Union Government deputes High-Level Central Team to Investigate Death of Cheetah due to Firearm Pellet Injuries in Madhya Pradesh

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The Union Government has taken serious note of the death of a 19-month-old male Cheetah (KNG22) of Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, due to firearm pellet injuries. Viewing the matter with utmost gravity, the Centre has deputed a high-level team for an on-ground investigation into the incident, given the critical importance of Project Cheetah and the need to ensure the highest standards of protection for the reintroduced population of the Big Cat.

The Central team comprises the Inspector General of Forests, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Additional Director, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), and Regional Deputy Director, WCCB. The team has been tasked with undertaking a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to the death of the Cheetah, examining all available evidence and coordinating closely with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department to ensure strict and swift action in the matter.

The Cheetah, an offspring of Cheetah Nirva, was found injured on 25th October 2026 in the territorial forests of Morena, outside the protected area of Kuno National Park. As reported by the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, it was rescued from the Sheopur Territorial Forest Division the same day and provided intensive veterinary care and emergency surgery at the veterinary facility in Jabalpur. During the surgery, five firearm pellets were recovered from its body. Despite the medical intervention, the Cheetah succumbed to its injuries on 27th October 2026. Medical examinations corroborated multiple internal injuries associated with the recovered firearm pellets.

The State Government has already constituted a Special Task Force (STF), comprising Forest and Police officers, to investigate the incident. The Central team deputed by the MoEFCC would work in coordination with the State machinery. It would also examine the implementation of security protocols, as well as monitoring and protection measures being undertaken to avoid any such incident in future. The Central team would submit its findings and recommendations to the Ministry for further directions to the State Government and field authorities.

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