

Bandhavgarh report today

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The killing of the tigress at Bandhavgarh reserve in Madhya Pradesh continues to rake up controversies. Close on the heels of Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh seeking a report on the death of the eight-year-old feline from the CM, simmering resentment prevails amongst the local villagers following the statement of Rajesh Gopal, Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for blaming the tourists for the incident.

Additional Principle Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Madhya Pradesh, Dharmendra Negi, who inves-



tigated the case, would submit his report on Friday.

However, even at the face of the ongoing investigation, there was largescale resentment amongst the nearly 4000 local villagers involved in various tourism activities in and around the reserve.

"We have given up our farming land and grazing land to extend the buffer zone of the reserve, with the money

we got being engaged in various sustainable activities in tourism," Jagat Narain, a Bandhavgarh local, told *The Pioneer* over telephone.

Some bought safari jeeps to take the tourists around in the reserve, others work as guides, naturalists or work in the various motels lining the reserve, he added.

"We have given up our land for the tiger reserve and we are very happy to share it with the tourists, it is thus not justified to thrust the blame on us", said Dhruv Singh, another local. Most of the families fringing the reserve earn their livelihood through wild life tourism. "It is not justified to put the blame on tourism, for the death of the animal", asserted Singh.