Kuno National Park: female cheetah gives birth to 5 cubs

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News

On **5 October 2026** Union Environment Minister **Bhupender Yadav** announced that **KJP21**, a **32-month-old India-born** female cheetah, gave birth to **5 cubs** at **Kuno National Park**, Sheopur district, **Madhya Pradesh**. The father is a male from **Botswana**, so these are the **first cubs of the Botswana line** in India. India's cheetah count is now **60**, of which **41 were born in India**.

Key facts

Mother	**KJP21**, born in Kuno; the **3rd India-born female** to give birth (after **Mukhi** and KGP12)
Father	A male brought from **Botswana** (9 cheetahs arrived on **28 Feb 2026**)
Count	**60** cheetahs in India; **41** India-born
Second home	**Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** (Mandsaur–Neemuch, MP) from April 2025
Agency	**National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** with the MP Forest Department and Wildlife Institute of India

Background

- **Project Cheetah** began on **17 September 2022**, when **8 cheetahs from Namibia** were released at Kuno – the world's first intercontinental move of a large wild carnivore. **12 from South Africa**

followed in **February 2023**.

- The cheetah was declared **extinct in India in 1952**.
- **Kuno** is named after the **Kuno river**, a tributary of the **Chambal**; sanctuary in 1981, **national park in 2018**.
- **IUCN:** African cheetah – **Vulnerable**; Asiatic cheetah – **Critically Endangered**, now found only in **Iran**. Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) is the **fastest land animal**.
- **Banni grasslands** (Kutch, Gujarat) is being prepared as another cheetah site.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu runs similar recovery work for its own threatened species: the **Nilgiri tahr** (State animal) under **Project Nilgiri Tahr (2023)**, and vultures at the **Mudumalai–Sathyamangalam** landscape. Tamil Nadu has **5 tiger reserves**: Kalakad–Mundanthurai, Anamalai, Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Srivilliputhur–Megamalai.

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