

Cheetahs in Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

Madhya Pradesh will release two cheetahs, Tholo and CCB-3, from Kuno National Park (KNP) into Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (VDTR).



Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (VDTR)



 Location	Madhya Pradesh
 Region	Bundelkhand
 Districts	Sagar, Damoh & Narsinghpur
 Area	~ 2,339 sq km
 Also known as	Nauradehi Tiger Reserve
 Tiger population	~ 30
 Protected Area Status	1997
 Tiger Reserve status	20 September 2023
 Cheetah status	3rd cheetah habitat in MP
 Special feature	First Indian cheetah habitat involving rocky terrain

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

- It will be the 3rd cheetah habitat in Madhya Pradesh, after:
 - Kuno National Park
 - Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary
- Significance** - It represents the first planned attempt in India to enable **free-ranging cheetahs to coexist with an established tiger population.**

Rationale for Selecting VDTR as a Cheetah Habitat

- Area** - Approximately 2,339 square kilometers, providing an extensive landscape.
- The region supports a diverse assemblage of prey species and carnivores.
 - Chital

- Sambar
- Nilgai
- Leopards
- Tigers
- Bears
- Cheetahs typically inhabit **open grasslands**, whereas tigers primarily utilize denser forested areas.
- This habitat differentiation may reduce direct interspecific competition.
- Historical records indicate that **Asiatic cheetahs, tigers, and leopards previously coexisted within the Indian subcontinent.**

Cheetah and Tiger Coexistence

- **Key Ecological Consideration**
- The tiger is a dominant apex predator and is capable of killing or displacing cheetahs.
- The cheetah relies primarily on speed and typically avoids direct confrontation.
- Cheetahs and tigers exhibit partially distinct habitat and prey preferences.
- Successful coexistence is contingent upon several ecological factors:
 - Availability of an adequate prey base
 - Presence of sufficiently large habitats
 - Implementation of habitat restoration initiatives
 - Provision of spatial separation to facilitate avoidance behaviors
 - Ongoing monitoring of interspecific predator interactions

*It is important to note that coexistence does **not** imply the absence of competition or predation.*

Project Cheetah

Cheetah Reintroduction in India

- Project Cheetah was launched at **Kuno National Park** on **17 September 2022**.
- African cheetahs were translocated from the following countries:
 - Namibia
 - South Africa
 - Botswana
- Current Cheetah Population
 - The cheetah population in India has reached 60 individuals.
 - Of these, 41 cheetahs were born in India.

Note - Project Cheetah involves the **African cheetah**, whereas the Asiatic cheetah was historically present in India.

Reference

[DD India | Third home for Cheetahs](#)