

News Briefs

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1. Straying Thai elephant found (Cambodia) elephants.

Khmer Times – 11.1.2018

A wild elephant that strayed into Cambodia from Thailand's Sa Kaeo province was found yesterday morning. Yim Ly, provincial environment department chief, said the six-tonne female elephant had strayed into a forest in Banteay Meanchey province's Malai district after crossing the border in Battambang province's Sampov Loun district on Wednesday night.

"The elephant is now staying in the surroundings of Yeay Sam Mountain, about 3 km from the border," Mr. Ly said. He added his department dispatched officers to work in collaboration with local police to track down the elephant after learning of the animal's presence. Thai officers asked to join the operation in cooperation with the Cambodian side to observe the animal.

According to Thai authorities, the elephant broke loose from an electric fence enclosure for behaviour-adjustment in a forest conservation project area in Sa Kaeo province. The wild animal previously attacked Thai residents and destroyed farms.

2. Workshop stresses on birth control of wild elephants (India)

Times of India – 11.1.2018

Raising serious concerns over the increasing instances of human-elephant conflict (HEC), a regional workshop on elephant conservation in south Indian states has stressed the need for birth control of wild elephants through immunocontraception method and other effective strategies to stabilize the rising population of

When the workshop was inaugurated Wildlife Institute of India (WII) director V B Mathur said the ministry had already approved a project to research on birth control measures to be initiated in four species, including Asian elephant, nilgai, wild pigs and rhesus macaques.

"The challenge before us is getting the right kind of drug and to find the right way of administering it. The management of elephant population has become vital as the country is witnessing 350 – 400 deaths of people, damages to 10,000 – 12,000 houses and crop loss for 30,000 – 40,000 farmers every year due to HEC," he said.

3. Dak Lak province moves to conserve elephants (Vietnam)

Vietnam News Agency – 11.1.2018

The Central Highlands province of Dak Lak has taken a number of measures to manage, monitor and care for elephants so as to help conserve and develop the animals, said Director of the province's centre for elephant conservation Huynh Trung Luan.

He said relevant agencies have guided elephant owners how to care for the animals and reduce the number of days and the load elephants have to carry when they serve tourists in order to ensure their health and lifespan.

Recently, the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Centre implanted microchips in local tame elephants. Data on each elephant such as height, weight, sex and previous diseases are also recorded to make it easier for managing, caring for and studying tame elephants.

Dak Lak currently has 45 tame elephants, mostly in Buon Don and Lak districts. It is also home to five wild herds with about 80 – 100 elephants in total, and most of them live in Buon Don, Ea Sup and Cu M'gar districts.

4. Sensors to curb elephant death on tracks (India)

Times of India – 17.1.2018

The forest department has installed eight sensors with infrared facilities on both sides of a railway track at Madukkarai to reduce the incidents of wild elephants being hit by speeding trains. The sensors fixed on 6 m poles would alert the forest department staff if elephants cross the track.

The staff would get SMS and immediately a team of anti-depredation watchers would visit the spot and chase away the elephant from the railway track.

The forest department has been taking many steps to prevent wild elephant deaths while crossing the railway track on the B (Palakkad - Coimbatore) and A (Coimbatore - Palakkad) railway lanes. While the train traverses through the reserve forest for 3.5 km on B-lane, it chugs through 1.5 km stretch of reserve forest on A-lane.

As many as 12 wild elephants were killed by speeding trains on the two lanes since 2006. The forest department fixed the sensors last week. The forest department has deputed 12 anti-depredation watchers (ADW) at the watchtower round the clock.

5. Critically endangered Sumatran elephant gives birth in Indonesia

Outlook India – 17.1.2018

A critically endangered Sumatran elephant has given birth to a new calf in Indonesia, the country's conservation agency said today. Sumatran elephants are a protected species, but rampant deforestation for plantations has reduced their natural habitat and brought them into conflict with humans.

The newborn was found with its 40-year old mother Seruni, who was being closely monitored by the agency in anticipation of the birth inside a conservation forest in Riau on the island of Sumatra.

Dozens of elephants were found dead in Sumatra last year, including an adult without tusks in Aceh, along with its abandoned 11-month-old calf. Most were killed by humans, according to conservationists.

