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Wildlife Protection

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In a first, Eravikulam National Park gets a fernarium

Sandeep Vellaram
IDUKKI

The Eravikulam National Park (ENP) in Kerala, the natural habitat of the Nilgiri tahr in Munnar, has a new attraction – a fernarium set up inside the park. According to officials, this is the first time such a fern collection is being set up in the hill station.

Job J. Neriampampil, Assistant Wildlife Warden, ENP, said that 52 varieties of ferns had already been planted in the new fernarium.

“As per data, ENP has

104 varieties of ferns. We have planned to increase the number of ferns inside the park to 104 soon,” Mr. Neriampampil said.

“The fern park has been set up near the orchidarium and will be opened to the public on April 20,” he said.

Biodiversity area

“The ENP is one of the rich biodiversity areas, and the new initiatives aim to provide visitors with awareness of the park’s biodiversity,” said the official.

Jomy Augustine, botanist, said that ferns were the



Pioneer attempt: The Eravikulam National Park in Munnar has set up a fernarium inside the park. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ecological indicator of healthy forests. “The climatic condition inside the ENP is more suitable for

growing ferns,” Dr. Augustine said.

“Ferns are part of the Epiphytic family. They grow naturally in a soilless condition. The plants obtain water and nutrients through leaching from trees. A large number of ferns are on the trees inside the park,” said Dr. Augustine.

Meanwhile, after the calving season of the Nilgiri tahrs, the ENP opened for the public on Saturday.

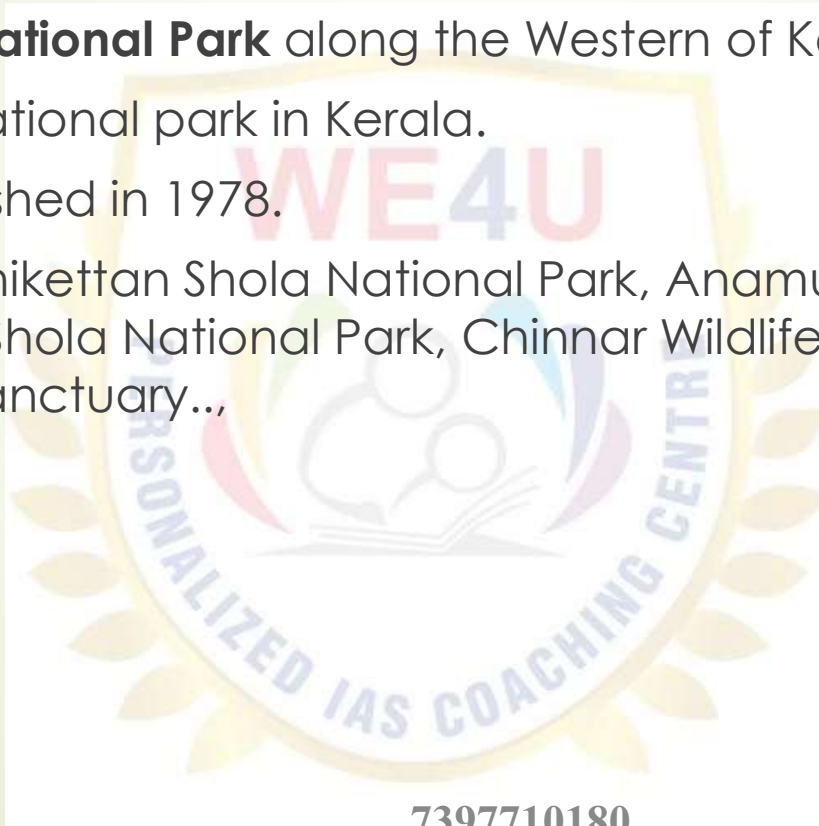
Mr. Neriampampil said that a selfie point was among the new facilities established for tourists.

“Three buggy cars have been arranged for the visitors to explore the park, and two more will be purchased soon. The park had 1,607 and 1,684 tourists on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, said the official.

