

News Briefs

Compiled by Jayantha Jayewardene, Editor

1. Dead elephants likely to be kept as specimens (Vietnam)

Tuoi Tre News - 27.8.2012

Two wild adult elephants, one male and one female, that were found dead in Yok Don National Park in Dak Lak Province last Saturday may be kept as specimens, as proposed by a Hanoi-based animal museum, said Hoang Van Xuan, the park's deputy director. In accordance with applicable regulations, the bodies of the animals were set to be destroyed, but this may not happen since the museum has asked the park to transfer the bodies to it so they can be kept as specimens.

After examining the scene, concerned agencies concluded that the animals had been killed for their tusks, and the killings might have been carried out the previous week. The dead animals belonged to a herd of 20 wild elephants that has appeared in the park from time to time.

Since the beginning of this year, six wild elephants have been killed in this Central Highlands province by poachers, further decreasing the local elephant population, authorities reported. In April alone, three wild elephants were killed in Ea Sup District and many parts of their bodies, including their tusks, were taken away, authorities said.

2. Rare baby makes history (Thailand)

The Nation - 25.8.2012

Early on April 17 a baby elephant was born in a wilderness reserve in central Thailand. This was an important moment not just for Jarunee, a 15-year-old former tourist elephant from Surin, who had carried the baby inside her for 22 months but the staff at the Sublangka Wildlife Sanctuary near Lop Buri, who had been waiting for this day.

Sublangka valley is one of three sites in the Central, North and Northeast regions - about 1.1 million rai of wilderness in total - used by the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation, a Royal-initiated Thai non-profit organisation that releases captive elephants back to the forest. The Reintroduction Foundation has been working towards this goal - healthy individuals rejuvenating their herd back in their natural habitat - for 10 years.

Creating an opportunity for Asian elephants to be reintroduced to natural habitat is one way to help ensure they survive. Thailand has about 4000 elephants - a captive population of about 2800, mainly in tourist facilities, plus 1200 to 1500 in the wild. Many of the wild elephants are on the Thai-Myanmar border, but these beasts are often at risk of being poached for logging, killed for meat or ivory, or having their children captured and sold to Thai tourist camps.

3. 46 elephants killed in train-hits in last three years (India)

Press Trust of India - 30.8.2012

Forty-six elephants have been killed on rail tracks in the country since 2009, with the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) accounting for the maximum number of pachyderm deaths, the government said today. A total of 36 elephants were killed, including five till August 15, alone in NFR. While in 2009, nine elephants were killed in train-hits, the casualty rose to 20 in 2010 across the country. However, casualty decreased next year to nine and till August 15, the figure stood at eight.

Railways have undertaken several steps to prevent elephant casualties. It is holding regular meetings with Environment and Forest Ministry to take remedial measures. Elephant corridors have been identified by the Forest department

and on such corridors speed restrictions have been imposed and signage boards provided to warn train drivers.

4. Perhilitan Captures Wild Elephant In Jelawang (Malaysia)

Bernama.com - 15.9.2012

The Kelantan Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) has captured a wild elephant in a forest reserve near Kampung Sungai Batu, Jelawang, about 70 km from here yesterday. The male elephant was caught by four members of the department's Elephant Action Unit (UTG). At the time of its capture, it was roaming with a herd after damaging crops in a nearby area about 10 am.

“The elephant was caught, following complaints from villagers who claimed two elephants had damaged their banana and rubber crops since early this month. It is believed that the animal was from a group of elephants in the Jentiang Forest Reserve. Villages affected by the herd include Kampung Jerimbong, Andek, Kampung Keluat, Ladang Taku, Kampung Bahagia, Kampung Bantan, Kampung Jenal and Kampung Jelawang. Meanwhile, villagers in high-risk areas have been advised to report any sighting of elephants to Perhilitan for further action.

