



# Tiger Tourism

*ST*  
*cm-1 & 2*  
*WS*

RECENT DEATHS OF BIG CATS  
HAVE CAUGHT WILD LIFE  
ADMINISTRATION ON THE  
WRONG FOOT. THE STATE  
GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING  
PLANS TO SAFEGUARD ITS  
WILD LIFE TREASURE

years ago the figure was 10 per cent," says an executive of the Taj property in Ranthambhore.

However recent deaths of big cats have caught wild life administration on the wrong foot. The state government is preparing plans to safeguard its wild life treasure which not only will go a long way in preserving the biodiversity but also act as magnet for the tourists looking out for wild safari.

Realising the potential of wild Rajasthan, the state government has prepared a policy on eco-tourism. The eco-tourism policy allows tourists to go trekking on designated routes through unexplored areas, river cruising to view wildlife, overnight camping at forts and rest houses in forests and natural ecosystems. Initially, specified area of national parks, protected forests and sanctuaries would be promoted for eco-tourism. It will also allow safari in vehicles or animal backs to observe wild life and animals along the designated path.

For night camping, a limited number of sites would be identified initially and basic facilities would be developed. Forts and Palaces would be restored and basic camping facilities would be developed for night camping. Existing forest rest houses would be furnished and thrown open to eco tourists. Apart from that nature interpretation centres would be developed at places of importance and staff would be trained to assist tourists during trekking, safari and other allied activities.

tinuous increase in the number of visitors since 1995. This trend remained unaffected even during the global meltdown when the tourism industry was hit badly," he said.

The economy of areas surrounding Ranthambhore National Park is dependent on the famed Tiger Safari. There are 50-odd hotels and lodges near the national park including hi-end properties of Taj, Oberoi's and Aman Group. "Tigers are life-line for us. Tourists come here and spend money just to see a glimpse of big Cat in the reserve. Eight-five per cent of park visitors are Indian; 10

**T**hrill of spotting tiger in the thick woods of Ranthambhore has turned out to be a big revenue generator for Rajasthan government. The craze for Tiger safari has translated into revenue of Rs 2.71 crore for forest department - up by 8% from the collection of Rs 2.51 crore in 2008-09. Ranthambhore National Park deputy forest officer Sudarshan Sharma said that the state has clocked 13% increase in the tourist influx, last fiscal. "Last year, 2.03 lakh tourists visited park as against 1.78 lakh in 2008-09. There has been con-