

जयराम रमेश
JAIRAM RAMESH



D.O. No. 1-58/MOS(WC)ERF/10
राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
पर्यावरण एवं वन
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110003
MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI - 110 003

My dear Ashokji -

30th July 2010

As you are aware, the cheetah is the only large Indian animal that we have lost since Independence. They also occurred in Rajasthan in the past. I am sure you and the state of Rajasthan would be as keen to bring back this lost natural heritage of India. The reintroduction of the cheetah would not just be restoration of a lost species, but also a restoration of some of our degraded but invaluable ecosystems and the varied fauna and flora dependent upon them. Of all the large cats, the cheetah would cause the least conflict with people, as there is no record whatsoever of a cheetah ever causing injury to humans and they do not attack cattle.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests had commissioned a special study of ten sites in four states, to ascertain the feasibility of cheetah reintroduction. The report of this investigation has clearly indicated that cheetah can be reintroduced at three sites - Kuno-Palpur in Madhya Pradesh, the southern Shahgarh landscape in the western part of the Jaisalmar district of Rajasthan on the border with Pakistan, in the area also known as Shahgarh bulge and Nauradehi, also in Madhya Pradesh.

The western and southern flanks of this Shahgarh bulge have been fenced off along the international border and the area is totally under the control of the BSF. The area being a desert covered with sand dunes and some vegetation, there is no agriculture. There are, however, settlements called Dhanis which are occupied seasonally by nomadic pastoralists who graze sheep and goats, and who occupy these Dhanis for a part of the year. They also move out when the army and the BSF want them to do so. As the western and southern sides of this bulge has already been fenced off, it is proposed to fence off the eastern and the northern sides, whereby a large area could be secured, the vegetation including grass could be allowed to regenerate and the cheetah would not be able to go out to raid the small stock of the shepherds. The nomadic shepherds could be given alternate sites outside this fenced off area where large tracts are still available on the north-eastern side and where bore-wells could also be provided. The shepherds could be given the same generous package as is given under Project Tiger. Every effort has been made to exclude large human habitations from the proposed enclosed area and a more detailed survey would be made to ensure that there is the least possible conflict of interests, while delineating the periphery of the proposed fencing. The mining for gas or oil would not be hampered and there would be no curtailment of the patrolling activities of the armed forces. In fact, these agencies would be part of the joint venture. The introduction of the cheetah would be a substantial addition to the tourist attractions in Jaisalmar district.