5. Train derailed after hitting jumbo (Sri Lanka)

The Sunday Times - 16.9.2012

The human-elephant conflict took a slightly new turn when a wild elephant was knocked down by a Colombo bound train at Kekirawa in the Anuradhapura District killing the elephant and causing the train to derail. The train, which was travelling on Friday night from Trincomalee to Colombo came to a halt when the elephant was hit at around 11 pm at Nellyyagma near Kekirawa. No one on the train was injured in the incident.

Last year the human-elephant conflict killed 200 elephants and 48 people, according to statistics of the Forest Conservation Department. Over the

past 19 years an average of 148 elephants and 59 humans have been killed per year, it said.

6. Menacing elephant captured in Cambodia

Sky News - 22.9.2012

A 16-year-old male elephant that has menaced Cambodian villagers and destroyed their crops has been captured and re-homed at a wildlife centre. Reuters reports that Sakor destroyed buildings, charged vehicles and injured cattle in the province of Koh Kong for over a year. A three day operation was launched to move the elephant to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre.

‘He’s caused a lot of problem along the National Road 48, caused several car crashes and he’s been making inroads into the sugar cane plantation. Local people, although they all love him, they’re kind of angry. If we don’t capture him then he will cause trouble and ultimately will probably be killed himself,’ Nick Mark, the Director of Wildlife Alliance, told Reuters.

Once the elephant was sedated a crane was needed to move the four tonne elephant. It is unlikely Sakor will be returned to the wild but Mark from the Wildlife Alliance said the elephant would become a proud father and a partner to one of the other female elephants at the wildlife centre.

7. Hakka Patas’ claims most elephants (Sri Lanka)

The Nation - 23.9.2012

Human-elephant conflict is dramatically on the rise. It has become one of the major issues in the fight to save Asia’s endangered elephants. Sri Lanka Department of Wildlife claimed that 117 elephants and 30 men were killed up to June this year, mostly due to human-elephant conflicts. “Main cause of the deaths is human activities and a few are natural deaths,” Wildlife Department spokesman told The Nation. In 2011, the total number of elephant deaths was 255.

“Irate farmers and terrified villagers react to crop depredation and damage to people by killing

elephants,” he added. Most of those elephants were killed by gunshots, electrocution, poisoning and explosives hidden inside vegetables and fruits. “Some people use ‘hakka patas’ to kill these animals. They would hide this inside a pumpkin or melon. Once an elephant eats this it will explode inside its mouth,” he said. “The elephants injured by ‘hakka patas’ cannot be cured. But all their efforts were in vain since the explosion causes severe damage to the elephant’s brain,” he said.

“Baby elephants are most likely to be injured by these dreadful acts. They suffer a lot before they die,” he lamented. Wildlife Department is ready to take stern action against people who are responsible for the elephant deaths. “If there is any information, please inform the Wildlife Department. They will be given stern punishment,” Department spokesperson stated.

8. 90 jumbos electrocuted in 5 years (India)

IBN Live - 24.9.2012

As many as 600 elephants have died in the state in the last five years, according to the records of the Forest Department. Among these, 90 pachyderms died of electrocution. One of the main reasons for the electrocution of pachyderms is illegal drawing of electricity to the fences for protecting crops from wild elephants. Besides, the sagging electricity line inside national parks and sanctuaries are also resulting in the death of wild elephants, the forest officials said.

Electrocution has claimed lives of nine elephants in 2007-08, 19 in 2008-09, 22 in 2009-10, 13 in 2010-11, 15 in 2011-12 and seven lives of elephants till July 31, 2012, they added. Taking a serious note of these figures, senior officials of the forest department held a discussion with the officials of electricity supply companies (ESCOMs) and requested them for regular monitoring of the power line.

The elephants die on the spot if they try to gatecrash into the fields. This is rampant in four districts, which come under the Mysore Elephant Reserve. Apart from this, it has recommended

putting the spike guard on every electric pole put up in forests so that the elephants do not go near it and there should be sagging of wire drawn between two poles.

Now, the police are booking cases against farmers who are drawing electricity illegally by adding sections under the IPC and CrPC. This has increased in the rate of conviction.

