

View: Welcoming back the cheetah to India

Synopsis

All these factors induced by human action are symbolic of just one thing — an outright domination of the natural world by man. The reintroduction of cheetah into the wild is therefore a step towards correcting an ecological wrong and moving towards fulfilling our commitment towards Mission LiFE, a mantra given to the world by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Agencies

Cheetah

The countdown for the return of [cheetah](#) has begun and [India](#) cannot wait to welcome back the fastest land animal whose growls once echoed in forests across the country, barring the high mountains and coasts. Come September 17 and the cheetah will be back in India. Soon the cheetah would be crisscrossing the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

The loss of cheetah from India is attributed to myriad reasons, including large-scale capture of animals for coursing, bounty and sport hunting, extensive habitat conversion and a resultant shrinking of the prey base.

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The Western growth model led to the creation of an impression that the human is supreme, and powered by technology, this 'supreme human' can achieve whatever he sets out to claim as his. When this model was put to practice, humans lost, and lost even as they temporarily gained the sense of prospering. This model has not just endangered several species but the very existence of [Planet Earth](#). In India, for ages, we have believed "Nature protects if She is protected". India lost only one large wild mammalian since our Independence.

We have been able to preserve several critical species and their ecosystems, including tigers, lions, Asiatic elephants, gharials and the one-horned rhinoceros, despite our surging population and developmental needs. With [Project Tiger](#), [Project Lion](#) and [Project Elephant](#), India has, over the last few years, also been able to increase the populations of these critically important species.

While the tiger has served as a flagship and umbrella species of forest systems, the cheetah will fill the void for open forests, savannah and grasslands. The reintroduction of the cheetah is an ambitious step towards building a sustainable planet because reintroducing a top predator restores the historic evolutionary balance which helps trigger a cascading impact on restoration of their habitat and conservation of the prey base. The cheetah has been the evolutionary natural

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