Project cheetah

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Why in News?

The third anniversary of India's cheetah reintroduction program (Project Cheetah) was observed on September 17, 2025.

- **Project Cheetah –** It is India's ambitious cheetah relocation program and the ***1st intercontinental*** reintroduction of a wild, large carnivore species.
- **Launched in - *September 17, 2022***, with the translocation of the first batch of cheetahs from Namibia.
- **Aim -** To bring in 5-10 animals every year, over the next decade, until a self-sustaining population of cheetahs is established.
- **Need for introduction –** To establish a ***viable cheetah metapopulation in India*** and provide space for the expansion of the cheetah within its historical range.
- It is a ***flagship species***; the conservation of cheetah will revive grassland-forests habitat.
- **Implementing body -** The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.
- **Assisted by -** The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF).
- **Reintroduction so far -** The African cheetahs are translocated from the forests of ***South Africa and Namibia*** to the ***Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh***.
- The cheetahs were relocated from Kuno National Park to ***Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary*** in Madhya Pradesh, making the sanctuary the ***second home of the species*** since their reintroduction.
- As of 2025, between Kuno and Gandhisagar, ***India currently has 27 cheetahs***.
- **Other potential sites to support cheetahs** - Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Bhainsrorgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh; Shahgarh bulge in Jaisalmer and Mukundara Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan.

Quick Facts

Asiatic cheetah
• **Scientific name** - Acinonyx jubatus venaticus, the planet's fastest land animal, ***currently surviving in Iran***. • **Distribution** - Its range once spread from the Arabian Peninsula and the Near East to the Caspian region, and northern South Asia. • **IUCN** - Critically Endangered. • Asiatic cheetahs, once abundant in India, was officially declared ***extinct*** by the Indian government in ***1952***.
African cheetah
• **Scientific name** - Acinonyx jubatus jubatus, also called Southeast African cheetah, native to East and Southern Africa. • **Distribution** - The Southern African cheetah lives mainly in the grasslands, scrublands and open forests across the continent, especially in the countries of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. • **IUCN Status** - Vulnerable

References

1. The Hindu | September 17 - Third anniversary of Project Cheetah
2. NTCA | Project Tiger

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