9. Jumbo job for foresters during migration season (India)

The Asian Age - 30.9.2012

As October approaches, forest department officials in the Coimbatore region gear up for their annual challenge the migration of elephants in the Nilgiris biosphere. This is because the wild jumbos passing through the borders of the textile town raid farms and villages along the way. Following the massive intrusions by herds of elephants into Thadagam, Thudiyalur and the surrounding areas in the past few years, the forest department focused on these regions and has been reasonably successful.

The elephant-proof trenches (EPTs) and other precautionary measures such as solar fencing and providing drinking water facility in the forest areas have drastically reduced animal movement in these areas. However the problems have begun this year on the western side as a few herds have been wreaking havoc in Ettimadai, Madukarai and other areas on the Palakkad road. Despite constant monitoring and other efforts, people still continue to get killed by jumbos although the numbers have reduced this year.

Dry rivers drive wild animals to villages. With the monsoon playing hide and seek, most water holes in the forests of the Nilgiris are drying up, forcing elephants and gaurs to wander into nearby villages in search of food and water. The animals are only moving in what they consider their home range. So the growing man-elephant conflict we are seeing today can reduce only if forests return to the way the way before human intrusion.

10. Four elephants electrocuted in Odisha (India)

Press Trust of India - 7.10.2012

In a suspected case of poaching, at least four elephants were found electrocuted in Odisha's Ganjam district, Forest Department sources said today. The animals died after coming in contact with electric wires apparently laid by poachers. Forest personnel recovered the carcasses of a 35-year-old female elephant and its two-month-old male calf from a cashew jungle in Kanakhai jungle under Khallikote forest range this morning.

Though injury marks due to electric shock were visible on the calf, the exact cause of the death could only be ascertained after post mortem. Forest personnel, however, did not find any electric wire from the spot. It was the third such incident within ten-days, where the poachers killed at least five elephants, including two calves and a tusker.

While a female elephant and its six-month-old calf were found dead in cashew jungle near Karadabani in Gallery forest range in Ghumusara (North) forest division yesterday, a tusker was electrocuted in Karchuli jungle under Buguda forest range on September 26 last.

11. No one can save Vietnam's elephants?

VietNamNet - 12.10.2012

The serious poaching which has not been eased over the last many years has led to the sharp fall of the number of elephant individuals in Vietnam, from 1500-2000 in 1990s to tens of elephants now. Three years ago, FFI, an international flora and fauna conservation organization, gave the warning that the then 150 elephant individuals were in the danger of becoming extinct.

An elephant conservation centre has been built in the National Park in Dak Lak province, becoming the residence place for a herd of 29 elephants. However, the small scale of the centre and the limited sponsor fund do not allow the officers to prevent poaching to protect the lives of elephants.

Two weeks ago, a couple of elephants were killed right in the forest belonging to the sanctuary. The officers here discovered the dead body of a male elephant with its head, heliotrope and tusks cut. Forest rangers are now worried that the death of a male elephant would make it difficult for the elephants to maintain the race. Director of the Dak Lak National Park said the elephant poaching had been developing so rapidly. Six male elephants have been killed so far this year.

In 2006, the government of Vietnam released an "urgent action plan" to protect elephants nationwide. However, the plan has not been implemented so far. In 1993, the government of Vietnam decided to move 13 wild elephants in the southern region, which then turned into industrial farms, to other places. The result of the campaign was the death of an elephant, while the last elephant was carried to the Saigon zoo.

12. Elephant drowns in canal (India)

Press Trust of India - 12.10.2012

An elephant drowned in a DVC canal today in Bankura district where a herd of about 120 pachyderms from Dalma range had gone to drink water. Three elephants fell into the canal at Dhansimla in Sonamukhi area and were stranded. With the help of the local people and forest department personnel, two of the three elephants managed to get out of the water but the third one drowned. The carcass was sent for post-mortem, he said, adding that the other two have been taken away for treatment and they will be later released in the jungle.

