News Briefs

Compiled by Jayantha Jayewardene, Editor

1. Thorough probe over death of elephants: Musa (Malaysia)

New Straits Times - 30.1.2013

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman wants the State Wildlife Department and Forestry Department to immediately and thoroughly investigate the death of 10 elephants in Tawau recently. He said the state government viewed this matter seriously as Borneon pygmy elephants were an endangered species.

Yesterday it was reported that 10 Bornean elephants had been found dead within two weeks in a forest reserve in Tawau. The elephants, seven males and three females, were from a single herd while a three-month calf was found alive next to what appears to be its mother.

Expressing shock over the death of Borneo pygmy elephants, Musa said that these elephants were part of Sabah's rich and exotic wildlife and should therefore be protected. "People come from all over the world just to catch a glimpse of these animals. It is unfortunate that there are people who would resort to such a horrific act, " he said.

2. Thermo-scan to predict elephant musth

Deccan Chronicle - 30.7.2013

Thanks to newly developed non-invasive diagnostic equipment, elephant handlers and festival organisers will soon be able to forecast the 'musth' period of tuskers without having to physically restrict verify it. The device, called Thermo-scan, measures the heat emitted by the elephant's body with its high sensitivity to visualise pathological changes in the animal. The device absorbs the radiated heat emitted from the elephant's body and converts it into a colour image. The spectrum of colours depicts the temperature patterns. The system, with a sensitivity of 0.1 degrees centigrade, enables daily measuring of temperature of the musk gland area, enabling the estimation of the onset of musth at the initial stage.

3. Electronic fence to safeguard elephants (Vietnam)

TuoiTre News - 16.2.2013

The Natural and Cultural Reserve in Dong Nai Province has set up a project to build an electronic fence around a forest to protect the living environment of both local residents and the dwindling elephant population. The fence, which is expected to be 30 kilometers long, will be built in the forest areas in Phu Ly and Ma Da Communes, Vinh Cuu District with a total cost of about VND 9 billion (US$432,000). The project is aimed at preventing a herd of more than 10 wild elephants from attacking or causing damage to locals, while also protecting the animals from being harmed by poachers.

However, the project has yet to be developed since many households have objected to it. They complain that the fence will block the normal paths to their cultivation areas in the communes. According to statistics, Vietnam now has between 75 and 130 wild elephants, mainly in Dong Nai, central Nghe An Province and the Central Highlands province of Dak Lak.

4. Tuskers feast on Umling maize fields (Bhutan)

Kuensel Online - 1.7.2013

A week ago, three elephants, a cow and two calves, entered the maize fields in Umling. The elephants were initially spotted in Dungmin village a week ago, and were found to have

moved to Dangling village two days later. Gup Ugyen Norbu said they don't know how much of the maize fields have been destroyed by the three tuskers. He said it had been some time since they didn't face problems from elephants, especially after the community forest was started.

"We didn't even send domestic animals to that side of the forest where elephants are spotted, thinking it would protect their area and to prevent them from coming to villages," said the villagers. Ap Gyeltshen said one from each household goes to the field every evening to chase the elephants after an early dinner. "We use burning torches to chase the elephants whenever we spot them."

Karma, another villager said the situation now is nothing compared to what they used to experience less than a decade ago. However, she said with electricity, and an increasing number of people in the village, wildlife attacks have decreased. Elephants mostly attack maize, paddy fields, banana and millet, said Karma.

5. Wild jumbos threat to tame ones (India)

The New Indian Express - 23.2.2013

Not ready to take any chances, the state Forest Department has asked mahouts and kavadis not to take tame elephants, especially those who participate in the Mysore Dasara, deep into the jungle, fearing attacks by wild pachyderms. Attacks on tame elephants have become a common feature as they are generally freed after sunset for grazing. If wild elephants are in 'musth,' they get aggressive and attack whoever comes their way. Killing of tame elephants by wild ones has been reported in the past.

This follows last week's tragic death of Rajendra, a 33-year-old tusker, when a wild elephant attacked him near Sakrebail elephant camp. Usually, the tame elephants fight back, but Rajendra was helpless, resulting in his gory death.

