

Tiger claims its sixth victim in Pilibhit area

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Lucknow: A 55-year-old woman on Monday became the sixth victim of the man-mauling tiger of Pilibhit. The body of Redavati, with missing right leg, half-eaten left leg and chopped off abdomen parts, was recovered from compartment number 7 of Deoria range on Tuesday. A resident of Deoriaakalan village, Redavati had gone to collect firewood from the forest when she was attacked by the tiger.

"The body was eaten up considerably by the big cat," said Pilibhit DFO V K Singh. On whether the tiger would be branded a man-eater, senior forest officials said they needed time to consider the various aspects before a decision is taken. "We have collected samples of tiger's body hair from the site of the killing," added the DFO.

The sample would be sent for DNA analysis to identify the tiger that is killing and eating humans in the area. The pugmarks of a tiger and a tigress have also been obtained from the different killing sites, indicating presence of two man-mauling big cats in the area. "We have re-installed eight digital cameras at the site," added the DFO.

However, pugmarks from the spot could not give a clear indication as rains had reduced the patch to a swamp. "We can say something on that by Thursday evening," said the official. On August 3, a partially eaten carcass of blue bull was recovered from the Pasgawan compartment of Deoria range. The tiger was seen returning to its natural prey. However, a

FELINE FURY

Tiger has killed **six humans** since May 3 in Deoria range of Pilibhit

Killings were made on **June 7, June 23, July 25, July 27 and on August 9**

Sites of killings have been within **4 km** aerial distance

Bodies have been recovered from within the forest

PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY FOREST DEPARTMENT

► Forest officials installed digital cameras after July 25 killing

► Tiger was caught only once on the camera

► Three teams headed by range officers have been created to educate villagers

► 12 people have been detained for trespassing in a week's time



► Informative posters have been put up at PHCs and primary schools

► Entire range has been divided into grids of 4 sq km each

► A camera has been installed at every grid to understand tigers' behaviour, in general, in the region

Pilibhit spreads over **712 sq km** area. It has five ranges — Deoria, Mala, Mahof, Haripur and Barahi. Deoria spreads over 69 sq km.

woman getting killed and eaten by a tiger about three km from Pasgawan reinforces the fear that the tiger might turn a compulsive man-eater.

According to forest officials, it is a young tiger which is trying to establish its territory in Deoria range. The range, so far, was not a territory to tigers though it has dense forest patches. The grasslands here are not good, said the DFO. The range also has a poor prey base. It has wild boars and blue bulls but is devoid of cheetals and sambars. To deal with the crisis, however, Pilibhit officials have sent a proposal to forest headquarters for providing additional manpower and infrastructure.

Forest officials are finding it difficult to control human behaviour in the affected area. The villagers on be-

ing stopped from entering forest have approached police with a complaint that forest department is harassing them.

Incidentally as is in this case the tiger has not ambushed and killed the humans who had gone to the forest and were attacked. Independent experts have differing opinions about its status.

As bundles of firewood, grass and bags containing 'katarua' mushroom (which grows extensively in monsoon and sells for Rs 70 to 80 per kg) were recovered from the killing spots, the victims were most probably attacked while they were squatting on ground and the tiger mistook them to be quadrupeds, said an expert.

► Tiger's status...P 8