13. Elephant calf found abandoned in plantation (Malaysia)

New Straits Times - 16.10.2012

A Baby elephant, which was found roaming alone in a plantation near Mentelong forest in Rompin last week, will be the latest attraction at Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary in Lanchang near here. The year-old female calf is now the youngest mammal at the sanctuary, which currently has a total of 28 elephants, aged up to

70. The oldest is Lokimala, a female elephant which arrived at the sanctuary in 1978 to help in the relocation of wild elephants.

Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) elephant unit head Nasaruddin Othman said when the rangers spotted the calf there were no adult elephants in sight and checks revealed that the confused animal had been roaming the area for more than two weeks. The calf may have come from a big herd from the nearby forest and may have lost its way after failing to keep up with the group.

Weighing about 200 kg and 1.2 m tall, the calf was later brought out of the plantation to the sanctuary on Friday. Despite a tiring four-hour journey from Rompin, the calf appeared joyful as it was fed with papayas and given full attention by the caretakers at the sanctuary. Nasaruddin said the calf was healthy and had been placed with other elephants at the sanctuary.

14. For ‘de-programmed’ elephants, return to wild is a slow, costly process (Thailand)

The Nation/Asia News Network - 21.10.2012

Two elephant conservation groups are working together to reintroduce domesticated elephants to the wild, releasing 84 of them over the past 10 years under an initiative of Her Majesty the Queen. The Elephant Reintroduction Foundation (ERF) must shoulder not only the increasingly high cost of purchasing elephants, but also of preparing them for their return to the wild.

In the meantime, it focuses on taking good care of the domesticated elephants in its custody, which is only a fraction of the number in the Kingdom that could potentially be released back into their natural habitat. ERF Secretary General Siwaporn Thantharanont said that without the conservation efforts of the foundation and the National Elephant Institute (NEI), an estimated 2,500 to 2,800 domesticated elephants could die unnecessarily over the next 30 years.

Due to higher demand for elephants in the tourism business, where the pachyderms are put

on show for tourists, plus begging on the streets of Bangkok, an elephant now costs up to Bt 1.5 million (S\$ 59,712), compared to Bt 300,000 in recent years. Reorienting a domesticated elephant for life in the wild once cost the ERF Bt 300,000 to purchase the animal plus Bt 200,000 in nurturing expenses, food and mahouts’ fees. This later rose to Bt 1 million, Bt 700,000 to buy the elephant plus Bt 300,000 in costs.

15. School closed after jumbo invasion (Sri Lanka)

Times Online - 18.10.2012

The local authorities were forced to close a rural school earlier today after a group of wild elephants stormed the premises, officials said. They said the Malwatte Thissapura Vidyalaya in the Amparai District was forced to close down as a group of five wild elephants were roaming in a wooded area situated inside the school compound.

Police along with wildlife officers arrived at the school and are currently monitoring the situation. Moves are currently underway to chase the jumbos away from the area.

16. Elephant herd helps researchers identify new sanctuaries (Malaysia)

The Star - 22.10.2012

A herd of elephants is helping researchers identify areas that need to be set aside as wildlife forest corridors in Sabah’s lower Kinabatangan region.



Tusker in Indonesia
Photo by Indra Tryshanie

Since 2008, researchers from the Sabah Wildlife Department, Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC) and non-governmental organisation HUTAN, have tracked nine elephants eight cows and a bull using satellite collars.

Data from the satellite collars on four of the nine elephants is providing crucial information on suitable and available elephant habitats in the region. One of the four elephants has already provided two years of data made up of 24 positions per day, which will allow to prioritise areas where landscape connectivity along the Kinabatangan river has to be rebuilt.

The researchers also collared one of the three females named Puteri by Nurzhafarina Othman, a Malaysian PhD student at Cardiff University conducting research on the social behaviour of the Bornean elephant. Nurzhafarina said the satellite collars allowed researchers to track the herd and study how the elephants adapted their social behaviour in the degraded and fragmented landscape of the Kinabatangan floodplain.

