Botswana-born cheetah has 4 cubs at Kuno; count now 62

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News

At Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, 'KOMG 3', a female cheetah about two and a half years old brought from Botswana, gave birth to four cubs in the wild; Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced it on 20 November 2026. India's cheetah count thus rose to 62, of which 43 were born in India. It is the first litter in India from a Botswana-born cheetah and the second birth in the wild in the project's history. Before these births the official count was 58 – 52 in Kuno, 4 in Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and 2 in Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (late October). 'Project Cheetah' began on 17 September 2022 as the world's first intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore. However, a 19-month-old male, KNG22, found injured on 25 October, died on 27 October with five firearm pellets in its body; the Centre sent a high-level NTCA–WCCB team and Madhya Pradesh formed a Special Task Force.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Total	62 (43 born in India)
Mother	KOMG 3 – Botswana-born, about 2.5 years
Cubs	4 – born in the wild
Announced	Bhupender Yadav, 20 November 2026

Point	Details
Sites	Kuno 52, Gandhi Sagar 4, Veerangana Durgavati 2 (late Oct, when the count was 58)
Project began	17 September 2022
Brought in	Namibia 8 (2022), South Africa 12 (2023), Botswana 9 (2026)
Declared extinct	1952 in India

Background

- History: the last three cheetahs in India were reportedly shot in 1947 by the ruler of the princely state of Koriya, now in Chhattisgarh. The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952 (Patrika, WION).
- Under Project Cheetah, the first batch of 8 came from Namibia in September 2022, 12 from South Africa in February 2023 and 9 from Botswana in February 2026. Some were later shifted to Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary near Mandsaur.
- Geography: Kuno National Park is in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. Botswana is a landlocked country of southern Africa, much of it covered by the Kalahari Desert; Namibia has the Namib Desert.
- Challenges: deaths of translocated and India-born cheetahs, and a cheetah killed with firearm pellets in October 2026, keep the project under scrutiny. The government plans to expand beyond Kuno and Gandhi Sagar to other suitable habitats.

Tamil Nadu link: No Project Cheetah site is in Tamil Nadu; the project is implemented by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Total: 62 (43 born in India); Mother: KOMG 3 – Botswana-born, about 2.5 years; Cubs: 4 – born in the wild; Announced: Bhupender Yadav, 20 November 2026.

What is the background to this news?

History: the last three cheetahs in India were reportedly shot in 1947 by the ruler of the princely state of Koriya, now in Chhattisgarh.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Before the new cubs, India's 58 cheetahs (late October 2026) were at Kuno, Gandhi Sagar and which third site?

A) Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

B) Satpura Tiger Reserve

C) Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

D) Panna Tiger Reserve

Answer: A – Explanation: Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) – 2; Kuno 52, Gandhi Sagar 4. The 4 new cubs take the count to 62.

2. Project Cheetah, launched on 17 September 2022, is described as the world's first of which kind?

A) Intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore

B) Cloning of an extinct species

C) Breeding by artificial insemination

D) Translocation of a marine mammal

Answer: A – Explanation: The world's first intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore; implemented by the NTCA.

3. The princely state of Koriya, whose ruler reportedly shot India's last cheetahs, is now in which State?

A) Madhya Pradesh

B) Odisha

C) Chhattisgarh

D) Jharkhand

Answer: C – Explanation: Chhattisgarh. Koriya's ruler reportedly shot the last three in 1947; the cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952.

4. Unlike lions and tigers, which of these can a cheetah NOT do?

A) Purr

B) Chirp

C) Hiss

D) Roar

Answer: D – Explanation: Roar. Cheetahs do not roar; they purr, chirp, hiss and growl. They hunt mostly in the early morning and late afternoon.

5. The mother of the new cubs came from Botswana. Which desert covers much of Botswana?

A) Namib

B) Kalahari

C) Sahara

D) Karoo

Answer: B – Explanation: The Kalahari. The Namib lies along Namibia's coast; Botswana is landlocked.

Sources: ThePrint; Free Press Journal; WION; News On AIR; Business Today. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.