

Netizens debate fatal zoo mauling

A tiger that was shot to death after fatally injuring a man who had sneaked into its enclosure on Sunday in Ningbo has drawn sympathy from Chinese netizens, many of whom also expressed condolences for the family of the dead man.

There also were disagreements on who should be blamed – and often it wasn't the tiger.

The man who died, surnamed Zhang, was reported to have climbed the walls at Youngor Zoo to avoid paying the 130 yuan (\$18.90) entrance fee, but landed in the tiger enclosure, according to the Ningbo Dongqian Lake Tourist Resort Administrative Committee.

Zhang was cornered by three tigers. One clenched its jaws around his neck and head, refusing to retreat even when zookeepers lit firecrackers.

The mauling happened in front of the middle-aged man's wife and two children.

"The tiger was killed trying to catch the guy who avoided paying the zoo ticket. I feel bad for the zoo, the tiger and the guy's family," Chen Ou, CEO of Jumei, an online beauty products retailer, said on his Weibo account.

"Save it, people. This is Spring Festival. Death is death, no matter how hard you curse," said one user on Weibo. "The tiger can never be revived." While it appeared he was referring to the dead man, his last comment made clear that wasn't necessarily the case.

The comment received thousands of "likes".

Still, one of Zhang's relatives, surnamed Yang, said, "Even if he (Zhang) climbed over the walls to get in, it was the zoo's mismanagement."

In July, tigers in a drive-through wildlife park in Beijing mauled a woman and killed her elderly mother, who tried to save her. The woman, who broke the rules by leaving the car, sued the park.

In May, a 3-year-old boy fell into the gorilla enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo in the US. A 200-kilogram male gorilla named Harambe was shot to death while dragging the child away. There was a debate over whether Harambe was trying to harm the boy or protect him.