The biggest worry is that the elephants that participate in the Mysore Dasara every year are also housed in various camps. The department is not ready to take any chances, especially with the Jumbo Savari elephants. Chief Conservator of Forests of Project Elephant Ajay Mishra said that he has instructed officials to be careful while releasing pachyderms for grazing. The mahouts have been asked to look out for wild elephants before releasing the tame ones in forests.

6. Wildlife dept scotches myth of 'pygmy' jumbo in Kerala (India)

Manorama Online - 8.2.2013

The now-on-and-now-off claims of the presence of a 'pygmy' elephant in Kerala forests has once again been put to an end by the Forest Department. Wildlife authorities recently took an elephant into custody for observation after a nature photographer claimed to have spotted and videoed a 'pygmy' elephant at Manithukki sector on slopes of the Western Ghats.

After observing the small jumbo closely for the last five days, experts concluded that it is just an ordinary calf and not the dwarf variety as claimed by the lensman and local tribals. The claims of existence of dwarf elephants in the area are just a "folklore myth," a senior wildlife official said.

"What we found was a lean male jumbo, suffering from malnutrition near Manithukki area on February 1. It is a six-year-old calf, not the pygmy as claimed by tribes people. The existence of the dwarf elephant is just a folklore myth," said V Gopinath, Principal Chief Conservator (Wildlife).

7. Understanding elephants' needs to reduce conflicts (Malaysia)

Borneo Post - 17.2.2013

Scientific information is extremely important and valuable for both conservation managers and research scientists in their effort to manage and save the Bornean elephants. Among the major threats facing the Bornean elephants presently are the degradation and fragmentation of their habitat, which incidentally raises their risk of genetic isolation from other elephant

populations, particularly when their traditional seasonal migratory routes are blocked.

Herds were found to cover greater distances under three circumstances. 1) When the elephants were affected by elephant control activities' such as the use of firecrackers and drums to scare them off the plantations; 2) When the elephants enter unsuitable forest habitats such as swamp areas and upland forest probably due to limited food resources and 3) When elephants were forced to travel through narrow habitat corridors, sometimes as narrow as 30 to 50 meters along rivers that were bordered by oil palm plantations.

Studying their feeding behavior, Raymond Alfred has recorded at least 140 species of plants. Five of the main families consumed by the elephants were Palmae (13%), Moraceae (13%), Euphorbiaceae (10%), Leguminoceae (9%) and Graminaeae (8%). All the evidences collected supports the fact that food sources from woody climbers, grasses, trees and bamboos dominated the elephants' diet in the rainforest area.

8. Ten wandering pygmy elephants in Sabah translocated to Tabin elephant range (Malaysia)

The Star Online - 27.2.2013

Ten Borneo pygmy elephants that had ventured more than 45 km from the Tabin Managed Elephant Range, ending up 10 km from Lahad Datu town, were rescued over a period of one week from Jan 18. The effort coordinated by the Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) under the Sabah Wildlife Department saw nine female elephants taken back to the Tabin Wildlife Reserve, while a sole young male aged about four years was sent to Lok Kawi Wildlife Park near Kota Kinabalu due to severe injury to his trunk, which was probably caused by a snare trap.

Establishing corridors within plantations and between forest reserves can be a solution to mitigate conflicts. There is also an urgent need to stop any land conversion in elephant ranges as stated in the recently launched State Elephant Action Plan.

9. Camera fixed trains to detect elephants on tracks (Sri Lanka)

Daily News - 1.3.2013

Sri Lanka Railways has taken measures to rescue wild elephants that stray onto railway tracks and risk being hit by moving trains. Transport Minister Kumara Welgama yesterday commenced a project to install video cameras on engines of trains plying across elephant infested areas in the country. The project commenced at the Fort railway station with the fixing of a new video camera on the engine of the Batticaloa bound train, yesterday morning, as a pilot project.

The cost incurred to fix one night vision camera on a train engine is around Rs. 2.7 million. The project will be sponsored by Dialog and carried out by the Sri Lanka Railways together with the Wildlife Conservation Department. These night vision video cameras will be fixed on engines of trains plying across elephant corridors in areas,such as, Trincomalee, Habarana, Vavuniya, Galoya, Baticaloa and Galgamuwa.

