

For the man on top



Gireesan, the handsome tusker of Tripunithura

Elephant Care has opened Insurance coverage for mahouts. The offer is being extended to mahouts who hold exemplary love for the elephants in their care.

The EC mahout scheme is designed to insure mahouts, specifically because they are the closest to the elephants and the most prone to temper tantrums of the huge being. Mahouts, we know, are by far the most uncared for, sometimes untrained and often temporary recruits in the elephant management circuit.

EC will screen the mahouts from the training programme scheduled in April 2006. The programme aims

Elephant Gazers

- ⌚ Do not touch or disturb elephants
- ⌚ Do not tempt or distract mahouts
- ⌚ Don't take children too close to the elephant

To join us please write to :
The Secretary, *Elephant Care*, 16/
478, Peroor Road, N.F. Gate,
Tripunithura- 682301

STATE Support

- ⌚ Support Forestry department in elephant/mahout welfare schemes
- ⌚ Initiate health programmes for elephants after festival seasons
- ⌚ Compulsory training programmes for mahouts
- ⌚ Ensure safe place for burying dead elephants

at helping the mahouts discover the immense responsibility vested on their shoulders. Mahouts who understand their responsibilities and resolve to love and care for the animal in their care will be sponsored for the life long coverage. A medical check - up has also been planned for the mahouts.

EC was inspired to open an exclusive scheme for mahouts for two reasons: Primarily they are the most ignored group when it comes to the elephant world and secondly because the eligibility criteria could also serve as a check on the ill treatment meted out to scores of elephants.

JUMBO CHECK

ELEPHANT Owners

- ⌚ Pure vegetarians that elephants are, it must have atleast 250kgs of *Panampatta* every day
- ⌚ Elephants need 250-300 Ltrs of water three times a day
- ⌚ It is discouraging to starve the elephant while it is in rut
- ⌚ Water escapades are good for the elephant and for strengthening jumbo-mahout bonds
- ⌚ Let the elephant rest in sheds made to standard specifications with adequate facilities for air and water
- ⌚ Don't make the elephant walk for more than an hour at a stretch
- ⌚ Maximum distance permissible in a day is 30 kms. For longer distances, it is better to take the elephant in a lorry with a day's rest in between long journeys.
- ⌚ A senior mahout should have a minimum experience of three years
- ⌚ The mahout should be certified by a doctor and the insured by the owner

TEMPLE People

- ⌚ Check if the temple premise can accommodate the number of elephants planned for the festival
- ⌚ Elephants should be permitted to participate in festivals only after a thorough medical check up
- ⌚ Food, water and rest should be given in plenty during busy festival seasons
- ⌚ Plan shifts if elephants have to stand for longer hours during festivals
- ⌚ Avoid competitions and select well trained and well behaved elephants for temple festivals and processions

Gaja Raksha, the camp



At the exclusive medical camp

An exclusive medical camp *Gaja Raksha*, was organized by *Elephant Care* in the royal town of Tripunithura on 4 Dec 2005. Tripunithura which is surrounded by temples is home to many festivals with any number of elephants adding glitz and glamour to the celebrations.

The camp was organized in the light of media reports of elephants succumbing to attacks of tuberculosis. Nearly ten elephants have died in Kerala alone due to this deadly disease that spreads fast among animals and human beings.

An expert team led by Dr KC Panicker, an authority on elephants in Kerala, was at the camp where 17 elephants were examined. First aid kits and medicines were sponsored by *Elephant Care*.

Dung and blood samples were tested at certified laboratories in Ernakulam and Thrissur. The elephants examined here were certified free from tuberculosis though a few of them were reported to have minor intestinal problems. The medical reports were later sent to the owners of the elephants.

Captive elephant Management

THE WORKSHOP

Mr V Gopinathan, Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Govt. of Kerala inaugurated the State level workshop on *Captive Elephant Management* organised by *Elephant Care* on 28 January 2006. Speakers included eminent

ELEPHANT CARE

is a non-profit voluntary society (registered) for Protection of Asian elephants, working towards providing a dignified environment to the domesticated elephants. The Society takes up activities to provide free medical camps for elephants in domestic captivity, to provide training and research in management of captive elephants.

IN APRIL

- Awareness Camps
- Screening of Mahouts for *EC Mahout Insurance Scheme*

elephant specialists Dr KC Cheeran, Dr KC Panicker, Mr Deepak Mishra, Divisional Forest Officer (Malayattur), Mr Balakrishna Shenoy, Mr Sudhakaran Nair, President and Mr E Nandakumar, Secretary (*Elephant Care*)

Inside an elephant



Is an elephant an intelligent animal? The answer is a resounding Yes! Well then, how intelligent is he? Are there any biological or behavioral evidences for this intelligence?

Philosophers consider *man* as the highest and noblest creations of the Almighty. However it hasn't been very long since contemplations began on how low animals are. It was Scientist Conard Lawrence who gave the much required scientific edge to the study of animal behaviour. He is also considered the Father of these behavioral studies in animal science that have produced several path-breaking discoveries. An interesting one revealed recently is that the genetic index in man and chimpanzees differ only by 3%.