6. Elephants terrorizing locals of Damak (Nepal)

My Republica – 22.1.2018

Elephants have been terrorizing the locals of ward no 2 and 3 since the last few months. Chairperson Baral informed that a herd of elephants has entered their villages from India. These wild tuskers have thrown their normal life out of gear especially after 7 pm. In last 22 days, elephants have destroyed 27 houses and ruined the fields of numerous farmers of both the wards. According to Baral, locals are facing a great torture due to the wild elephants.

In lack of effective measures, locals have been obliged to stay awake all night for protecting their lives and properties. On Thursday, an elephant smashed the wall of Surendra Dulal of Damak-2. His whole family had to beat plates and utensils to chase away the elephant.

Blowing conch shells in the evening has been a regular routine for the locals here. However, this is not the first time elephant rampage has taken a toll on the lives of locals of Damak-3. But it is the first time that they have caused so much loss and damage in Damak-2. Som Dhungana, secretary at the DFO, informed that elephants spend their days in the community forests and head toward the human settlements at night in search of food.

Some of the victims have already been provided relief while some are yet to get. "We are just provided with Rs 10,000 to 15,000 but that won't cover our loss," said Baral.

7. Sri Lanka police lose gun as elephants charge during stake-out

Daily Nation – 21.1.2018

Sri Lankan police who were charged by elephants as they staked out a cannabis farm dropped an automatic rifle as they ran for their lives, sparking a hunt on Sunday for the missing weapon.

Policemen who had been camping out near the plantation in a bid to catch crooks turned tail and scampered after the huge creatures started hurtling after them. The constables dropped their weapons and fled to save their lives when the elephants charged. Officers were now looking for the T56 automatic assault rifle in the bush at Lunugamvehera, 225 km south of Colombo.

Sri Lanka has strict laws protecting elephants, which are considered sacred. However, about 200 jumbos are killed annually by farmers who say wild elephants stray onto their land and destroy their crops. About 50 people are killed in wild elephant attacks annually.

8. Jumbo job awaits Bengal mahouts (India)

Telegraph India – 23.1.2018

Forest Department officials in Seraikela contacted a group of trained mahouts from Bankura district in Bengal to drive away a herd of rampaging elephants in Seraikela-Kharsawan, about 35 km from here, after local drivers failed to accomplish the task.

The mahouts from Bengal would be camping at Seraikela till their job is done unlike their locals counterparts from places such as Kuchai and Chandil who would stay in Seraikela for a couple of days and head back home, leaving their job midway. The trained mahouts are expected to reach Seraikela in 2-3 days. The herd from Odisha, comprising 18 elephants, including four calves, had entered Seraikela-Kharsawan after crossing Rajnagar jungle. The DFO said the elephants were not returning to Odisha as they had deviated from the route because of the digging of canals at two local dams.

9. Here is a device to alert people about elephant movement in their area (India)

NYOOOZ – 24.1.2018

Wouldn't it be possible to avoid man-elephant conflicts if there were an early warning system to alert people about the movement of wild elephants in their area? And that's what exactly city-based N Parthiparajan, 33, and S Suresh, 29, have done.

The device would be now used at Thadagam area and Periyanaickenpalayam forest range on a pilot basis to curb man-animal conflicts. Forest department officials said if the trials were a success, the device would be installed in many places of Coimbatore forest division.

Parthiparajan, president, Western Ghats Wildlife Conservation Trust, and Suresh, proprietor of 3Q technologies, said they developed the GSM-based device to alert the people residing along the forest fringes about the movement of elephants.

The device has a SIM card with more than 250 – 300 mobile numbers of villagers fed to it. The SIM card details would be shared with two villagers and three field staff of the forest department. If the designated villagers and field staff were to spot wild elephant(s) near the village, they would dial the mobile number of the device by using their mobile phone. Immediately, the villagers would get an alert about the elephant movement.

10. Nghe An residents in conflict with wild elephants (Vietnam)

VietNamNet Bridge – 24.1.2018

Together with Dak Lak and Dong Nai, Nghe An is one of three localities in Vietnam with the highest wild elephant populations. However, their natural habitat is shrinking. A survey found that there are 13 – 15 wild elephants in Nghe An, including 11 – 13 living in Pu Mat National Park. There are two groups of elephants, one in Khe Thoi in the national park's core area, and another in the buffer zone.

In recent years, the second group of elephants has entered cultivated areas and residential quarters, damaging crops and houses and threatening people's lives. Pu Mat National Park is classified by MARD (the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) as one of three elephant conservation centres in Vietnam.

