

Bits and Pieces

from the press

ZOO NEWS

Court asks mobile zoos to surrender animals
A court directed (19th May 1998) owners of all mobile zoos to surrender animals in their possession to the government of their respective states by 21 July 1998. The order was made on hearing the petition by the All India Mobile Zoos Association (AIMZOA). The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) had granted recognition to these mobile zoos after finding them in compliance with the Wildlife Protection Act. The zoo owners had sought recognition from the CZA on the plea that the owner was basically a farmer and the zoos were the sole mode for them to earn their livelihood. The Delhi High Court asked the counsel for the owners to consult CZA on compensation terms and report back by 10th June 1998. Till then, the owners cannot exhibit their animals. *The Times of India, New Delhi, 20th May 1998.*

Lives of zoo animals

The weather this summer has taken a toll of animals at the Nandankanan zoo near Bhubaneswar. Three snakes died presumably of sunstroke and ten small birds died due to heat wave condition. As a temporary measure, the zoo was covered with straws to beat the heat. *The Times of India, New Delhi, 24th May 1998.*

Zoo to be opened on Tuesdays

During school vacation this summer, Vandalur Anna Zoological Park will be open even on Tuesdays (weekly holiday). This Park is home to a variety of birds, animals and reptiles, 39 breeding species. It has 3,70,923 visitors from April to September. On average, there are more than 2,000 visitors during this time. More than 35,000 persons visited the Park on a Pongal day. A tiger birth is in progress in the aviary. Zoo will receive a female tiger in exchange for a young male one by August this year. *Express, Chandigarh, 26th April 1998.*

Zoo gets one more Royal Bengal Tiger

Vandalur Anna Zoological Park as 'a centre for captive breeding' of Royal Bengal tigers has purchased recently from the Biju Patnaik Zoological Park (Orissa) a 7 1/2 year old Royal Bengal Tiger, carrying 'White gene'. This zoo has a tigress carrying 'White gene' with which the authorities hope to mate to produce white tigers. Normally in one litter, a tigress delivers four cubs. The chance of getting a white tiger will be one in a hundred. According to Mr. N. Krishnakumar, Deputy Director of the Park, the new tiger is being monitored on its behaviour. At present there are four Royal Bengal tigers, an equal number of tigresses in the Park. Most of them were bred in captivity. The Park has also received a Japanese fowl (with Brownish grey feathers and white face). *The Times of India, New Delhi, 3rd May 1998.*

Drugs come to the aid of ailing Delhi zoo inmates

The treatment of animals on specific ailments has some happy results at the Delhi zoo. The drugs are easy to administer and do

not cause side-effect. The only problem is the extended healing duration as compared to allopathic drugs. The successful treatment of an ailing white tigress has inspired the zoo authorities to cure a sulphur-crested cuckoo which was suffering from a skin infection. The medicine is mixed in water for easy ingestion. A hog deer was also cured by this from intestinal disorders. *The Times of India, New Delhi, 20th May 1998.*

Female rhino calf is zoo's pride

In November 1997, was born in Delhi Zoo, Maheswari, the female rhinoceros - a rare event in any zoo in India. It was not let out in public for the first three months as the zoo authorities did not want to take 'any chances with its health'. Initially fed by mother's milk, Maheswari has begun to munch grass now. In Delhi zoo, there are five rhinos - three males and two females including this calf. Mr. B.R. Sharma, the zoo Director says "It is the rarity of she-rhinos born in captivity, that makes it special. This unusual trend is attributed to the declining male-female ratio. 'Space conditions in captivity might have something to do it' says Mr. B.R. Sharma. Out of about 27 rhinoceroses in zoos over the country, only eight or nine are females. *The Times of India, New Delhi, 2nd April 1998.*

Battery operated vehicles at zoo to be replaced

At the Vandalur Anna Zoological Park, the old Battery Operated Vehicles (BOV) are being replaced to provide better facilities to the visiting children and their parents. Under the auspices of Rotary Club of Ambattur (Chennai) many programmes for children like 'Save the tiger' workshop 'Nature trail' inside the Guindy National Park (a trekking programme for a distance of four kms) have been organised in May. *The Hindu, Chennai, 23rd May 1998.*

Rare macaws lay eggs for the first time in Delhi Zoo

Delhi zoo will soon witness the hatching of eggs laid by two exotic Mexican birds - the Eclectus parrot and the blue-yellow macaw - after eight long years of waiting. According to the veterinary officer (Dr. N. Pannir Selvam) it is difficult to breed these birds in captivity. These are strict vegetarians. But it was found last year two of the Eclectus parrots laid two eggs and consumed them due to 'mineral shortage'. So the diet has been supplemented with calcium and phosphorus. The officials are hoping that the four eggs will hatch into chicks. *The Times of India, New Delhi, 9th April 1998.*

Cleanliness drive gains momentum

The six months old drive of disallowing eatables and polythene bags by visitors to the Delhi Zoo, has resulted in the zoo appearing cleaner than before. Visitors, violating this are fined Rs.50/- and inside the campus, there is constant vigil on the erring visitors. This is the sequel of death of some animals due to stomach pain or asphyxiation. In 21st March 1987, a male zebra died after swallowing the polythene bag and its female partner died three days later, apparently due to separation. There are critics to this policy as they feel that people visit to enjoy the green surroundings by having picnic inside the premises. Even carrying food out of the zoo canteen is not allowed. The drive of converting several wet moats into dry moats make the premises