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India, South Africa sign pact, 12 cheetahs to be brought to Kuno in February

India had been waiting for the signing of this MoU to bring more big cats to supplement the first batch of eight cheetahs brought from Namibia last year.

Written by **Esha Roy** [Follow](#)

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The first batch of eight cheetahs from Namibia arrived at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh last year. Express file

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A second batch of 12 cheetahs — seven male and five female — will be **brought from South Africa to Kuno National Park** in Madhya Pradesh next month. The central government on Friday confirmed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in reintroduction of cheetahs has been signed between the two countries.

India had been waiting for the signing of this MoU to bring more big cats to **supplement the first batch of eight cheetahs brought from Namibia last year.** The South African cheetahs range from 18 months to 4 years in age.

EXPLAINED

Chasing the big cat

In India, the big cat population got completely wiped out in the early 1950s, mainly due to over-hunting and habitat loss. Under the 'Action Plan for

Reintroduction of Cheetah in India', 50 cheetahs will be brought from African countries to various national parks over 5 years.

“In terms of the agreement, an initial batch of 12 cheetahs are to be flown in from South Africa to India during February 2023. The cats will join **eight cheetahs introduced to India** from Namibia during 2022,” said a statement from the Environment Ministry.

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“The exact date of bringing the cheetahs has not been fixed yet. We are sending an Indian delegation to South Africa in the first week of February and once they give the green light, we will decide on the date,” said S P Yadav, additional director, Project Tiger, and member secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

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Yadav said while the protocol for bringing the second batch of cheetahs remains the same, **some improvements have been made to the existing bomas (wildlife enclosures built usually for the treatment or quarantine of animals)** based on the observations of the last few months.

These improvements include building a gallery around the acclimatisation enclosure where food and water can be given to the big cats as unobtrusively as

possible.

Yadav added one female cheetah named Sasha, who had kidney problems, has been recovering well.

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