

ZOOS' PRINT NEWS PRINT

ZOO NEWS FROM THE INDIAN PRESS

Kufri Zoo awaits arrival of Red Panda

The Himalayan Nature Park (Mini Zoo) at Kufri will shortly have one of the endangered species, a red panda from the Darjeeling zoo. With a colourful coat, this animal is mostly found in the temperate forests of the Himalayas above 5,000 feet. It is a solitary creature except during the mating season (Jan-Mar). Taronga zoo is the home of two pairs of red pandas which arrived there in 1977. Since then by a successful breeding programme, 37 births have occurred, a significant contribution to the international captive breeding programme. (*The Indian Express, Chandigarh, 15 Sept 98*).

Nehru zoo moves at getting its acts together - Educational entertainment is new buzzword

Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad in its simulated near natural surroundings notches up an impressive 17 to 18 lakhs visitors a year. Its curator (K.N. Banerji) admits that they have not been able to work towards a serious programme to educate the visitors for lack of a dedicated education officer and not well educated animal keepers. Attempts were made in the mid-eighties in this direction with results far from satisfactory. The zoo used to have enthusiastic groups (NGO's) interact with the visitors. (Ex: The snake shows conducted by the Friends of the Snake Club). Trained youngsters used the snakes for demonstration to remove the fear of the reptiles from the people. In a recent visit to the zoo, Ravi Chellam (Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun) and a group of zoo directors has this to say; "There is a need for professionally trained and committed staff at all levels who can not only help the zoo to pursue its stated policy but also assist the visitors in leaving with a better understanding of wildlife". He agreed that the lack of comprehensive education programme has led to a situation where opportunity to turn people into friends of wildlife conservation is lost everyday in our zoos. He pleaded for the provision for a post of education officer in each zoo. As a first step the Nehru zoo plans to bring out a guide book next year that 'will lead the visitors not just through the zoo but also answer some of the most commonly asked questions about animals...' (*Deccan chronicle, Hyderabad, 4 Oct 98*).

Zoo expansion suggested

Justice Guman Mal Lodha, the chairman of the Central Animal Welfare Board said, after a visit to the Alipore Zoo, Calcutta, that 'animals, particularly tigers and lions were being caged for too long'. They were being kept in open enclosures only by rotation, with the result that they 'are not getting enough air, water and light due to lack of space'. He suggested open enclosures. A proposal from the society for prevention of cruelty to animals to increase the area from 100 to 190 acres was suggested. (*The Statesman, Calcutta, 11 Oct 98*).

Zoo Next to Taj Mahal proposed

A project of establishing a Zoological park (on 80 hectare land) close to the eastern gate of the Taj Mahal, Agra, has been cleared by the Central government and it would cost Rs.3 crores for the U.P. forest department. According to B.K. Sharma, the regional director of afforestation the project will proceed in conjunction with the ongoing Taj nature walk under which a number of mounds were being developed to provide glimpses of the Taj from different perspectives. It is also expected to encourage the breeding of Gir Lions in the zoo. (*The Times of India, Ahmedabad, 9 Oct 98*).

Norms for better management of zoos soon

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) will soon prepare a master plan and formulate management guidelines for better maintenance of zoos. The plan will envision the needs for the next two decades. At present the WII has implemented three projects in Tamil Nadu. (1. Effects of rain forests fragmentation. 2. Monitoring eco development programme. 3. Bio-diversity and managed projects). These were launched during 1995-96. WII will soon release poster on 'Amphibians and reptiles of Western Ghats'. It runs training courses on the endangered species and zoo management Training for zoo directors. These courses are with the assistance of Zoo Authority of India. The management teaching imparted in the training are on a par with the international zoos, Chellam claimed. (*The Hindu, Delhi, 7 Sept 98*).