The camera has the capacity of capturing the images of elephants and other animals based on their heat sensitivity within a range of one kilometre and the clear image of the animal would be displayed on monitors with a range of 300 meters. Between 10 to 15 wild elephants are knocked down by trains every year.

10. 49 elephants killed on railway tracks since 2010 (India)

Times of India - 1.3.2013

The highest number of 20 elephant casualty on rail tracks took place in 2010, followed by 15 last year. Nine such incidents were reported in 2011. As many as 49 elephants have been killed on railway tracks since 2010 including five in January this year, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Friday.

In a written reply, Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal said his ministry is holding regular meetings with the Environment Ministry to take

remedial measures for controlling elephant casualties. "Elephant corridors have been identified by the Forest Department and on such corridors speed restrictions have been imposed and signage boards provided to pre-warn the train drivers," he said. He also said that advisories have been issued to zonal railways to sensitise train crew and station masters on regular basis.

11. China pledges to fight against ivory trade

Xinhua - 5.3.2013

China is determined to work with the international community to curb ivory trade and protect wild elephants, officials said on Monday. In its Ivory Trade Report submitted to the ongoing 16th Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Chinese delegation outlines the nation's effort in combating illicit ivory trade and the measures for protecting wild elephants.

China has not completely banned its domestic ivory market but sets the limit on the amount of legal consumption at six tons per year. The ivory that are allowed for sale in the market come from two sources: those that were imported before CITES took effect and those bought by China from four African countries' stocks as permitted by CITES in 2008. All other elephant tusks circulated in the market are labelled as illegal, according to Meng.

12. Pungent paste to keep jumbos at bay (India)

Times of India - 4.3.2013

The Athagarh forest division has come out with a bulwark prepared with paste of red hot chillies, tobacco leaves and used engine oil to prevent marauding elephants from straying into human habitats and paddy fields. The paste will be smeared on cotton rope fences around paddy fields to keep the pachyderms away. The acrid smell of the paste will keep the jumbos at bay.

The project will be implemented at Sarkoli village on Monday on a pilot basis, and if it works the forest officials will extend it to other parts of the division. Sarkoli village is prone to frequent elephant attacks. The method has been successfully experimented in states like Assam and Karnataka.

The aim is to reduce man-animal conflict in the region. Farmers in villages around Athagarh have been suffering massive agricultural losses owing to elephant menace. Herds of elephants recently entered Tangi and Choudwar area and wreaked havoc.

According to 2012 census, the population of elephant in Athagarh division is 131. In that year, the elephants had destroyed 2400 acres of paddy fields in the division. Since April, 2012, at least three elephant deaths have been recorded in the division. Due to shrinking habitats, the elephants are venturing out of forests in search of food.

13. Ivory trade threatens Myanmar's elephants

Myanmar Times - 4.3.2013

The thirst for illegal ivory is killing Myanmar's Asian elephants. Over the past 20 years, the population of these rare creatures has declined by nearly 2000, the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry's anti-trafficking official said. Just 2500 to 3000 Asian elephants are thought to survive in the wild in Myanmar, down from 6000 in 1960-1970 and 4639 in 1991.

"The main reason is the declining population of male elephants," said U Win Naing Thaw, director of the department's Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division. The picture is likely to get worse because of illegal ivory poaching, human encroachment on natural habitats, and hunting for medicinal or other purposes. Male elephants are the main targets because only they have tusks – females don't.

Asian elephants are listed as "completely protected" under the 1994 Protection of Wild Animals, Wild Plants and Conservation of Natural Areas Law, as well as enjoying international protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna

and Flora (CITES). Myanmar is a member of CITES, which prohibits commercial trade in live specimens, their parts or derivatives. However, ivory can be found on sale in retail outlets in Yangon, Mandalay, Tachileik, Myawaddy and Muse, and is openly sold, often to buyers from China and Thailand.

14. New plantation concessions threaten Borneo pygmy elephants (Indonesia)

Mongabay - 10.3.2013

Borneo pygmy elephants (*Elephas maximus borneensis*) are under threat in Indonesia's new North Kalimantan province, where their habitat is set to be converted for rubber, jabon and sengon plantations. Experts worry that if the planned conversion goes ahead, the entire elephant population in Indonesian Borneo could be lost.

