



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Project Cheetah

Published On: 18-09-2023

Why is in news? Commemorating one year of successful implementation of Project Cheetah in India

Cheetahs were found in various parts of India, but they became extinct in the country in the 1940s due to hunting, habitat loss, and other factors.

Therefore, Project Cheetah was initiated by the Government of India to **reintroduce the African cheetah into suitable habitats within India** to restore the ecological balance and improve upon the lost biodiversity. Eg: Reintroduction of Cheetah in Kuno National Park of Madhya Pradesh.

Objectives of Project Cheetah:

Re-establish a viable population of the Asiatic cheetah in India, which is currently considered critically endangered and on the brink of extinction.

By reintroducing this species, the project seeks to **restore the ecological balance**, enhance biodiversity, and conserve the unique genetic heritage of the cheetah.

Potential to revive India's natural heritage and strengthen its commitment to wildlife conservation.

Enhance India's global standing as a responsible custodian of endangered species.

The project could attract ecotourism, generating economic opportunities for local communities and promoting environmental awareness.

Background:

'Cheetah' (**Acinonyx Jubatus Venaticus**) originates from Sanskrit and means 'the spotted one'.

The Cheetah is the **fastest land animal in the world**.

Its historical range includes the majority of Sub-Saharan Africa and extends eastward to India.

It is the only large carnivore that went 'Extinct' in India due to overhunting and habitat loss.

The last cheetah died in the Koriya district of present-day Chhattisgarh in 1947 and the species was **declared extinct in 1952**.

According to the Wildlife Institute of India's (WII) "**Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India**," 50 wild cheetahs that are ideal for starting a new cheetah population would be imported as a founder stock over five years initially.

The PM of India released the first batch of eight cheetahs (five females and three males) from Namibia into a quarantine enclosure at Kuno last year.

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Some modifications have been made to the current bomas (wildlife cages constructed often for the treatment or quarantine of animals).

Threats: Habitat loss, conflict with humans, poaching and high susceptibility to diseases.