17. Wild elephant kills woman in China

News Track India - 1.11.2012

A woman in a Chinese village died after a wild elephant attacked her, police said. Fifty six-year-old Li Lianfen's body was found Wednesday in a watermelon field in Xishuangbanna prefecture of Yunnan province, Xinhua reported. The body had multiple fractures.

According to the police, the woman was harvesting pig feed Tuesday evening when she came across a group of wild elephants searching for food. It is common for wild elephants to damage crops or attack humans near the rainforests of Xishuangbanna, which is home to the 250 or so Asian elephants living in China.

18. Elephant deaths rampant in Orissa

The Hindu - 31.10.2012

Orissa, where kings were once addressed as 'Gajpati', is fast turning into a graveyard for

elephants with 296 jumbos dying in the past five years. Electrocuting has been identified as the major cause of elephant deaths in the state. At least 116 elephants were electrocuted in the state in between 2000-01 and October 11, 2012. While 46 of them were found to be deliberately killed by administering electric shock. 70 others died accidentally by coming into contact with hanging live electric wires.

An analysis of elephant deaths in the last five years showed that while 26 jumbos died due to poaching, 16 were poisoned to death to prevent damage to crops. At least seven elephants were run over by trains while 16 more were killed in various other accidents. Between 2008-09 and October 2012, 59 jumbos died due to diseases. During the same period, 29 elephants died due to deliberate electrocution while 32 died of accidental electrocution.

Experts cite the loss of habitat, diversion of forest land, increasing frequency of trains, irrigation projects, rise in electricity connections, changing demographic patterns in and around forests and irrational allocation of land for mining as threats to elephants. Poaching for ivory is a major reason for high casualty of elephants.

19. Dak Lak: elephant – human conflicts (Vietnam)

Vietnam.net - 3.11.2012

The conflict between the humans and elephants has lasted for decades in the Central Highlands. But now it has reached the peak when wild elephants have been driven angry and continuously destroyed the crops. Some innocent people were killed by elephants. The latest case happened on October 27. Mr. Cao Xuan Chien and Mr. Cao Xuan Dong, residents of Ea Le commune, Ea Sup district, Dak Lak province, were lucky to avoid the lashes of elephants but their friend, Mr. Cao Quang Canh, 42, a policeman of Ea Le commune, died.

Canh and three friends entered the local forest to seek wild yellow apricot trees for the upcoming lunar New Year. At the sub-zone 276, they

encountered a herd of about 20 elephants, which were seeking food. Seeing the humans, the elephants roared and attacked these people. Canh was very near to the elephants so he could not quickly run away and was killed by elephants.

Before the threat of extinction of elephants, in 2005, Dak Lak province approved the wild elephant conservation project, which was listed at “urgent level.” But until now, it is still on paper. According to the statistics of the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Center, there are about 10 herds of wild elephants, with more than 100 individuals, living in the jungles of Yok Don National Park, Buon Don, Ea Sup, Ea H’leo districts and the forest areas bordering Cambodia.

20. Flooding forces wild elephants out of habitat (Indonesia)

The Jakarta Post - 9.11.2012

Major flooding hitting three districts in Rokan Hulu regency, Riau, has forced scores of wild elephants out of their habitat and into the nearby oil palm plantations of local residents. The presence of the wild animals, which have appeared in the evenings over the last three days, has caused restlessness among residents of Kasiamang hamlet in Kepenuhan district.

Kepenuhan district head Dedi Sanjaya said Thursday that he believed the animal’s habitat was submerged so they had sought safer areas. “Both Kepenuhan and Bonai Darussalam districts are located at the crossroads of the paths of the animals. As the elephants were trapped by the flooding, they ventured into nearby areas,” he said.

The wild elephants have to be captured or at least driven away. Local villagers have been traumatized by the wild elephants. There have been many houses damaged by the beasts and even several years ago, a villager was trampled to death by scores of wild elephants. The efforts to drive the herd away only seemed to have moved the animals, which had been displaced by land clearing in the area, from one place to another within the three sub districts.

