

जयराम रमेश
JAIRAM RAMESH



D.O. No. 1-50 MOS(UC)E&F/10

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
पर्यावरण एवं वन
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110003

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI - 110 003

D.O. No. 1-16/93-PT

7th August, 2010

My dear Shriraj Singhji -

I am shocked to learn about a recent initiative "Patrolling the Tiger Land" taken by my good friend the Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh for involving tourists in patrolling of protected areas / tiger reserves. Many wildlife experts have also expressed their serious concerns on this initiative.

The advisory issued in this context by the Chief Wildlife Warden directs the Field Directors of Tiger Reserves and Directors of National Parks/Wildlife Sanctuaries to register tourists and permit their entry in the wildlife habitat, besides facilitating their stay in patrolling camps. Further, it has also been suggested that temporary rooms with the local available material may also be used for providing accommodation to tourists. A proposal from the Field Director, Kanha for constructing double storeyed camps in this regard has also been indicated in the said advisory.

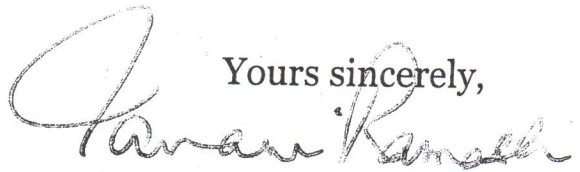
The above initiative / advisory goes against the spirit as well as the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, to keep the core areas, habitat inviolate for tiger and wild animals. As you are aware, poaching is the biggest threat to our tigers and wild animals. Hence exposing the tourists to sensitive patrolling routes, paths, strengths and weaknesses of the field staff would certainly pose a great threat to the safety of wildlife including tigers. The poachers, under the garb of tourists, may acquire all details of the terrain besides the spatial occupancy of tigers and wild animals in the area. There is a very strong likelihood of the patrolling staff acting as 'guides' for the tourists, with the latter luring them with rewards.

The recent tragic mortality of a tigress at Bandhavgarh is still fresh in our mind. Field patrolling is a specialised job involving lot of legwork and risk, which may be possible only by the frontline staff who are recruited / trained to do the job. The tourists hardly have the physical or technical capability to undertake this task, and the entire effort may prove fruitless and deleterious for tigers and wild animals. The attention of the field staff would also be diverted to cater to the needs of the tourists rather than to focus on patrolling. Also, use of forest material for constructing tourist facility amounts to violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the directives of the Hon'ble Apex Court. The Government of India provides 100% central assistance to tiger reserves for construction patrolling camps to strengthen protection. Hence, any modification of these structures, for accommodating tourists amounts to violation of the guidelines of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of this Ministry.

In the light of the above, I earnestly request you to immediately direct the authorities concerned to stop the above initiative, while withdrawing the advisory / directive of the Chief Wildlife Warden under reference. There is an urgent need to regulate tourism while stepping up the intelligence-based enforcement in our tiger reserves and protected areas.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Jairam Ramesh)

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan,
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Madhya Pradesh,
Bhopal.