

No plastic in national park

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Food and drinks packed in plastic will not be allowed inside Sanjay Gandhi National Park. Forest officials started a crackdown on plastic on Friday and will continue the campaign to free the park of plastic litter.

On Friday, two big garbage bins greeted visitors entering SGNP. Five locals and four forest staffers checked the crowd that trickled in for walks or picnics. Forest officials checked about 400 visitors for plastic bags and bottles. Forest officials said on Saturday 20 NSS volunteers from Bhavan's College and Thakur College will join the campaign to check visitors and make sure no plastic is littered in the national park premises. Those found littering the premises will also be

GARBAGE AND LIQUOR-FREE



- ▶ Two big garbage bins are located at the entry gate of SGNP
- ▶ A team of 20 NSS volunteers from Bhavan's College will join forest officials in checking visitors
- ▶ Twenty staffers and local volunteers will be posted at Tulsi gate near Kanheri caves to check visitors
- ▶ Police officials will conduct breathalyzer tests on those suspected of consuming alcohol
- ▶ People will be fined between ₹100-500 for littering, carrying plastic and alcohol consumption within the premises of the park

fined between Rs 100-500. Forest officials have also taken help from the local police officials to conduct breathalyzer tests on people to check consumption of alcohol.

"There were about 700 people who visited the park till 4 pm. We checked 400 people and asked them to put their plastic in the big bins at the entry gate. More volun-

teers will be posted at the weekend as we are expecting around 5,000-6,000 visitors in the next two days," said Sunil Limaye, chief forest conservator, SGNP. "We are also planning to keep cloth bags for people to carry their eatables inside," he added. Officials said they will extend their drive to Kanheri caves as well. Though the area falls

beyond the forest jurisdiction, it has been plagued by excessive littering by visitors. With the onset of the monsoon, the influx of visitors has increased causing a lot of littering. "Two teams of ten people each will be posted on the Tulsi gate located before Kanheri caves on Saturday. A team will be posted to check people at the SGNP gate as well," an official said. Officials said on Saturday visitors will also be checked for alcohol by police officials with a breathalyzer.

"There are people who drive in with liquor bottles and dump them inside," said Limaye. Officials said they may try to involve more agencies to expand the cleanliness drive. "It will be intensive during the monsoon when the park sees more visitors," an official said.