



# Conservation Watch - Nepal

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## Suspicious death of wild elephant at breeding center

An elegant rut wild elephant was found dead at the gate of the Elephant Breeding center at the Khorsor in the Chitwan National Park (CNP) on 15th October. The locals and the staffs of breeding center predicted the elephant might have died after being electrocuted by high volt current from electrified fence surrounding the center while attempting to enter the breeding center. Chief Conservation Officer of CNP Megh Bahadur Pandey said park has seriously taken the issue and investigation has been already started.

According to the staffs of elephant breeding center, the dead was one of the two male elephants that used to come regularly to have an intercourse with female elephants. The dead elephant was given the name "Ronaldo" by the breeding center staffs behind the name of Brazilian football striker Ronaldo. The other elephant was named "Romeo".



At present, all 11 female elephants of the breeding center are pregnant and the breeding success has been utterly attributed to "Ronaldo" and "Romeo". A grim faced breeding centre's staff Rajendra Panohar said it was a major setback for the elephant reproduction since it was one of the

two male elephants contributing for reproduction and the copulation with wild elephant mostly produce healthy and potential calves. Khorsor, CNP is only Elephant Breeding Center of Nepal.

Three days before of the incident, Ronaldo had attacked and killed a four-month-old child of Dil Bahadur Tamang, of Bachhauri VDC. Locals have suspected the inter-connection of this incident with the death of elephant.

Two years ago, a male elephant 'Dhirendra Prasad' was killed after the attack of invading wild elephants and several times elephants of breeding center have sustained injuries. To shun these circumstances, electrified fencing was surrounded with calculated electric volt so that offending animals would distract from limited shock.

## Three megafaunas died between nine days

### TB afflicted elephant died, elderly rhino demise

Three megafaunas of Chitwan National Park (CNP) died between the interval of nine days. On October 15, wild elephant was found dead at the gate of Elephant Breeding Center (report above). On October 17, an elderly age female rhino succumbed to natural death and on 23rd tuberculosis stricken male elephant died.

A tuberculosis afflicted 35 year old elephant, christened 'Birendra Prasad', died at the elephant yard in Sauraha on 23rd October depriving of medical treatment. Birendra Prasad had been living in the Elephant Breeding Center of Khorsor but recently shifted to Sauraha for medicare. It was brought to Chitwan 22 years ago, the year that the elephant breeding centre was set up.



Chief of the breeding centre Rameshwar Chaudhary said joint team of the Elephant Care International and CNP found 10 elephants at the park to be afflicted with tuberculosis. Though TB suspected elephants could infect others in the park, they are not kept in quarantine. Out of nine remaining elephants, three are kept in Kunjauli Post, two each in Divyapuri and Khoriya Post, one in Amrit Post and one in Elephant Breeding Centre. TB stricken elephants are suffering from fever, cough and appetite loss, according to Chaudhary.

There is the quota for a veterinarian in the park, but there is none on duty there. According to the park sources, the laxity appeared because the Forest Conservation Department did not release funds on time for

the elephant's treatment. However, Giridhari Chaudary, former executive chairman of the Sauraha Hotels' Association, alleged that the elephant died because the park authorities did not pay attention for treatment.

On 21st August, male elephant 'Yerawat' died after a year long sickness. The reason behind it's death was also assumed to be tuberculosis. A medical team comprising four doctors had investigated the case but the result was not disclosed yet.

An elderly age female rhino succumbed to death on 17th October inside the premises of Janakauli Community Forest of Bachhauli VDC. A frail looking rhino was not able to cross the small canal, remained stuck and finally gave up life. According to the forest guard Shiva Rimal, the rhino was returning from paddy field and eventually got stuck there due to the weakness. Local youths and army force set up tents to safeguard it. They had expanded the canal and cleared the route to ease movement but dying rhino didnot take interest to move anywhere nor eat anything.

