

Note for the Press Meet on Capturing of wild elephant

- ❖ It is probably for the first time that one wild elephant has been captured live by Tripura Forest Department.
- ❖ This elephant is sub-adult male of about 7 years with small sharp tusks. This is a loner, away from his original herd, probably to begin a new group on associating with any available female elephant.
- ❖ This lone sub-adult tusker came out during winter months from the forest areas of Killa areas and had been noticed straying around the human habitation mostly in the West, Sepahijala and Gomati districts for last 6-7 months.
- ❖ During winter drier months, there is always a scarcity of food and water, which causes stress to all wildlife including elephants and force them to supplement their requirements from areas around human habitation on provisioned food.
- ❖ In the month of February-March 2015 it was again sighted continuously for about few weeks near Rungtang park adjacent to NH 44 (Agartala-Udaipur).
- ❖ There have been many small incidences of human property (mainly food crops) damages by this lone elephant on several occasions, besides creating a fear psychosis amongst the people whose normal daily life got affected due to this elephant.
- ❖ Incidentally, there has been no case of attack on humans.
- ❖ Several attempts to drive away this loner from the human habitations of Udaipur and Jampuijala had been made in the past incurring lots of expenditure. However, this elephant was found to coming again and again to be in and around the human habitation.
- ❖ It has been noticed now that this lone male has lost wild instincts and has developed human imprints. The elephant prefers only the agri-crops and vegetables and is unable to feed on the wild natural food meant for elephants.
- ❖ This change in habit is forcing this elephant to occupy human territories. This also explains as to why the elephant is returning to the human habitations even after pushed back into the forest areas on several occasions in the past.
- ❖ Recently on 11th June the elephant was sighted at Laxmanpara areas, moving about menacingly.
- ❖ Considering that several attempts in the past to drive away in the forest areas met with failure due to change in its behavior, particularly, food habits, it was realized that no amount of pushing back in the forest area will help as it is a loner and would again return to human habitations, it was decided by the Chief Wildlife Warden to arrange for its capture.
- ❖ Shri Subrata Paul Chaudhury, an elephant expert from West Bengal Forest Department was also summoned with permission of both Government of Tripura and West Bengal Forest.
- ❖ The Chief Wildlife Warden ordered the Director, Zoo in the morning of 13th June 2015 at about 9 am to lead the team of Veterinary doctor, researcher, three mahaouts, trained staff on tranquilizers and two captive elephants to the site of stray elephant. The CWLW also ordered the District Forest Officer, Gumti to arrange camping of SDFO and his staff at the site to facilitate the capturing operation after the notification to this effect was issued by the Chief Wildlife Warden of Tripura on the 12th June, 2015.

❖ The team reached the site at about 1230 pm and after making preliminary preparations, started the capture operation at about 330 pm. Heavy showers did interrupt in between the process, which ultimately was completed successfully at about 550 pm using the chemical capture technique, which is non-invasive and one of the safest and best that does not cause any trauma and injuries to the animal. The capture location is at 23 38.156 N; 91 28.385E. The expert from WB arrived at the capture site in the evening of on 14th June.

❖ The captured elephant was brought first to Tepania at about 1230 am of 15th June on foot with the help of two captive male elephants covering a distance of about 14 kms. Both the captured and captive elephants were rested at Tepania for the rest of the night before starting second leg of journey to Sepahijala next day. The journey from Tepania to Sepahijala was started in a truck at about 530 pm to reach Sepahijala at about 7.15 pm. The captive elephants came on foot to reach Sepahijala at about 11 pm.

❖ The elephant was shifted to the zoo area in presence of Hon'ble Forest Minister at about 9 pm and has since shifted to the pilkhana along with other two captive elephants.

❖ The Department has plans to impart basic training and then advanced training of *Kunki* by taking help of the experts from the Assam Forest Department.

❖ This elephant, along with other three captive elephants, can be pressed into the tourists' services that may earn revenue to the state.

➤ **Animal Exchange Program:**

To be brought from Bannerghatta		To be given from Sepahijala	
Animals	Number	Animals	Number
Lion	1:1	Spectacled <i>Langur</i>	1:2
Sambar	1:1	Pig Tailed Macaque	1:2
Porcupine	1:1	Himalayan Black Bear	1:1
Black Buck	1:2	-----	-----

➤ And From WTI, Borjuri, Assam, One pair of Common leopard (1 : 1).

➤ **Conservation breeding programme at Sepahijala :**

The Conservation Breeding Programme at Sepahijala ZP is initiated in 2011. The aim is to precisely bred, physically, genetically & behaviorally healthy animals to be retained as a viable population and insurance cover against population loss in the wild, to save them from the brink of extinction. It is difficult to have large population of RET animals for the Conservation Breeding Programme. Arguments are there that 250 animals are a viable population but it is difficult to meet such tall order. All these issues are considered when the Sepahijala ZP authority took up Conservation Breeding Programme for four species viz. Binturong, Clouded leopard, Spectacle langur and Pig-tailed macaque. These species, though indigenous have become rare now. The Project saw success in respect of all the animals.

➤ **Conservation Breeding Successes, Sepahijala:**

1.	Clouded leopard	4
2.	Pig-tailed macaque	7
3.	Spectacle langur	2

