

## South Asian Zoo News

### Bangladesh

Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh — The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Jersey, Channel Islands, UK offers a Diploma course in collaboration with the University of Kent. Students from different parts of the world come and take this conservation training course. This year I was offered a place in this course with full scholarship from DWCT. This year 13 participants attended the course from 12 countries. From Asia myself, Sat Pal Dhiman from India and Chik Suetha from Hong Kong availed the course. It was at the very strong urging of Sally Walker that I applied for the course and she was one of my important referees. The course started on 10th March 2005 and ended on 29th July 2005. Due to late completion of visa formalities I reached there on 11th March 2005. The course had 3 components: theory, practical and dissertation. The theory portion consisted of biodiversity conservation, small population biology, reproductive biology, conservation education, studbook management etc.

An attractive feature of the course is the PHVA facilitation skills training workshop. Dr. Phil Miller, CBSG and Dr. Frances Westley were the tutors to conduct the workshop. These practical sessions in Jersey zoo gave me opportunities to work directly with zoo keepers, veterinarians, conservation biologists and conservation education staff. Dissertations writing was a very significant part of the course enabling us to learn how to conduct research work. I conducted research work on "Development of a Control Programme of Tuberculosis for Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh". In addition the course arranges an opportunity every year for writing a small grants application for all Diploma participants. I wrote a successful small grant for equipment for assisting with the Education programme in Dhaka Zoo as well as for development of interpersonal skills. The trust gave me a portable public address system to launch the education programme.

We participants were shocked to get the news that the International Training Centre building will be sold. This is a historic building which housed more than 1000 conservationists. The Trust Board of DWPT has decided to sell the ITC building but they announced that the Training Programme would not be affected by it. **Submitted by Salim Iqbal, Veterinary Officer, Dhaka Zoo.**

### Animal Population Control Attempt by Dhaka Zoo

The Dhaka Zoo is trying to control its burgeoning population of tigers and lions. Five lion cubs and one adult are in quarantine as they have no cages ! The accommodation crisis is exacerbated

The crisis of accommodation, food and management has become so acute that they are now thinking of animal population control through castration of the big cats. Seven tigers are now placed in a moat that can accommodate only one pair of tigers. The same is the case with Python, Rhesus monkey and Chital the zoo officials said. The Central Zoo of Kathmandu, Nepal, contacted the Dhaka Zoo through the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock to take one pair of tigers in exchange of two Black Bucks and two

Golden Pheasants. The Nepal zoo agreed to bear the transport cost for taking the animals from Nepal to Dhaka and the other way round. The livestock ministry has been working on the process of animal exchange. The Nepal zoo placed the proposal a year ago and it has been delayed because of bureaucratic tangles. Dr Salim Iqbal, veterinary surgeon of the Dhaka Zoo spoke of various contraceptive methods such as the use of devices, agents, drugs, sexual practice, or surgical procedures for animal birth control. The Dhaka Zoo authorities are thinking of vasectomy, the popular surgical method. Zoo staff is concerned that authorities will refuse thinking that the animals have great conservation value. He said they had been planning a legislation for the zoo with provisions for birth control for animals.

Mr Mofisur Rahman, Curator, said the big cats were also in-breeding, which could damage the health of future animals. Rahman also added that Bangladesh does not have the necessary forests where surplus big cats could be released.

The irony of this situation is that the issue of conservation value of the animals is nil, forests or no forests. All the lions and tigers in the zoo are hybrids of a variety of subspecies of tigers and of the two subspecies of lion. They have no conservation value at all. This fact was not revealed to the reporters.

***Most information taken from articles published in New Age by Taslima Miji, Correspondent from BBC News by Waliur Rahman.***

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### Indian Zoo News continued ... Jumbo runs amok in Gulbarga: Nehru zoo to the rescue

The Nehru Zoological Park authorities came to the rescue of an elephant, which ran amok in Gulbarga in Karnataka late on Saturday night. The female elephant killed its mahout and refused to leave his body. In an agitated state, it began tossing the body and running amok on the main road and the wild run continued till the wee hours. Panicky authorities in Gulbarga alerted the Nehru Zoo Curator, B. Srinivas, as tranquillising equipment in Karnataka was available only at Mysore zoo. Forest Department of Gulbarga, sought help from Nehru zoo. The zoo veterinary team, led by its Deputy Director, Navin Kumar, rushed to Gulbarga and tranquillised the elephant at around 3 a.m. on Sunday. "Had it not been tranquillised in time, it would have been shot dead to save lives of people," the curator said in a statement here.

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