Eastern Sector Chief of CNP, Lal Bahadur Bhandari said the rhino age is expected to be at least 35. After it's death, horn and hoofs were safely taken and body was buried.



### Leopard spotted, struggled and killed in the heart of capital

People would not have ever thought to spot a leopard in the heart of Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, though appearance of leopard on the fringes of Kathmandu Valley is not a new incident. But it happened in the morning of 23rd October.

The wild big cat was first spotted at around 7 am in the Maligaun area of Kathmandu where high rung bureaucrats and political leaders reside on. Amidst serial of attack and counter attack with locals, a frantic leopard was killed after three and half hours struggle. Before succumbing to death, it injured five persons, including two policemen.



The life of leopard could have been saved had the darting being successful to control it. Police and official from the Central Zoo reached the spot immediately. Central Zoo officials fired tranquilizer from the premises of the house owned by former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa but the dart failed to have its effect on the animal and the leopard instead started running frantically.

"The injured leopard attacked people including two policemen and we fired six rounds at it", Inspector Basanta Rajaure at the Metropolitan Police Sector, Kamalpokhari, said.

The leopard fell down on the premises of the house owned by Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Sports, Laba Prasad Tripathi, but

again tried to attack locals who had flocked around to see if the leopard was really dead. Eventually, locals hacked it with Khukuri (sharp weapon).

### **Foreigner arrested for rhino horn smuggling**

A nexus among national and international rhino horn traders has been unveiled after a expatriate was arrested by the team of Chitwan National Park. Covert investigative team of Chitwan National Park, led by Assistant Conservation Officer Ananath Baral arrested Taiwani national Li Fang U on 30th August but was made public only after the period of one and half months. He was arrested from Thamel, a touristic hub of Kathmandu.

Mr. Baral informed the incident was not revealed earlier because it might hinder to go deep into their network. Arrested Taiwani citizen Li Fang U is currently held on remand at Bharatpur prison, Chitwan.

On June this year, members of this investigative team disguised themselves as horn traders and had nearly apprehended international rhino horn smugglers from Kathmandu. They carried original rhino horn along with and pretended to sell in hefty sum. During this course, they succeed to get approach with Taiwani and Chinese horn smugglers who apparently fled along with horn on the pretext to examine it's originality. The arrested Taiwani national is one of them. Aftermath of that futile attempt, CNP team did not let up their operation instead continued their efforts and finally relished success.

The arrested Taiwani national Li Fang U has married Nepalese woman and is living in Nepal since five years. Further investigations are going on with him.

In separate operation of CNP, Khag Prasad Shrestha of Bharatpur, Chitwan was arrested on 9 th October. He was suspected to be involved on rhino trade. According to the CNP, he used to provide rhino horn for toplisted and most wanted smugglers Sonam Hapke Gurung and Karma Gurung.

### **Rhino Club took out student rally**

Sajhapur Rhino Club, Meghauri, Chitwan has organized student rally on 7th October in Jagatpur Chitwan. The secondary level students of 10 schools from seven bufferzone VDCs of Chitwan National Park participated in the rally.



Sajhapur Rhino Club has been formed in Sajhapur Secondary School, Megghauli, Chitwan, by Empowering People For Rhino Conservation Project (EPRC) which is being implemented by Media Consultancy Nepal with the support of Asian Rhino Project, Australia.

With the placards at their hands, students chanted conservation oriented slogans like "save Rhino, it saves us", "wild lives are our valuable ornaments", "let's protect wildlife to protect nature and environment" etc. The rally of the students passed through the bufferzone area around Jagatpur. Local people have curiously observed the rally.

After the rally, the students were taken to the Chitwan National Park headquarters Kasara to strengthen their knowledge on different wildlife, conservation aspects. Students observed museum and crocodile breeding

centre. CNP officials and EPRC team members apprised them on the situation of different wildlife, various aspects of conservation, conservation initiatives and also have answered their queries.



The participating students said the program had motivated them more towards conservation and they would spread acquired information and knowledge to their friends, family.