Two forest plantation companies – PT Borneo Utara Lestari (PT BUL) and PT Intracawood Manufacturing (PT IWM) – have been granted Industrial Plantation Forest (HTI) concessions in Tulin Onsoi in North Kalimantan's Nunukan district. Both concessions fall within the Heart of Borneo, an area the Indonesian, Malaysian, and Brunei governments have committed to manage sustainably, and overlap significantly with pygmy elephant habitat.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classified Asian elephants, of which the Borneo pygmy elephant is a subspecies, as endangered. Research indicates an estimated 20-80 pygmy elephants are living in North and East Kalimantan.

15. Tracking wild elephants to identify conservation areas and corridors (Malaysia)

Borneo Post - 18.3.2013

The Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) from Sabah Wildlife Department darted two female elephants, one adult and one juvenile in Gunung Rara Forest Reserve. The two females were part of the herd from which 14 individuals died from unknown cause. The adult female, named Dara by WRU rangers, was set up with a satellite collar provided by Danau Girang Field Centre.

"We also collected blood from Dara and a juvenile female from the same herd, following a request by the State Wildlife Enforcement Task Force. One of the causes of death of the 14 elephants could be an emerging or unknown disease. By analysing the blood of the living elephants from the same herd, it could help identifying the disease, if any," explained Ramirez.

Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC) director Dr Benoit Goossens said by collaring an adult female from the herd, they hope to identify the movements of the herd within the changing landscape in Gunung Rara/Kalabakan region, and try to understand what could have happened to the 14 elephants that died last January.

16. 'Alpha Male' gores 20 female elephants to death (India)

Deccan Herald - 1.4.2013

As the wild jumbo, Alpha Male, is thought to have gored to death seven female elephants while in musth in the months between November 2012 and February this year, demand is growing for it to be shot down. But Periyar Tiger Reserve authorities say they don't have enough evidence to hold the elephant responsible for the deaths, although it has in the recent past allegedly killed 13 other female elephants in similar fashion. According to reports, the elephant turned violent in 2008-2009 and in 2012, killing the female elephants by goring them with his tusks.

"The issue should be settled either by shooting down the elephant or absolving him of the killings altogether. However there is no assurance that the elephant will not turn violent again during the musth period that falls between November and February and cause more deaths. So we should consider shooting it down," said a wildlife enthusiast, explaining that a special order from the Chief Wildlife Warden was necessary for bringing down the killer elephant.

17. Crime 'gangs shot elephant' (Thailand)

The Nation - 13.3.2013

At least three organised criminal gangs are suspected to be behind the illegal killing of a wild elephant in Kaeng Krachan National Park in Phetchaburi province, investigators said yesterday.

The first suspected gang was previously sentenced for killing wild elephants and has eluded arrest. The second suspected gang is a group of local people who shoot at wild elephants; and the third is a group of officials who have guns and hunt wild animals for sport. According to the investigator, some police officers might be involved in these organised criminal groups.

The primary investigation found that the bullets in the dead elephant came from AK47 rifles or M16 rifles. Local officials and investigators has set up a working group to track the criminal gangs. There is concern among international and local environmentalists - now convening at the 16th CITES conference in Bangkok - over illegal killing of wild elephants and the ivory trade.

Thailand has been designated with other eight countries as a watch-list nation for the illegal killing of elephants and ivory trade. The country is also classed as a destination for illegal ivory. Last week, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra vowed to end ivory trade in Thailand.

18. Summer separates jumbos, calves (India)

The New Indian Express - 3.4.2013

The acute water scarcity in Bandipur forests is now leading to a pathetic situation — 'separation' of elephant calves from their mothers. At least three calves were 'deserted' by their mothers on the fringes of Bandipur in the last month when the herds strayed into agricultural fields in search of water and were scared by villagers who burst firecrackers.

In each case, the elephants ran towards the forest leaving the calves behind. The calves were spotted in villages near Hunsur, Periyapatna and Gopala Swamy Betta. Forest officials waited for a couple of days for the return of the elephants. But as the jumbos did not come back near the villages, the officials sent the calves to the Bandipur elephant camp.

