



Protecting the tiger's habitat

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Why in News?

Controversial death of tigress Avni in Maharashtra has triggered furore across India over action of Maharashtra Government.

Since 2016, the deaths of 13 people in the Pandharkawda divisional forest of Maharashtra have been attributed to tigers and at least five of them to Avni, a 6-year-old with two cubs.

- India's wildlife laws permit a tiger which is believed to have preyed on humans to be killed. The decision to shoot T1 (known as Avni) was taken in January but stayed by the Bombay High Court after appeals by activists.
- Three more deaths later, the Supreme Court, in September, cleared the way for the forest department to have the tiger killed.
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi described the killing as "murder", and several activists and some veterinarians have alleged that no attempt was made to tranquilise the animal.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority has commissioned an independent team of wildlife experts to investigate the killing.

Tiger-human conflict

- The killing of a man-eating tigers is a rare but not unprecedented in India.
- As tigers are India's apex predators and symbols of its success at conservation, the unusual death of even one tiger causes disquiet in

forest departments and among conservation biologists, tourism officials and activists.

- Are conservation efforts adequate
- While there is a larger concern about the shrinking space for tiger habitat in India, conservationists have also said that a few tiger reserves are being pampered at the expense of others.
- A recent study by the World Wildlife Fund said that eight tiger sanctuaries in India could, over time, support more than four times the current population of tigers in these sanctuaries.
- Conservationists have also said that “man-eaters” is a legacy term from colonial hunters and incorrect in today’s times.

Tigers don’t actively seek out humans; it is only because of increased contact between humans and animals that there are more conflicts which leads to deaths.

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