

'Let tribals guard tiger reserves'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Evicting tribals and traditional dwellers from tiger reserves is not always the solution. Creating a stake for them in reserves could also be an option. The biggest tiger reserve of the country, Nagarjunasagar Srisailem has its security manned by its tribal folks 'Chenchus'. The step taken by Andhra Pradesh forest department to employ at least one person from 'Chenchu' family has been found effective by committee of experts which evaluated the management of the reserve between August 10 and August 30.

"The young boys and women have been employed, mostly on daily wages," said R L Singh, chairman of the committee. The tribals are employed on basis of daily wages. The idea is to ensure protection and security of wildlife and natural resources of the reserve spread over 3,500 sq km.

The tribals are trained in security mechanisms. They are familiar with remote areas of the reserve and can move around even at odd hours. "We have readied certain set of recommendations for better management which we would hand over to GoI," said Singh.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), in May had come up with 'Management Effectiveness Evaluation' project. It had roped in wildlife experts, researchers, conservationists and activists to field visit all 39 reserves in the country and evaluate the effectiveness of their management plans. The reserves had been divided into five clusters, state-wise and region-wise, for evaluation.

The eight tiger reserves lying in Naxalite affected belt had been put in Cluster III. The team of experts constituted by NTCA started its visit from Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh) on August

WHEN PREDATORS BECOME PREYS



Cluster I reserves | Dudhwa (UP), Corbett (Uttarakhand), Ranthambhore, Sariska (Rajasthan), Melghat, Pench, Tadoba-Andhari, Sahyadri (Maharashtra)

Cluster II reserves | Bandhavgarh, Satpura, Kanha, Pench, Sanjay-Dubri (MP)

Cluster III reserves | Palamau (Jharkhand), Similipal, Satkosia (Orissa), Indravati, Achanakmar, Udanti-Sitanadi (Chhattisgarh) & Valmiki (Bihar).

Cluster IV reserves | Bandipore, Nagarhole, Bhadra, Dandeli-Anshi (Karnataka), Periyar (Kerala), Kalakad-Mundanthurai, Annamalai, Mudumalai (Tamil Nadu)

Cluster V reserves | Nandapha, Pakka (Arunachal Pradesh), Kaziranga, Assam, Dampa (Mizoram), Buxa, Sunderbans (West Bengal)

Hunt still on for man-mauling tiger: The combing operation to track the man-mauling tiger continued on Tuesday in Shahjahanpur forest division. A team of experts and forest officials searched for the tiger in the forest area close to Saraiyan village where the big cat was spotted on Saturday. There has been no killing reported from Pilibhit forest division.

Meanwhile, the big cat, which injured a man in Kuriyani village of Mailani range of south Kheri forest division on early Sunday morning, could not be the same tiger which has wandered out of Pilibhit. **TNN**

10. The team will now move on to Palamau (Jharkhand), Similipal, Satkosia (Orissa), Indravati, Achanakmar, Udanti-Sitanadi (Chhattisgarh) and Valmiki (Bihar).

In Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem, however, the team did not notice any Naxalites. "Employment of tribals has helped in controlling the threat which was there till two years back," said Singh. The women have been employed as wildlife guards. Their job involves surveying the area in groups of 4 to 5 women. The idea is to en-

sure the presence of forest guards over maximum area of the reserve.

The project report by all committees is to be submitted by December, 2010. The ever rising man-animal conflict, increasing incidents of wildlife crime, poaching threat and subsequent decline in number of tigers has led NTCA to design the said project.

The management plan of reserves, breedable population of tigers, status of staff, water conservation and prey base are to be studied.