They said elephants would stray into villages on the fringes of the forests in search of water during the summer, and this year the problem had become serious as the summer set in early. Veterinary doctor Nagaraj said the deserted calves could be the first babies of elephants, which did not know how to take care of them.

19. Over 12 jumbos die in Mudumalai (India)

Deccan Chronicle - 6.4.2013

While more than a dozen wild jumbos were said to have died due to dehydration and shortage of fodder in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) in recent times, the greens here accuse the MTR administration of poor water management and lack of care for animal health, for the jumbos' death.

These are not happy times for MTR as the dry weather has been prolonging since December. But, it appears that the MTR administration and chief wildlife warden (CWW) in the state failed to take up the challenge posed by the testing weather to protect the jumbos.

Though officials in MTR attributed natural causes for the jumbos' death, it is a fact that they died due to dehydration, lack of fodder and infections caused by contaminated water in slushy pools. It is learnt that the administration does not have sufficient facilities to provide tanker water in all the vulnerable areas. The TNGM would seek the intervention of the judiciary if the forest officials in Chennai failed to act to set right things in MTR for healthy animal life.

Jayachandran said MTR should learn lessons from the adjacent Bandipur tiger reserve in Karnataka where water management is good and the animals are taken care of. As officials in MTR declined to talk to the media,

citing instructions from the CWW, sources said the infighting and factions among the top officials and lack of planning were the reasons for the present situation.

20. Endangered Vietnam elephant 'skinned, disemboweled'

Agence France Presse - 6.4.2013

The skinned and mutilated corpse of one of Vietnam's dwindling population of endangered wild elephants has been discovered in a forest in central Quang Binh province, state media said Friday. The female elephant's skin, tail, tusks, ears and many internal organs had been removed, the Tuoi Tre newspaper said, quoting local forest rangers. It was not immediately clear why it was mutilated, but elephant ivory and other body parts are prized in Vietnam for decoration, as a talisman, and for use in traditional medicine.

Vietnam is home to some 100 wild elephants, according to state media, but habitat loss, human-animal conflict and poaching are seen as responsible for a sharp decline in the population in recent decades.

Environmental group WWF says Vietnam is one of the world's worst countries for trade in endangered species. Vietnam outlawed the ivory trade in 1992 but shops can still sell ivory dating from before the ban.

21. Karnataka high court dismisses PIL challenging translocation of 23 elephants to Madhya Pradesh (India)

Times of India - 12.4.2013

In an interesting development, the Karnatakka high court has dismissed a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging the proposal of the Karnataka government to translocate/transfer 23 elephants to Madhya Pradesh.

"In the instant case, the state government in its wisdom has taken a policy decision for the translocation of the elephants having regard to the expenditure to be incurred by in maintaining the said elephants and other considerations. These matters are within the realm of the state government. This court in exercise of its jurisdiction of article 226 of the constitution cannot sit in judgment over the decision of the state government to translocate the elephants concerned. It is also brought to our notice that the state had already brought this issue to the notice of the Ministry of Environment and Forest (central government). If that is so, then it is the matter between state government and the Madhya Pradesh government with central government having jurisdiction. We do not think that we can interfere, " a division bench headed by Chief Justice D. H. Waghela has observed while dismissing the PIL filed by animal rights/ welfare organizations. The petitioners have claimed violation of Wild life (protection) Act, 1972.

22. Sumatran elephants found dead, poisoning suspected

France 24 - 3.6.2013

Two critically endangered Sumatran elephants were found dead in an Indonesian national park and it is believed they were poisoned. It takes to three the number of the elephants found dead in Tesso Nilo National Park on Sumatra island in the last month. The carcasses of a male aged around five and a young female were found on Friday about a kilometre (0.6 miles) apart, said WWF spokeswoman Syamsidar, who goes by one name.

A Sumatran elephant was discovered dead in the park early last month, also from suspected poisoning. Fifteen Sumatran elephants were found dead last year in Riau province, where the national park is located, with around half them found to have been poisoned.

Fewer than 3000 Sumatran elephants remain in the wild, according to IUCN. Rampant expansion of palm oil and paper plantations and the mining industry have destroyed nearly 70 percent of the elephant's forest habitat over 25 years, according to the WWF, and the animals have been targeted by poachers.