11. Innovative scare gun a hit among farmers (India)

Times of India – 4.2.2018

Farmers in Wayanad district are now a happy lot. Hundreds of them have deployed an innovative low-cost carbide gun in order to ward off crop-raiding jumbos and other stray animals. The gun, made by a Wayanad-based farmer, doesn't pose any harm to the animals.

Vinu A A (38), who lives at Chethalayam on the fringes of forests under the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, has sold around 1000 PVC "guns" to farmers in the district, which is the epicentre of human-wildlife conflict in the state. The machine uses a mix of calcium carbide and water to produce a powerful bang. He said that even forest officials in Wayanad had been seeking his help to drive wild jumbos back to the forests using the sound gun as a replacement to fire crackers.

The carbide gun is basically two PVC pipes of varying diameters joint together and has a triggering apparatus made from gas-stove lighters. A piece of calcium carbide dipped in water is dropped down the muzzle. The acetylene gas produced in the reaction is ignited using a triggering mechanism connected to the device to produce a loud bang. One kg calcium carbide, which costs around Rs. 85, is enough to make 400 'explosions'.

12. Plastic waste kills elephant near Pamba (India)

Times of India – 7.2.2018

On January 27, a week after the conclusion of the Makaravilakku festival at Sabarimala, a 20-year old female elephant was found dead near

Valiyanavattom. The post-mortem examination of the carcass revealed that it died after large quantity of plastic blocked its alimentary canal, resulting in internal bleeding and failure of the vital organs. Forest officials have found that plastic is a key content in the dung of the mammal all over forest region covering the hill shrine.

The forest department in 2016 had filed an affidavit before the high court after a sambhar deer died after consuming plastic, on the basis of which the high court imposed a total plastic ban in Sabarimala. But despite this, loads of plastic bottles and packets are still dumped in and around the shrine, after the pilgrimage season.

13. Rohingya influx deals blow to Bangladesh's wild elephant population

Dhaka Tribune – 9.2.2018

The influx of the displaced Rohingya has dealt a double blow to the wild elephant population inhabiting Bangladesh's Chittagong region. Shortage of food and destruction of habitat forced the elephants to venture out, leading to clashes with humans. Five elephants have been killed between November 21 last year and January 22 – three of them from electrocution and landmine-related injuries.

Since the latest spell of Rohingya crisis, Myanmar security forces planted landmines and erected barbed wire fence along its border with Bangladesh, obstructing the trans-boundary migratory routes of the giant mammals.

On the other hand, shelters set up for the Rohingya – which led to the destruction of 4000 acres of forestland – also blocked the wild elephants' routes. The Rohingya are destroying forest resources to meet their daily demand of firewood of 800 tons. Nearly 690,000 Rohingya escaped to Bangladesh from Myanmar last August. Another 100,000 Rohingya had crossed the border earlier.

Deforestation and changing patterns in forestry created a severe shortage of food for elephants and other animals.

14. Villagers learn to keep Borneo pygmy elephants away using PVC ‘cannons’ (Malaysia)

New Straits Times – 18.2.2018

Some young villagers here have been consulting with Sabah Wildlife Department’s Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) and resorting to google online to find ways to keep the Borneo pygmy elephants away effectively.

As human-elephant conflict grows in this area where the huge mammal has been trespassing into village settlements, they took the initiative to make ‘cannons’ from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe, locally known as ‘ladum’, which is believed to scare the herd and prevent them from destroying crops and properties.

The step was taken following a shortage of staff in the department as well as WRU staff to fully manage the situation at six locations which have this problem. Syaiful Anthony Stephen, 32, from Kampung Gambaron, said the villagers involved normally moved in groups of three to eight every night on patrol duty since a herd of elephants trespassed their village early this year.

The home-made ‘sound bomb’ made from PVC pipe, plastic bottle and gas lighter, uses spirit as explosive and a safety cone instead of a loud speaker to chase the wildlife back into the forest.

15. Elephants have unique personalities just like humans: Study (Myanmar)

Deccan Chronicle – 22.2.2018

Elephants have unique personalities just like humans. Researchers of the University of Turku in Finland studied a timber elephant population in Myanmar and discovered that the Asian elephant personality manifests through three different factors - attentiveness, sociability and aggressiveness. “These kinds of consistent differences in behaviour are called personality.”

Besides humans, personality studies on other long-lived species living in their natural habitat are rare. Researchers found that male and female

elephants do not differ in these three personality factors. Attentiveness is related to how an elephant acts in and perceives its environment. Sociability describes how an elephant seeks closeness to other elephants and humans.