The elephants were first spotted in Mahato, where they destroyed nearly 50 hectares of an oil palm plantation, a rubber tree plantation and farmland. The regency forestry and plantation agency later deployed animal tamers to drive the elephants away, but they failed. BKSDA Riau later used two tamed elephants to herd the animals into the forest and succeeded in four days.

21. Animal Rights Group Puts Bounty on Elephant Killers (Indonesia)

The Jakarta Post - 13.11.2012

Animal rights group PETA offered a \$1,000 reward Tuesday for information on the killing of three critically-endangered Sumatran elephants near palm oil plantations in Indonesia. The carcasses of three female elephants, including a year-old calf, were found rotting at the weekend in the jungle on Sumatra island outside the Tesso Nilo National Park, which is surrounded by palm oil plantations.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals offered the reward for information “leading to the arrest and conviction” of the killers. “These cowardly killers need to be caught and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” PETA Asia vice president Jason Baker said in a statement.

At least 17 elephants have died this year at the park and surrounding districts, mostly from suspected poisoning, Simbolon said, adding that his team was working with police to hunt down the perpetrators in the latest case. Fewer than 3,000 Sumatran elephants remain in the wild, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, a 50 percent drop in numbers since 1985.

22. Radio device to trace killer tusker’s movements (Nepal)

MyRepublic.com - 22.11.2012

A search team mobilized by the Chitwan National Park (CNP) on Wednesday captured a killer tusker and fitted a radio tracking device to it so as to be able to trace its movements. The killer

elephant had recently killed two persons in Madi area of the district.

In accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act-1973, the District Administration Office, Chitwan had decided to kill the tusker if found to be mad. The Act permits the authorities to kill mad elephants that kill people and destroy properties.

After tranquilizing the tusker, the team removed one of the elephant's tusk and fitted a radio tracking device around its neck. The device will help trace every movement of the tusker after being released. If the tusker will still demonstrate erratic behaviour.

Dr Kamal Gaire, who has been studying wildlife at CNP for several years now, said that electric fences round the national park have not deterred the wild animals from entering human settlements. According to CNP, wild tuskers of CNP have claimed 13 lives in the last two years alone. The captured tusker has been named Dhurba.

23. Trained elephants to keep wild ones at bay (India)

Times of India - 26.11.2012

The Forest Department has brought two trained elephants from Kodagu, hoping to chase away wild jumbos back to the forests. Though some of the officials are currently camping near Yasalur forest area with the newly bought elephants, villagers are not yet convinced. Some of them even feel that it is just another decision to hoodwink them and the real issue still remains unaddressed.

The elephants - Prashantha and Vikrama - are brought from Dubare and Kushal Nagar in Kodagu. The authorities have decided to camp at Yasalur forest area first because elephant menace is severe in this locality. Villages in this Western Ghat region have witnessed several deaths in the recent past due to frequent elephant attacks. The official apathy in curbing elephant menace has forced villagers to launch series of protests

against the government and forest department officials. This has forced the authorities to come up with some solution.

Experts feel that bringing in trained elephants to rein in wild jumbos is hardly a solution. "Even though they can be shooed away for the time being, the wild elephants will certainly return in search of food. In fact, some of the tuskers are too wild to be handled by a trained elephant. We need to approach the issue from a larger perspective," said a wildlife expert.

24. Vietnam's Elephants Face Threats from Near and Far

Voice of America - 5.12.2012

At the end of the war in 1975, as many as 2000 wild elephants roamed the lowland forests of Vietnam. Today, there are as few as 50. Poaching and habitat destruction have brought the animals to the brink of extinction, and conservationists say the only herd with a long-term chance of survival is located along the border separating Yok Don National Park and Cambodia.

As their habitat shrinks, the elephants become more aggressive, he says, and traditional scare tactics, such as lighting fires, become less effective. Because locals are not taught how to live in harmony with the elephants they often resort to violence. Many residents own guns and illegal hunting is not uncommon.

In 2006, officials in Hanoi promised an urgent action plan that included the proposed construction of electric fences to safeguard the country's wild elephants. Stalled by insufficient funding, however, the program, which was slated to run until 2020, may kick in too late to save Vietnam's elephants.