National zoos to be modernised

On 9th September this year, the Indian Union Cabinet approved a national zoo policy 'to modernise and improve the existing zoos on a priority basis'. Under this, no new zoo will be established unless it is essential for maintaining the general viability of the zoo population. This policy will act as a guideline to maintain the existing zoos all over the country. The Central Zoo Authority will organise with the help of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) if need be, measures to strengthen education aspects of zoos. The animals are to be maintained on scientifically drawn management plans. The Central Zoo Authority, constituted on Feb 3 1992, has been performing the five important functions - specify the minimum standards for housing, upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo; Recognise or derecognise the zoos; Ensure maintenance of stud-books, co-ordinate research in captive breeding and educational programmes for the purposes of zoos; and such other functions necessary to carry out the purposes of the act. (*The National Herald, New Delhi, 13 Sept 98; Hindustan Times, Patna, 11 Sept 98*).

A deer safari in a zoo

At the Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur (near Chennai) a deer safari (in 25 hectares of land) will come into being in a few months time. The safari (a small sanctuary within a zoo) can accommodate more than 500 deers which have been brought from the area where the Air Force Station, Tambaram is situated. As the movement of deers hamper landing and taking off aircrafts, the Vandalur zoo has acceded to the request of the Air Force Authorities to take the large number of deer. So, within a short time, multiple species of deer - Sambar, black buck, spotted deer and other herbivore, can be seen by visitors at the safari. (*The Hindu, Chennai, 7 Sept 98*).

Jail inmates visit Lucknow zoo

Lucknow Jail has launched a novel scheme of taking out its women prisoners to various scenic places in batches of 20 to remove the feeling of isolation in them. Recently more than 20 convicted women prisoners were taken to the Lucknow Zoo by the jail authorities. (*News Times, Hyderabad, 12 Oct 98*).

Illegal zoo unearthed at Naharkatia

On 23rd September, this year, an illegal zoo-cum-wildlife trading centre at Naharkatia (District of Dibrugarh in Assam State) was found out in a fair by the officials of the Forest department on the clue given by Nature's Beckon, a nature activist group. Narayan

Sharma, Range officer, Dibru-Saikhowa wildlife sanctuary, officially seized the wild animals from the zoo - one female leopard, eight monkey, one slow loris, two hyenas, two jackals, one porcupine, one crocodile, two pythons, one crested serpent eagle, one pelican and one grey heron. Director, Nature's Beckon reported the deplorable condition in the illegal zoo in the fair at Naharkatia and pointed out the peoples' ignorance about the laws regarding this. (*The Assam Tribune, Guwahati, 12 Oct 98*).

Night Safari in Hyderabad

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has held discussions with Bernard Harrison, Subash Chandran and Michael Graetz of Singapore Zoological Gardens on setting up the first ever Night Safari at Madhapur in the city. According to an official press release on Saturday, 300 acres of land suitable for the purpose was selected in which Botanical gardens would be raised in about 200 acres and a Night Safari would be set up in the remaining 100 acres. Bernard explained to Naidu that it would take about two and a half years to translate the proposal of Night Safari into reality. *Hindu, Briefs, Monday, November 16, 1996*

Elephants come to vet's rescue Mahouts threaten to bring animals to city.

Several mahouts and elephant owners in Surin have threatened to bring their animals to Bangkok to protest if the Zoological Park Organisation does not rescind its order prohibiting one of its veterinarians from treating elephants in distress. The order has also drawn mixed reactions from animal activists. The order prevents Alongkorn Mahannop, the organisation's planning director, from carrying out his long-time activity of treating animals, particularly injured elephants, and capturing escaped wild animals. Senior zoo officials say Mr Alongkorn should tend to his duty instead of spending working hours outside the zoo treating animals using zoo equipment and staff. The task belongs to another unit set up specifically for the purpose, they say. The centre is led by veterinarian Kanchai Saenwong, deputy director of Dusit Zoo, and has a hotline at 281-3033. It will have access to equipment, vehicles and staff at the zoo to respond to distress calls. However, the centre will no longer perform routine check-up for elephants outside the zoo.