Aggressiveness shows how aggressively an elephant acts towards other elephants and how much it interferes in their social interaction. The researchers studied the personality of over 250 timber elephants living in their natural habitat in Myanmar. The elephants work in the timber industry, pulling logs from one place to another. This is a very unique research environment, enabling us to study several hundreds of elephants.

16. Myanmar, conservationists collaborating to save wild elephants

Voice of America – 23.2.2018

For centuries, elephants have had a rich and proud history in Myanmar. Throughout the country’s past, the animals have been used for everything, including transportation, agriculture, construction and even warfare.

But its survival is under threat. There are about 2000 wild elephants left in Myanmar today, plus an estimated 5000 that are captive. But conservationists warn that the loss of their habitat, increased conflict with humans, and the illegal trafficking of elephants and their parts could result in the extinction of the Asian elephant in Myanmar.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation published the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Plan (MECAP). The plan, produced in collaboration with several prominent wildlife groups, aims to guide policies on the survival of elephants in Myanmar for the next 100 years and beyond.

“The Government of Myanmar decided to commission a review of the status, distribution and threats to elephants,” Anthony Lynam, a senior advisor for the Wildlife Conservation Society told VOA by email.

“It is a visionary plan that will need bold action on the part of the government and supporting agencies for it to succeed. The MECAP is a plan that requires action on the part of multiple stakeholders for it to work. The challenge is to see how the Government can coordinate the plan to see this happen,” he said.

17. Herbalist fights to save last of the elephants (Vietnam)

Viet Nam News – 25.2.2018

In Lắk Commune in the Central Highlands province of Đắk Lắk, elephant doctor Đầg Đắg Long is fighting a desperate battle to not only keep overworked beasts alive, but to provide the right conditions for them to mate so that they do not die out.

We visited the doctor as he was about to leave for a trip to Cambodia to treat an elephant. “I have only 30 minutes. I’m in a hurry,” Long said. “I’m actually a normal herbal doctor and hold no secrets,” he said. “I have many years of experience caring for my herd of elephants and I have drawn some experience in treating them. I inherited knowledge from my father as well. In recent years, elephants tend to have more tumours in their bodies. The tumours stem from polluted food and water, which leads to lack of nutrition and resistance in their bodies.”

18. A rescue centre for old, injured and ailing jumbos (India)

Times of India – 26.2.2018

Remember Sidda, the wild elephant which died in December 2016 after sustaining a fracture in its leg? Even today, wildlife activists feel timely treatment could have saved the jumbo. Sidda is not alone. Tens of wild elephants stray out of Karnataka’s forests, sustaining injuries in the process and die an agonising death in the absence of timely medical help. There are elephants rescued from temples, circus etc, which could be disease prone and cannot be sent to camps directly without proper treatment.

To rescue and rehabilitate such jumbos, the Forest Department will open a dedicated elephant rescue centre at Doddaharive Reserve Forest off Periyapatna in Mysuru District. Spread over more than 100 acres, the campus will be equipped to provide medical aid to injured elephants and rehabilitate rescued ones.

Manoj Kumar, chief conservator of forests (Project Elephant), said the long-pending project is awaiting final approval from the Central Zoo Authority (CZA). “As we have received in-principal approval from the CZA, basic infrastructure like solar fencing, crawls for elephants and accommodation for mahouts have been readied. Five rescued elephants, including three from a circus and two from Hassan, which were victims of conflict, have been housed there for the time being,” he added.

19. Will Dak Lak have elephants in the future? (Vietnam)

VietnamNet Bridge – 28.2.2018

After two years of waiting, in October 2017, Ban Nang, the female elephant in Lak district, gave birth to a baby elephant but it had died in the womb. Huynh Trung Luan, director of the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Center, said Pac On possibly died because the mother elephant was too old to give birth.

Dak Lak’s people have been spending big money and time, and making every effort to protect and develop the local herd of elephants. Since the Dak Lak Elephant Conservation Center doesn’t have modern facilities, its veterinary surgeons sometimes consult with foreign experts or invite Thai specialists to Vietnam to help elephants.

20. Elephant breaks into Malaysian school, creates panic; Borneo forest needs better deal?

International Business Times – 1.3.2018

An elephant broke into a school in the Malaysian province of Sabah on Thursday, forcing the eviction of teachers and students. The elephant appeared to be foraging for food at the SMK

school in Telupid, a small town in the region, and stomped through several classrooms in the building while people were still inside, as seen in a video published on the Facebook profile of the Sabah Police.

