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Reintroduction of Cheetahs

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Why is in news? PM Modi to release Cheetahs in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh 17th September, 2022

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release eight cheetahs **brought from Namibia at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh** in 17th Sep, 2022.
- This is the **world's first transcontinental project to restore large wild animals**.
- The area spread over 750 square kilometers of Kuno National Park is suitable for the habitat of about two dozen cheetahs. Apart from this, about 3 thousand square kilometer forest area is available for free movement of cheetahs in two districts Sheopur and Shivpuri.
- **Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India** was launched at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- NTCA is a **statutory body** under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- The cheetah is **one of the oldest of the big cat species**, with ancestors that can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era.
- The cheetah is also the **world's fastest land mammal that lives in Africa and Asia**.
- **IUCN status: African Cheetah – Vulnerable, Asian Cheetah - Critically Endangered.**
- **CITES status:** Both are in the Appendix-I of the List.
- The cheetah is the **only large carnivore that has been eliminated**, mainly by over-hunting in India in historical times.
- The **conservation of the cheetah** will revive grasslands and their biomes and habitat, much like Project Tiger has done for forests and all the species that have seen their numbers go up.
- **Reasons for the Extinction: Hunting, diminishing habitat and non-availability of enough prey** - black buck, gazelle and hare - led to the **extinction of the cat in India (1952)**. The advent of climate change and growing human populations have only made these problems worse.
- With help from the Wildlife Institute of India and the Wildlife Trust of India, the ministry will **be translocating around 8-12 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana**. These countries have large population of cheetahs.
- The Cheetah was **declared extinct in India in 1952**.

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