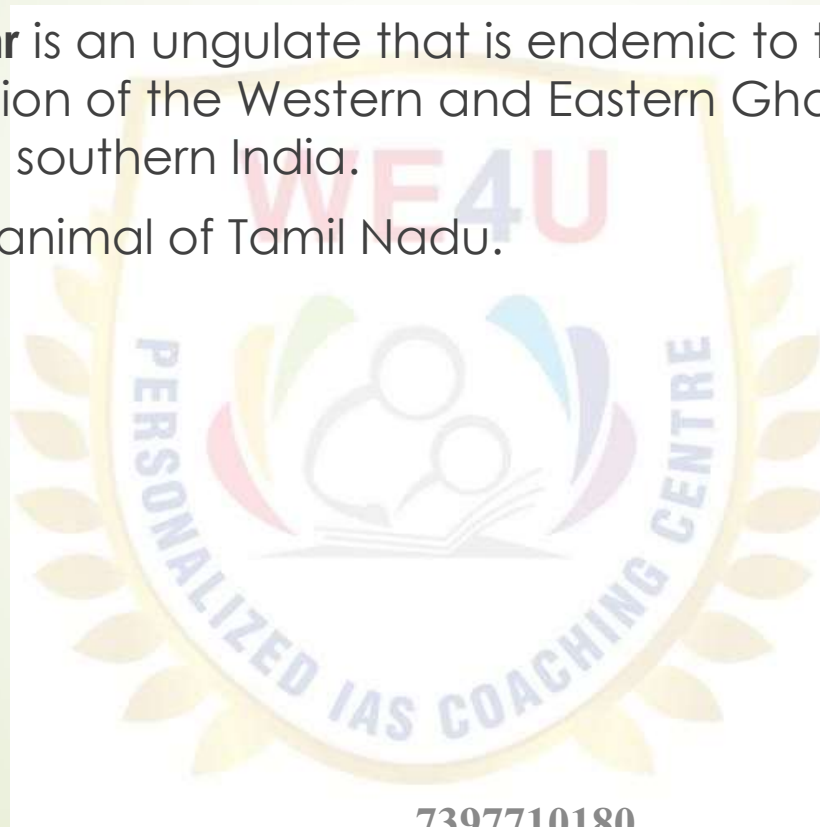
According to officials, a survey of new births in the ENP will be held on April 20. The last annual census recorded 785 tahrs, while 125 new calves were sighted.

“It is expected that the number of calves will increase from 125 to 150 after the census,” Mr. Neriampampil said.

- **Eravikulam National Park** along the Western of Kerala in India.
- It is the first national park in Kerala.
- It was established in 1978.
- Nearby: Mathikettan Shola National Park, Anamudi Shola National Park, Pambadum Shola National Park, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and the Kurinjimala Sanctuary...



- ▶ The **Nilgiri tahr** is an ungulate that is endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western and Eastern Ghats in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in southern India.
- ▶ It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.



Wildlife Protection

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Cheetah strays into field in M.P.; efforts on to send it back into wild

Press Trust of India
SHEOPUR

A cheetah strayed into an agricultural field adjoining a village near Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district on Sunday morning, an official said.

Oban, one of the eight cheetahs brought from Namibia in September last year, strayed into the field near Baroda village, some

15-20 kilometres from KNP, from the free range area of the park into which he was released last month, Sheopur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) P.K. Verma said.

Moving towards village

"As per the signals from its collar device, the cheetah was moving towards the village from Saturday night. It is sitting at the spot and a police team is monitoring the situation and keeping

villagers away. Forest Department staff are trying to send it back to the park area," he said.

Officials also shared a video in which staffers can be seen trying to coax Oban to get back into the forest.

So far, four out of eight cheetahs brought from Namibia to KNP in September, 2022, have been released into the wild (free range area) from hunting enclosures.

- **Kuno National Park** is a national park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, India.
- It derives its name from Kuno River.
- It was established in 1981 as a wildlife sanctuary
- In 2018, it was given the status of a national park.
- It is part of the Khathiar-Gir dry deciduous forests ecoregion.
- In 2009, Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary was also proposed as a possible site for cheetah reintroduction in India, which has begun with eight of the animals released in September 2022.

THANK YOU

