

# Namdapha to save the roar of tigers

**ITANAGAR:** With the Arunachal Pradesh government deciding to raise a tiger protection force, the sprawling Namdapha National Park, a tiger reserve under Project Tiger, can expect rampant encroachment and poaching to come down substantially.

## The Arunachal govt is keen on revamping the reserve with a slew of projects

"The tiger reserve, spread over 1,985 sq km in Changlang district, has been facing the twin problems for much too long to be ignored and the raising of the force would be of great help", said BS Sajwan, Principal Chief Conservator of the forest.

The force would be set up on the lines of one for the Pakke Tiger Project of East Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh, Sajwan said. "With this, not only will the unemployed youths in the buffer zones get employment, but the reserve and its habitat can be kept from the clutches of poachers and encroachers," he observed.

The state government is also keen to thoroughly



revamp the tiger reserve with a slew of development projects. The main problem faced by the Namdapha Tiger Reserve since 2005 is the encroachment into its core area by 444 Lisu families of Vijaynagar Administrative Circle, adjacent to the reserve. The authorities have carried out evictions, but the success rate has been low.

Also, a committee was set up to identify alternate land for the relocation of the Lisu people from the park. The members of the committee were also briefed about the centre's rehabilitation package announced recently.

"The package has two options: Payment of ₹10 lakh per family if they opt to move out on their own and the other option is the relocation at a land identified and developed by the government within the limit of ₹10 lakh allotted per family. In

case the total cost of the project exceeds the package amount, the state government would bear the same," added Sajwan.

Unfortunately, the encroachers have rejected the package. In a report, the Namdapha authorities admitted that the number of tigers, co-predators and other prey species have declined in the park, primarily due to human habitation inside the core area.

However, it is reported that the tropical rainforest cannot sustain large number of tigers.

To ascertain the presence of tigers in accordance with the directives of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, a survey was conducted in four zones from November 2008 to February 2009 in which evidence of the four tigers were found at different locations.