So far they were able to capture four aggressive elephants, which would be translocated soon, she said. It is estimated that there are 20 elephants in the herd which is entering the Malay villages and destroying plantations.

Rapid deforestation affecting the ecosystems of Borneo island is threatening the survival of elephants in the region with an estimated population between 500 and 2000. Borneo forest is fast losing its green cover with a current deforestation rate of 1.3 million hectares per year. A 2012 study by WWF projected that at this rate, 21.5 million hectares will be lost by 2020.

21. Plan launched to check human-elephant conflict in Rohingya settlement (Bangladesh)

Dhaka Tribune – 2.3.2018

There have been at least 10 deaths resulting from human-elephant incidents in the main Kutupalong-Balukhali refugee settlement, including one casualty in the past week involving a 12-year-old boy.

The highly congested refugee site, which houses around 560,000 refugees who fled Myanmar, used to be forest land but is now crowded with tens of thousands of refugee shelters and services. The site lies along one of elephants' main migratory routes between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

“Behaviourally, elephants always follow their traditional routes and corridors for regular movement. If they find any obstacles within it, they try to break it,” said IUCN in the survey report. It estimated that as many as 45 elephants could currently be active around the site.

The study also warned there could be spike in the numbers of elephants appearing in the coming days as elephants, often travelling in groups, are forced to forage for food and water during

the dry season. “This partnership is critical not only to ensure the conservation of elephants, but to protect refugees, a number of whom have tragically already lost their lives,” said Kevin Allen, UNHCR’s head of emergency operations in Cox’s Bazar.

22. Group of 50 wild Asian elephants spotted in SW China

XinhuaNet – 5.3.2018

A group of more than 50 wild Asian elephants have been spotted in a nature reserve in southwest China’s Yunnan Province. Of the elephant group, seven were cubs, with the youngest only about two weeks old. They were spotted Saturday in the valley, which boasts sufficient water and plants and is a natural passage for a variety of animals.

Adult Asian elephants have just entered mating season and their peak period for births. Wild Asian elephants are often spotted there, but it is rare to see them in such large numbers, according to the group.

23. Solar-powered detector to tackle jumbo menace in Nilgiris border (India)

Deccan Chronicle – 6.3.2018

A new early warning system which has been designed with help of an NGO with sensor, solar-powered battery and alarm facilities is ready to be in place within Pandalur limits in Nilgiris border to tackle the rising man-animal conflicts. This is an improved version than its predecessor.

While the jungle-rich Pandalur taluk is known for frequent instances of man-elephant conflicts in particular, the Forest range office in Pandalur was looking for a device with state-of-art technology to act as an early warning system.

“The device consists of a sensor to detect the movement of elephants due to the vibrations caused by the jumbos’ movement. Once the sensor is activated by the jumbos’ movement within an area of 20 – 40 ft circumference, a bulb in the device will burn and the alarm attached to

the device will ring,” he said. This would give enough warning to the people nearby to take necessary precautionary measures to take shelter and keep themselves safe, besides alerting the officers and others too.

24. Bengal jumbos set to be collared to ease conflict (India)

Times of India – 12.3.2018

After more than a decade, elephants in Bengal are set to get radio collars. The state forest department with technical help from Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore will radio-collar two elephants in south Bengal next week.

Wildlife warden Ravi Kant Sinha said: “To start with, we are planning to radio-collar two elephants in Midnapore Division. Earlier, such exercises were taken up mostly for solitary elephants, commonly known as loners. But this time, we will radio-collar elephants from herds. The move will help us get an idea about an entire herd’s movement.”

The GPS collars, a source said, have been indigenously designed in collaboration with a French organisation and its signals can be accessed from a computer or a smart phone.

25. Elephant dies of lung infection (India)

Times of India – 23.3.2018

A nine-year-old makna, a male elephant without tusks, was found dead in Singara range of forests in the Nilgiris, allegedly due to lung infection. The carcass of the elephant was found in a private land at Bokkapuram. “The carcass might be a day old,” said forest range officer Kanthan.

Government veterinarian attached to Gudalur taluk performed the postmortem operation and the preliminary autopsy report suggested that the animal had breathing difficulties as it had been suffering from lung infection. “Samples of vital organs have been collected for lab test,” the official said. Later, the carcass was buried inside the forest area.

