

**Biodiversity cess in AP tiger reserve**

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*Tourist will have to pay between ₹10 and ₹20 as entrance fee*

Conservation project The proposal to levy this cess was made by NGO Tiger First.

**Hyderabad, June 4:**

The next time you drive through the Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR), you will have to pay a small biodiversity cess.

Tourist vehicles that enter the tiger reserve will have to pay ₹ 10 or ₹ 20, depending on the type of vehicle. Government vehicles are exempt from the fee.

The money will be used to provide help to the tribal Chenchus and conserve the majestic Indian tigers in the reserve.

**Check-posts**

From June 1, the cess will be collected at four check-posts — Munnampur and Domalapenta in Telangana and Dornala and Sikharam in Andhra Pradesh.

The proposal to levy this cess was made by NGO Tiger First and the Government issued the orders recently. According to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), AV Joseph, the funds will be primarily utilised for improving the livelihood of the Chenchus tribe, who inhabit the forest areas.

There area is littered with plastic bottles, cigarette butts, eatables and other junk, which is creating problems to the wildlife. During festivals, the problem becomes acute, as lakhs of people from neighbouring Karnataka and Maharashtra visit the Srisailem temple. The funds can be used to clear the mess created.

The collection of toll fee is common in several tiger reserves such as the Jim Corbett, Ranthambore, Periyar, Sariska among others.

**Steps initiated**

The forest department will put in place appropriate manual and technology scanners to track vehicles. Several steps have already been initiated to conserve the tigers in the NSTR, Joseph said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated June 5, 2014)