25. Chasing away wild elephants near Indo-Bhutan border

Assam Times - 12.12.2012

A massive operation to chase away wild elephants from villages of Udalguri district was launched

from Paneri tea garden at 10.30 am on December 10. The Dhansiri Forest Division organized the operation. Forest personals from Mazbat and Nonoi Range Offices, Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Division head office launched the operation in association with police and civil administration.

More than five thousand villagers joined the operation to chase away 25 wild elephants to Bhutan hills unhurt, with the help of JCB and tractors. The breath taking operation was completed within four hours. Four domestic elephants namely- Moon, Joon, Rangilee and Rajdhan also took part in the operation.

It needs mention that man-elephant conflict has taken a very serious turn in the district causing deaths of 9 people and 7 wild elephants during last months. Rapid destruction of forests and encroachment on forest lands virtually rendered wild animals specially elephants homeless in the district.

26. Wild elephants ransack tea estate director's bungalow (India)

Times of India - 14.12.2012

A herd of nine elephants ransacked bungalow of Dr P Mohan Kumar, director of Tea Research Foundation of United Planters' Association of South India (UPASI), for the second time in a week in Valparai late night on Wednesday. The elephants ruined the kitchen and its electronic equipment including refrigerator. The house was attacked by the elephants earlier on Monday.

The elephant herd was moving around in Periyakallar and Chekkalmudi areas in the last few days damaging houses and public buildings. It moved to the premises of the tea foundation three days ago and started targeting bungalows there.

The second incident has evoked large-scale protest by locals in Chekkalmudi on Thursday morning. People blocked the road demanding steps from forest department to save their lives and property. The Manombally forest range officer and pacified the protestors saying the

department was planning steps to minimise human-animal conflicts. Recently, a security guard at a tea garden in Valparai was trampled to death by a wild elephant.

On Monday and Tuesday, forest officials averted attacks by the herd on human settlements by using crackers and torches. Four teams of state forest officials are camping there to monitor the situation. A round the clock vigil has been ensured in the plantation country to protect lives of those residing there. More forest guards and anti-poaching watchers would be deployed in coming days to prevent any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, elephants have started coming out of the forests and have destroyed crops in the adjoining agricultural lands in Alandurai, PN Palayam, Sirumugai and Thindamuthur. Forest officials are attributing the reason for the attacks to poor rains, which dried up the water sources in forests and the lack of enough fodder within the forest environment.

The conflicts involving elephants is too high in Sathyamangalam as well as at least 30 elephant raids were reported from the Thalavadi-Thalamalai region in the last two weeks.

27. Extreme curiosity of public leads to jumbo attack (India)

Deccan Herald - 26.1.2013

A large group of inquisitive citizens caused a herd of alarmed elephants to attack two men near Bethamangala on Saturday. While Krishnappa, 47, a resident of Timmapura, had gone to a eucalyptus grove near T Gollahalli to collect timber, Jayavelu, 39, a resident of Bethamangala, who attempted to take a look at the elephants, was attacked by the animals.

News of the jumbos visiting the grove had attracted hundreds of people from the villages near Bethamangala to the eucalyptus grove and the Forest Department and Police Department officers, who were trying ensure the elephants did not cross paths with human beings had problems keeping the curious public away.

The residents of Barli, Natta, Nallur, Kallikuppa and nearby villages, who were completely unprepared for the 'visit', went to the grove as usual, but had to return in fright. The three men, including Krishnappa, had gone to the grove to collect timber. Krishnappa was seriously injured in the attack by the elephants, while the other two men escaped attack. The news of the visit, however, attracted hundreds of residents of the villages to the grove, to have a look at the elephants, which have been in news the last one month. The humans, rather than the elephants, proved a greater problem for control of the officers and staff members of the Forest Department and the Police Department.