26. Trained jumbos drive away the wild ones (India)

The Hindu – 31.3.2018

Forest officials heaved a sigh of relief as they could successfully send back wild elephants into thick forest area on Friday night. Two well trained elephants (kumkis) which came from Chittoor provided much needed relief to the department as wild elephants followed those two animals into Palakonda forest range.

Currently, there are near Karagandi village of Sarubujjili mandal, according to Chief Conservator of Forest Rahul Pandey and Srikakulam District Forest Officer Ch. Santhi Swaroop. “Finally, we could send them back to forest area from plains without giving any scope for damage to properties and crops. Fortunately, all the eight elephants are safe.

The animals are able to move almost 60 to 70 km per hour but human’s capacity is not beyond 20 km. In spite of the hurdles, the officials continued their operation to control the animals. They also decided to keep kumkis for a couple of weeks as part of their operations. The officials are expected to seek suggestions from senior officials as the total number of elephants has gone to 12 in the district. Earlier, there was only one herd of four elephants.

27. Smartphones help tame giant forest threat (China)

Ecns.cn – 11.4.2018

Unlike smartphone addicts who spend hours a day on social media, playing games or watching videos, residents of Basan village are using smartphones to save lives and local incomes. The safety alerts about wild elephants they spread help prevent injuries and economic losses that can be caused by the roaming rainforest giants.

The village, in southwestern China’s Yunnan province, has witnessed frequent visits by wild Asian elephants in recent years as their numbers have grown. The giant animals, searching for

food, sometimes pose a threat to safety. The villagers' options for dealing with the safety threat are limited because the wild Asian elephant is listed as one of China's top-level protected wild animals due to its limited population – an estimated 300 – all living in Yunnan.

An elephant alert alliance was later formed voluntarily in the village. Through text messages, phone calls and social media, a report system has been established. Anyone who notices a wild elephant nearby will spread the alert.

28. Bago to get massive elephant sanctuary (Myanmar)

The Myanmar Times – 3.5.2018

One of Myanmar's biggest elephant sanctuaries will be established in Bago region to preserve endangered elephants in the country. Elephant Lake Sanctuary, named Four Paws, has initiated a long-term project, which aims to protect elephants, both wild and captive, on a 17,000-hectare area in Bago region, according to the Forest Department.

Here, people are not allowed to ride elephants. Elephants will be released in nature and not tied with a chain. The Asian elephants population has dramatically decreased in Myanmar due to loss of habitat, territorial fragmentation and poaching.

29. Anthrax fear in elephant death (India)

The Telegraph India – 13.5.2018

The death of an adult female elephant, suspected to be caused by anthrax, at a forest-side village in the district has spread panic among local residents. The carcass of the 20-year-old elephant was recovered from near Pitaspala village in Hadagada forest range on Thursday. Preliminary diagnosis by veterinary surgeons suggest that it was a case of anthrax.

As a precautionary measure, the forest department has undertaken a sensitisation drive and urged farmers to avoid using the spot from where the elephant's carcass was recovered. "The villagers

have been asked to stop grazing their cattle in the area for at least a week," said Anandpur forest division divisional forest officer Ajit Kumar Satpathy. The forest department has started an immunisation drive to vaccinate domesticated animals in the village.

The animal was buried after applying chemicals for quick decay of the body. "Cremation of the infected body was a better option to check the possible spread of the anthrax bacteria. However, going by local tradition, the forest department opted to bury it," Satpathy said. Anthrax is an air-borne disease.

30. SF withdraws his order to remove Sinharaja elephants (Sri Lanka)

Daily Mirror – 17.6.2018

Minister of Wildlife Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka today revoked his original decision to remove two elephants from World Heritage site Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Director General of Wildlife M.G.C. Suriyabandara said the Minister ordered to temporarily halt removing the elephants.

Despite President Maithripala Sirisena's order not to remove the two elephants, Wildlife officers continued search operations to find the two elephants in order to relocate them to some other place under Minister Fonseka's guidance. A special team of Wildlife officers was deployed to Sinharaja forest with necessary tools like ropes, chains and other tools to load the elephants. Instead of Wildlife veterinary surgeons, Air Force veterinary surgeons were deployed to the place with anesthetics to sedate the elephants. Minister's stance was to remove the elephants for the safety of the people of the area despite the order of the President. According to the Minister's order, the operation to catch the elephants was underway this morning.

Meanwhile, a protest organized against the removal of elephants was held in Rambuka village near the Sinharaja Forest today with the participation of professionals, environmentalists and residents of the area.