

# Territorial catfight claims a tiger

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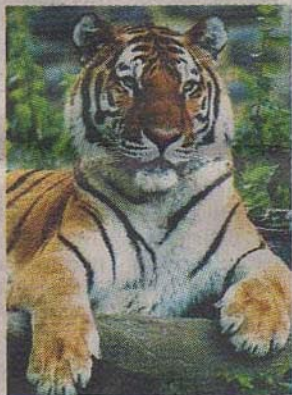
TN Raghunatha ■ Mumbai

In a setback to the ongoing 'Save Tiger' campaign, a full-grown tiger was found dead on the bank of Uman river in the Chimur forest range of Chandrapur district in eastern Maharashtra on Wednesday morning.

Reports reaching here in the evening said that a forest beat guard had found the carcass of the tiger - aged nearly 13 years - on the river bank in a forest area, located 15 km away from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR).

The local forest officials suspect that the wild cat might have succumbed to injuries suffered by it in a "territorial fight" it had with other tigers in the area.

Confirming the development, Chandrapur's deputy conservator of Forest Pravin Chavan told The Pioneer over telephone: "There were injury marks on the neck and a few



other parts of the tiger's body. Importantly, we found that some parts of the body had been eaten up, presumably, by the fellow wild cats"

According to Chavan, there are three more tigers in the forest area where the tiger's carcass was found. "We have a strong reason to believe that the dead tiger might have been fatally attacked by the fellow wild cats," Chavan said, as he dis-

missed initial reports that the tiger might have died after consuming water poisoned by the villagers in the neighbourhood.

Happening as it is in the Chandrapur forest area adjoining the TATR - considered the biggest man-tiger conflict zone in the country, the tiger's death has ironically brought some relief to the people in the nearby villages. As many as 66 people have been killed in the attacks by the tigers in the Chandrapur forest area since 2006.

In a State where the Wildlife Institute of India's 2007 census had pegged the adult tiger population at 105 and a simultaneous survey by the State forest officials had put the number of wild cats at 148, the forests located in Chandrapur district alone accounts for nearly 90 tigers. Of them, a maximum of 44 tigers are in TATR, which draws tourists from across the country all through the year.