23. In Assam, a village makes way for elephants (India)

NDTV - 5.6.2013

Now, for the first time in India, an entire village in Assam's Karbi Anglong district has decided to move out of an elephant corridor that supports as much as eight per cent of the total elephant population of India. It is a small step, but will go a large way towards helping more than 2000 elephants live a little more securely, with humans out of the way of their already fragile habitat.

At the Ram Terang village, deep inside Assam's heavily forested Karbi Anglong district, families say they are happy to get out of the way of elephants, literally. This village, falls in the middle of the Kalapahar-Daigurung elephant corridor in the district - a crucial connection for the area's 2000 elephants from the adjoining Kaziranga National Park to Karbi Anglong, which form more than eight per cent of the total elephant population of the country.

Moving freely across this corridor is a vital step to preserve an already shrinking elephant habitat, and the 19 families in the area are now preparing to become the first in the country to allow forest officials and the Wildlife Trust of India to relocate the entire village elsewhere, out of the corridor.

In return for relocation, the villagers get concrete homes with electricity and water, agricultural land, and assured livelihood promotion activities. The biggest challenge, though, will be to carry out the shifting without too many hitches.

24. Unmanned plane to help in jumbo hunt (Thailand)

Bangkok Post - 29.4.2013

Officials will install 20 cameras and use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to locate a pachyderm, which officials believe might be a baby white elephant. They are undertaking the search in Kaeng Krachan National Park in Phetchaburi province after a photographer had reported seeing one in a herd on April 10.

Apichart Puangnoi spotted the calf from still photos of an elephant herd he took and then reported the sighting to park chief Chaiwat Limlikhit-aksorn. Mr Chaiwat has sent a unit of forestry guards to track down the elephant calf in a race to keep it safe from possible poachers.

Theerapat Prayurasiddhi, deputy chief of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation said cameras will be installed along elephant trails inside the park to help in the search. Officials would also send camera-mounted UAVs into the forest.

25. Accused elephant killers arrested (Thailand)

Bangkok Post - 6.6.2013

Two men suspected of killing two elephants in Kaeng Krachan National Park were arrested on Thursday, police said. Sanya Tuansap, 37, and his brother, Veerapong, 25, were caught in Hua Hin district, Prachuap Khiri Khan. They face charges of illegally killing the elephants inside the borders of the park in Kaeng Krachan district of Phetchaburi, police said.

They were apprehended under arrest warrants issued by the court after police found evidence, including forensic checks on bullets and witness testimony, indicating that their rifles fired the shots that killed the two animals. Mr Sanya and Mr Veerapong denied the charges.

The two elephants were killed, one in March and another in April, close to Krarang 3 reservoir deep inside the park's boundaries.

26. 'Mourning' elephants refuse to leave accident site (India)

Times of India - 5.8.2013

Around 15 elephants, who are mourning a member of their herd after it was hit by a train near Matari railway station under Dhanbad division of the East Central Railway on Howrah-New Delhi main railway route a couple of days ago, have attacked villages and demolished parts

of a school and several houses. Villagers have been keeping night-long vigil, but haven't been able to drive away the herd.

Elephants have a strong sense of family bonding and often resort to revenge attacks. They often try to return to the site of such accidents as they believe that their mate has only been injured and could be rescued by them. Even when an elephant dies a natural death, their friends cover the body with bushes and small tree branches.

A herd of elephants had stopped several trains on the main Delhi-Howrah route near Matari railway station on Wednesday night after one member of the herd was killed by the Kolkata-Delhi Duronto Express. The elephants left the area only after the railway's disaster management team with foresters arrived on the spot and burst crackers. The herd, however, did not go very far. Experts in chasing the jumbos and tried to chase them away but they did not go.

27. Villages under siege by herds of wild elephants (Myanmar)

Myanmar Times - 9.7.2013

Village residents in Thapeikyin township along the Ayeyarwady River say they have faced recent attacks from wild elephants. "At 11 pm on July 3, our village was spoiled by some five wild elephants. They destroyed houses and harmed the villagers. An old man aged of 68 years is now hospitalized after he was hit by the trunk of an elephant. The villagers are very frightened now," U Maung Naing from Kyaut Kwal village told The Myanmar Times on July 4.

