hired on ad hoc, were also discontinued with immediate effect.

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