Russia hungry for exotic pets -- zoo benefits

Moscow airport zoo is overflowing with captured animals. Growing numbers of exotic and endangered animals are being smuggled into Russia. The increase stems from the rise in demand by affluent Russians wanting rare animals as pets. Rare bear: worth thousands. Chimpanzees, leopards and bear cubs are changing hands for many thousands of roubles. Those that are recovered by the Russian authorities end up at the Moscow airport zoo which is now full to overflowing. The extremely profitable illegal trade of animals now ranks third after the smuggling of weapons and drugs. As well as the animals that are brought into Russia, rare breeds originating from the country are sent to the West. Staff at the Moscow airport zoo say the illegal trade in imported pets has exploded. "If someone puts in a request at the pet markets then the animal will be shipped. You can order anything, even an elephant. Sometimes they use charter flights or trains to bring the animals in," said Moscow zoo veterinarian, Mikhail Koshelev. Smuggling animals into Russia is illegal but selling them is not so traders operate in the open. However, some animals never get as far as the market. They are dead on arrival at the airport. Hunting falcons were found with their eyelids sown together to prevent them panicking when they were packed into a suitcase for transport. They did not last the journey.

Ironically, the less rare animals being held in the airport zoo will eventually be sold on the open market. Environment ministry officials say that selling them is the only way to fund the zoo, which is needed to protect more endangered species.

London Zoo Elephants provide dung for sculpture

The work of an artist who creates his work using elephant dung is one of the highlights of the Turner Prize exhibition in London. Chris Ofili incorporates lumps of elephant dung in every work, including one inspired by the sorrow of Stephen Lawrence's parents. *No Woman No Cry* was created while the summer's inquiry into the unsolved racial murder was going on in London. It depicts a weeping black woman, and Stephen Lawrence's face appears in each tear. "It is about the personal suffering of that family, and particularly of Stephen's mother, Doreen," said curator Victoria Button. Each piece of Chris Ofili's work is perched on two lumps of elephant dung. Each piece of Chris Ofili's work is perched on two lumps of elephant dung. The figure, who wears a pendant of elephant dung, was inspired by Doreen, although it is not a portrait of her. The 29-year-old Ofili is favourite to win the £20,000 Turner Prize for the young British artist with the best exhibition this year. His colourful multi-layered paintings use glitter, photographs of leading black figures, often disguised or painted over, and his own cartoon-like characters. He has had to create new works for the Turner Prize exhibition because so many of his paintings are already on display elsewhere. Instead of hanging on the wall, each canvas is perched on two lumps of elephant dung. Ofili gets his elephant dung from the zoo. At first Ofili used supplies he brought back from a trip to Zimbabwe. Now he gets it from London Zoo, and dries it out in an airing cupboard. Ofili is the only man on the shortlist, but he is not the only artist to raise eyebrows. Tuesday, October 27, 1998 Published at 19:02 GMT

Capture of baby elephants for zoo shows protested

A dozen animal rights activists protesting the treatment of baby elephants rallied outside the South African Embassy on Tuesday. Two Ohio women were arrested for dumping coal and trying to block the entrance to the building. The demonstration was organized by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to protest the treatment of 30 baby elephants captured in Botswana and taken to South Africa, where they were being trained to perform in zoos, said Tracy Reiman, a spokeswoman for the group. Arathi Jayaram, 22, of Mansfield, Ohio, and Karla Lesh, also 22, of Canton, Ohio, were arrested by Secret Service officers on charges of destruction of embassy property. They were released after paying a \$25 fine each, according to Jason Baker, a fellow PETA activist. PETA is calling for a boycott of South African exports, such as coal, until the baby elephants are returned to Botswana, where they say they can still survive in the wild. Hennie Du Toit, the embassy's political counselor, said court proceedings were under way against South African Game Services, the company accused of mistreating the elephants. In the meantime, the elephants are in protective care, he said. Nancy Zuckerbrod - Associated Press. WASHINGTON Reiman, a spokeswoman for the group.

