

# Ramesh roars after tigress death in MP

## Asks CM To Probe Case & Send Report

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI

THE death of a tigress in the Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh sanctuary after being hit by a vehicle could result in the reworking of the eco-tourism policies. Environment minister Jairam Ramesh has sought a report from chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. "The minister has taken a serious note of the matter and has asked chief minister Chouhan to probe the case thoroughly and send a report," a ministry official said.

MP's additional principle chief conservator of forest Dharmendra Negi is investigating the case even as various theories for the death of the 10-year-old feline on May 19 in the Tala Range of the reserve are doing the rounds. Reserve field director C K Patil has demanded a CID or CBI inquiry into the incident. "Patil has written to the state's chief wildlife warden R S Negi with such a request," the official said.

Soon after the incident, Mr Patil had said that "a tourist vehicle had hit the tigress after which she died. But it needs investigation". Accord-

ing to reports from the tiger reserve, the tigress was hit by a vehicle belonging to the state's PWD minister Nagendra Singh's son.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) member-secretary Rajesh Gopal said the post-mortem report confirmed that the tigress had died due to the impact. The tigress was being tracked by a lot of tiger watchers as she was nursing three new cubs. Mr Gopal said: "The authorities in Bandhavgarh have taken action against three officials and suspended them."

This has given added impetus to demands for regulating tourism in reserve parks. Wildlife activist Kahini Ghosh Mehta said: "In case the death is because of VIP movements inside the park, the case needs to be thoroughly investigated and the offenders should be punished severely."

Environmentalist Mike Pandey said: "This is a tragic incident and needs to be thoroughly investigated. In case the cause of death is hit and run by a tourist vehicle, there can't be a bigger reason for the government to enforce strict tourism-related regulations inside and outside the park."