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Ramesh's no to patrolling of tiger land

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New Delhi: Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh on Saturday shot off a letter to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, asking him to scrap the "Patrolling the Tiger Land" scheme as it was against the spirit and provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of keeping core areas inviolate for tigers and wild animals. The scheme allows tourists to trek along with forest guards in national parks. "Exposing tourists to sensitive patrolling routes, strengths and weakness of the field staff would certainly pose a great threat to the safety of wildlife including tigers," the Minister said. Ramesh warned that poachers — in the garb of tourists — may acquire all details of the terrain, besides the spatial occupancy of animals in the area. "There is a very strong likelihood of patrolling staff acting as 'guides' for tourists, with the latter luring them with rewards," he stated. "Field patrolling is a specialised job which may be possible only by trained frontline staff," said Ramesh.