U Kyaw Htay, the 68-year-old, was initially taken for medical treatment in Kyar Inn Sit Hospital and was moved on July 4 to the Neuro Medical Department at Mandalay Hospital. The residents said they have kept their villages guarded in order to threaten the wild elephants by shouting at them with torches and fires as the animals usually raid the villages in herds or individually by night.

The villagers from affected areas said they have had to reconsider their crop-growing strategies, as they fear danger from the wild elephants. "We have given education about wild elephants to the inhabitants. We asked them just to threaten by shouting but not to fight the animals with weapons such as knife, stick or catapult.

28. Growers find novel ways to keep away wild elephants (India)

Deccan Herald - 20.6.2013

Wild elephant menace in the coffee plantations in various parts of Kodagu has been increasing. The reason for the increase in the elephants entry into coffee plantations are the jackfruits and bananas grown in the plantations. In order to save their coffee plantations from elephants, coffee growers have begun to destroy banana and jackfruit yields in their plantations.

Wild elephant menace is rampant in Aiguru, Kandanakolli, Kodlipet in Somwarpet taluk and Srimangala, Ammathi, Ponnampet in Virajpet taluk. Forests in these areas mostly comprise of teak wood which is why elephants are falling short of food. In addition, the water pits dug to supply water to coffee plants too are inviting elephants to enter coffee plantations to drink water. Repeated requests of the villagers to the forest department to chase elephants back to the forest have gone futile.

Speaking to Deccan Herald, coffee plantation labour Murugesh said that with the broken solar fences, the coffee growers have no other option but to cut jackfruit and banana plantations.

29. Wild elephants wander into southwest China village

NTDTV - 21.6.2013

Six wild elephants recently wandered into a village in Mengla County in southwest China's Yunnan Province, surprising villagers. The villagers called local police at 12:30 on Wednesday, telling them that wild elephants had appeared all around the village and that one of the young elephant's legs was injured.

"After the call, I immediately organized the police and rushed to the spot. We brought the villagers to a safe area, and sent officers to follow and watch over the elephants. I came here after 12:00, only to see six elephants coming out from the rubber plantation."

According to villagers, this herd of elephants lives on the nearby mountains and often comes down to search for food. They may not have gone back up the mountain to wait for the baby elephant with a hurt leg. The elephants are still hanging around near the village.

30. Warning system to track elephant movement installed (India)

The Hindu - 29.6.2013

Forest Department personnel have installed two 'early warning systems' close to two settlements in the Anthiyur forest range to track movement of tuskers and to alert the people living there when the animals were nearing their localities.

Department sources said that the system that has already been installed in a few pockets in Sathyamangalam range has now been introduced in Anthiyur range to put an end to man-animal conflict and the loss of life and property. "The system has two laser cameras that are installed on either side of the path through which elephants could reach the village, speakers and BSNL SIM cards distributed to different stake holders," an official said.

He said that a censor connected to the cameras will send an sms alert to the mobile numbers of the District Forest Officer, Forester, Ranger, Forest Guard and to a member of the Village Forest Committee which have been registered with the censor.

"Anyone of them can give a blank call to a BSNL number given to them that is connected to the speaker near the village that is about a kilometre away from the place where the laser cameras have been installed, which will make repeated announcements of the movement of elephants in that locality to help people ready to guard themselves or move to a safer place, in a timely manner," the official said.

"The system functions with electricity supply. Steps are underway to make it function with rechargeable batteries so that it will function throughout the day even when there is a power cut," he added.

31. Fences, trenches have failed to check the human-elephant conflict in Karnataka (India)

Times of India - 26.6.2013

Approximately Rs 1200 crore: that's the money spent over the past eight years to check the human-elephant conflict in Karnataka and its bordering states. The project involved digging elephant-proof trenches, erecting solar fencing and creating fodder and water facilities in the forests.

Not surprisingly, the fences and trenches to prevent wild elephants straying out of their habitat either do not exist or have simply proved ineffective. "Crores of rupees have gone down the drain because of a lack of monitoring and poor maintenance," said a senior forest official, presenting in-house data. The figures reflect the expenditure on fencing and trenching since 2005 by five states -- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.



Elephants in Pokunutenne (Sri Lanka)
Photo by Trevor LaBrooy