Officials had to resort to mild lathi charge, but to no avail. While they tried to chase a group of people away from the grove, another group just attempted to have a closer look at the elephants in the eucalyptus grove. About 14 elephants crossed the main road near Nallur-Kallikuppam at around 12.30 pm. Meanwhile, Jayavelu, who attempted to take a look at the elephants still in the grove, was attacked by the animals and was rushed to the Bethamangala hospital.

28. Jumbo jolt to army cantonment residents (India)

Times of India - 28.1.2013

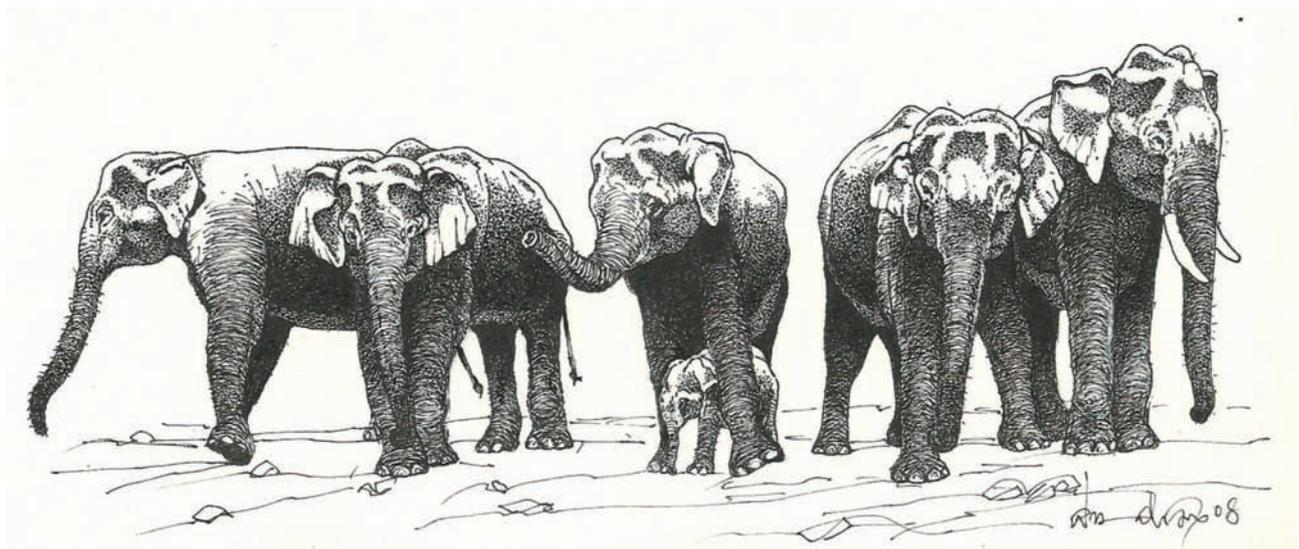
A wild male elephant that forced its way through the jungles and into the city entered the premises of the Deepatoli cantonment of the Indian Army

here on Sunday shocking all. Army men were taken aback when they saw an elephant sitting inside the cantonment area when they woke up in the morning. The Deepatoli cantonment is situated on the busy national highway 33. It is also surrounded by residential complexes particularly on the west and also on other sides. The elephant seems to be part of a herd, which had come near a village in Rahe (a block) recently.

Twenty-five elephants, who were on their way to Dalma wildlife sanctuary from West Bengal had deviated from their natural corridor and had created havoc in the fields of Rahe block around January 15. Two elephants of the herd (both female) were electrocuted when they came in contact with a sagging electric cable in the fields on January 14. Another elephant, supposedly a baby of one of the deceased elephants, had fallen into a well the very next day. The elephants were chased away into the Dalma area later.

The elephant had come from Tantisilvay. "It got stuck at the cantonment which is fenced with barbed wires from all sides. The fencing is broken at some places through which the elephant entered the cantonment.

Suddenly around 4 pm the elephant entered through the barbed fence of the cantonment and made its way into the residential areas. "We were out of breath when we saw a huge elephant standing at my gate," said Niranjan Singh, a local of Sarna Toli, the locality through which the elephant made its way back.



Drawing by Arnab Roy