Kuno National Park & Cheetah Conservation

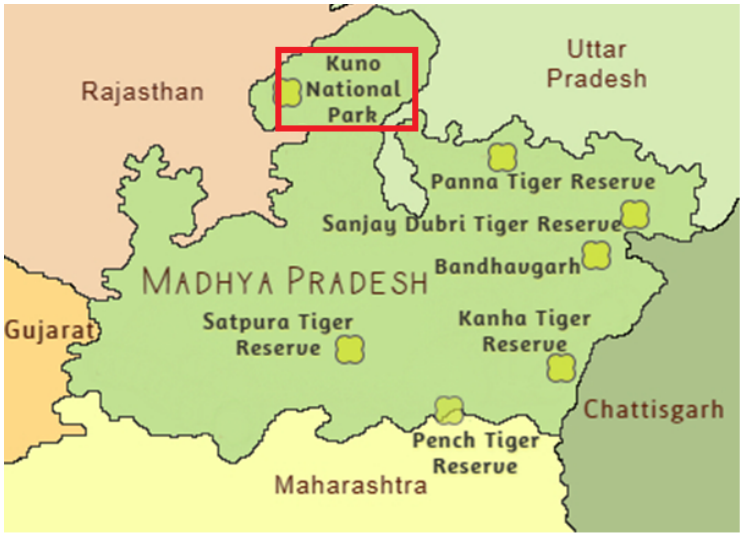
Prelims: *Current events of national importance | Environment*

Why in News?

An Indian-born female cheetah "KGP-12" (daughter of Gamini) at Kuno National Park, has given birth to four cubs in the wild, total population reaches 57.

Kuno National Park

Aspect	Details
Location	Sheopur district, Madhya Pradesh.
Terrain	Vindhyan Hills.
Ecosystem	Kathiawar–Gir dry deciduous forest ecoregion, including tropical dry deciduous and riverine forests.
Established in	1981 (as Wildlife Sanctuary), Declared as National Park in 2018.
River	Kuno River, a tributary of the Chambal, bisects the park.
Vegetation	Dry deciduous forest, grasslands, savannah-type ecosystem.
Flora	Kardhai (*Anogeissus pendula*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*), Salai (*Boswellia serrata*).
Fauna	Leopards, jackals, chinkara, nilgai, sambar, wild boar, wolves.
Tribal Presence	*Sahariya tribe* dominant in the region.
Special Note	Originally identified for Asiatic lion relocation from Gir, later chosen for cheetah reintroduction.



Project Cheetah (Flagship Initiative)

- **Launched in –** 2022.
- **Selection of Kuno –** Low human density, adequate prey base.
- **World First –** First intercontinental translocation of a large wild carnivore.
- **Nodal Agency –** National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Objective –** Restore cheetah (extinct in India since 1952) as a flagship species for grassland and semi-arid ecosystem conservation.
- **Species Sourced –** African Cheetahs from Namibia (2022), South Africa (2023), Botswana (2026).
- **First Release Site –** Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Significance –** First intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore.
- **Breeding Milestone –** Gamini's cubs (2026) are the first Indian-born cheetahs to reproduce naturally in the wild.

Authority/Regulation	African Cheetah – (Acinonyx jubatus jubatus)	Asiatic Cheetah – (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)
IUCN Red List	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered
CITES	Appendix I	Appendix I
Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972	Schedule I	Schedule I

References

1. PIB | Kuno National Park

2. The Hindu | Kuno National Park

