

## Uttarakhand approves setting up of tiger force

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UTTARAKHAND Cabinet today approved a proposal to set up a special tiger protection force, involving forest dwellers, at Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR).

The decision to set up the tiger protection force was taken at a cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, on directions from the Centre, Principal Secretary (Home) Rajeev Gupta told reporters here.

The Centre would bear the expenditure on the force, estimated Rs 4 crore per annum, and has already given its nod to raise one company under which 112 people in three platoons will work for the protection of wild animals, especially tigers, said Gupta.

Additional Conservator of Forests (ACF) would be the in-charge of the force, while each of the 3 platoons would be

headed by a Ranger. There would be 6 foresters and 30 forest

Corbett guards in each of the platoon, Gupta said.

While the posts of ACF, Rangers and Foresters would be filled from state forest department on the basis of deputation, there would be a direct recruitment for other posts, the official said.

Thirty per cent of the total 90 posts of forest Corbett guards will be reserved for Van Gujjars and other forest dwellers as per the Centre's instructions, he said.

The Corbett guards would be eligible to work till they age 40 years, the official said, adding, after that they would be accommodated in the state forest department.

The force will have the similar powers to that of police, However, its services would not be used in para-military activities, he added. —PTI