It is generally believed that among animals, the carnivorous lot is more intelligent than the herbivores. The logical explanation for this is that they have to devise strategies to get their prey. However elephants stand distinctly different here. As distinct as its huge self! The animal brain has been divided into three zones for scientific comprehension: *Emotions, Memory and Intelligence*.

- 🌀 **Emotions** evolve with the animal and is a prime requisite for its existence.
- 🌀 **Memory** is that which helps the animal to remember past learning experiences and chart his future actions based on that learning.
- 🌀 **Intelligence** is the analyzing zone that helps the animal analyse a problem and act instantaneously in the most suitable manner.

They have it in them:

- Intelligence
- Memory
- Emotions

visit: www.elephantcare.org

ELEPHANT Emotions

There are elephants that can't bear being separated from its mahout (a trend very much on the decline!). We often read many stories of inseparable Elephant-Mahout bonds. Another example of animal emotion is the empathy they have towards their comrades in the jungle and the way they team-up to save one of their kind in distress. We cannot expect the same behaviour from a domesticated elephant. Nevertheless they have the tendency of saving or protecting the mahout, who is in close counters with them most of the time. The extra large size of the amygdala in the brain that controls emotions tells us why elephants love whom they love.

ELEPHANT Memory

An elephant that lost his way during the Second World War in Burma was made captive again after 15 years. And to everyone's surprise when he was instructed to sit, he did! Keralites have no dearth of examples for understanding this aspect of elephant intelligence and also there is no wondering why the *Hippocampus*, the seat of memory is markedly huge in elephants.

ELEPHANT Intelligence:

There are umpteen biological evidences that explain the intelligent behaviour of elephants. The most important one is that the *Amygdala* and the *Hippocampus*, the zones that control emotions and memory are well developed in elephants. A benchmarked tool used for assessing elephant's intelligence is *Entephalisation*. In this method, the relative size, weight and circumference of the elephant brain is taken into consideration.

Taming the tusker

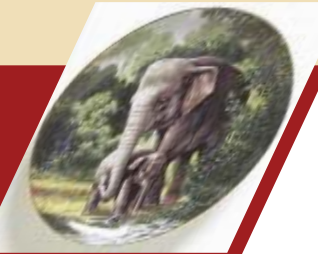
Taming an elephant and bringing it up with love is possible only because it is an intelligent animal. Well, elephants could use the same intelligence to escape from captivity and go back to the jungle. So is it intelligence alone that matters? Well the success in taming elephants lies in the fact that man is aware of the *mantra* of taming elephants and also those extra factors that make elephants remain with him.

In the jungle, group psychology shows that it is customary to have a leader and followers. Elephants live in groups in the jungle and also have the leader-follower system. The mantle of responsibility rests with the oldest female elephant of the group as male elephants tend to move out, as they get older. That is why in the West, taming male elephants is considered a mammoth task, especially when it is in *Musth*. The way we tame male elephants in Kerala and line up many tuskers for our festivals is still an unsolved puzzle for Westerners.

The basic principle for taming elephants from the wild is getting them accept human beings as their leader. This taming of the wild is a complex process and requires expertise and skills.

Mental bruises or bad experiences during the training period have a definite bearing on the elephant's mannerisms and behaviour, way into the future also. So is the case with the expertise shown by mahouts in walking the elephant by the stick, disciplining it too! We don't need much time to spoil a good elephant. And it is very easy to develop bad habits and very difficult to prune them out. Therefore, it is saner for a good mahout to manage a tough elephant rather than leave a good elephant to a rough mahout!

Managing elephants is nothing but a manifestation of human supremacy over the natural submissiveness in elephants. Sticks and canes are just symbols. Prime requisites to achieving this supremacy, is to get closer to the elephant both



Whazzat?

Do elephants have a psychology because they behave like humans?

No. It is the other way round. Human psychology, is more like that of an elephant

The basic principle for taming elephants from the wild is getting them to accept human beings as their leader

mentally and emotionally

This could take a long time, sometimes several years. Sticks and alcohol are the worst enablers!

Might

as well remember that if we don't treat the elephant properly, the elephant will show no restraint in *treating us properly either!*

MAHOUTS: Check this out

- 🌀 Only trained elephants should be taken out for processions. Elephants with temper tantrums should be given extra attention at public places
- 🌀 Do not force elephants to join festival processions if it shows signs of exhaustion, musth or illness.
- 🌀 Have a hand on the elephants tusk during the procession
- 🌀 Chain the legs if the elephant has to stand for longer intervals during the procession
- 🌀 Avoid tarred roads while walking the elephants on hot days. The chain guard on the body is compulsory.
- 🌀 Reflectors for sight and bells for sound are compulsory for people to know that here goes an elephant

It is saner to let a good mahout manage a tough elephant rather than leave a good elephant to a rough mahout!

