Tiger Electrocutions

What is the issue?

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Increasing instances of electrocution is being one of the major threats to tiger conservation in central India.

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What are the instances of tiger electrocution in central India?

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- More than 50,000-sq km central Indian area consisting of protected areas, reserved forests, which includes the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, southern U.P, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.
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- These regions which supports one of India’s largest tiger populations and has been identified as a global tiger conservation landscape.
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- Recently a tigress in the Chimur forest range in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra was died due to electrocution.
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- In 2017 alone 5 tiger were died due to electrocution in the Vidarba region of Maharashtra.
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- Seven tigers have been electrocuted in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh alone.
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- Tiger death due to electrocution are also reported in Telengana-Andhra Pradesh belt near Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary in Telangana.
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What are the reasons behind the electrocution?

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- In a desperate attempt to prevent herbivores like nilgai (blue bulls) and wild boar from destroying their crops, farmers often set up illegal high-voltage electrical fences around their fields drawing power from electrical lines meant for home or agricultural use.
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- Tigers, which use human-dominated landscapes including agricultural fields to move about, die when they come in contact with these fences.
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- In some places, poachers erect live wiretraps using overhead 11 kv lines to kill animals and is generally done at night.
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- Thus rampant and illegal use of high-voltage electric fences and traps is making the agricultural matrix more hostile to tiger movement, raising the importance of unbroken forest corridors.
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How this incidents are reported?

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- Electrocution could be a major problem in other landscapes too, but officials are probably not aware of it until they use radio collars.
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- The radio collars are attached to tigers to monitor its movement and in recent reports it highlighted the threat of electrocution faced by tigers.
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What are government initiatives on this regard?

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- In Maharashtra alone nearly 200 villages are identified,where tiger electrocutions are also highly probable.
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- In these areas, the government hopes to initiate awareness campaigns to prevent the use of electric fences.
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- The campaigns will also highlight the illegal use of such fences for crop protection: stealing power from overhead lines amounts to theft.
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- Solar fencing in the buffer zone of parks nearby is reported successful and there are plans to expand to non-buffer areas also.
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Quick fact

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Zonation system in Bio-sphere reserves

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Source: The Hindu

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