

# Rare white elephant born in Myanmar: state media

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A rare white elephant born in Myanmar's western Rakhine state is seen walking around Taungup township on Tuesday.

A rare white elephant has been born in western Myanmar, state media said on Wednesday, unveiling what many in the Buddhist-majority

country believe to be an auspicious creature.

Born last month in western Rakhine state, the baby weighs about 80 kilograms (180 pounds) and stands roughly 70 cm (two-and-a-half feet) tall, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper.

Footage released by state TV showed the tusker tot following his mother to a river and being washed by its keepers, and later feeding from her.

The mother—a 33-year-old called Zar Nan Hla—is kept by the Myanma Timber Enterprise in Rakhine state, the Global New Light said, adding the baby possessed seven of the eight characteristics associated with rare white elephants.

"Pearl-coloured eyes, plantain branch-shaped back, white hair, a distinctive tail, auspicious plot signs on the skin, five claws on the front legs and four on the back legs and big ears," the newspaper reported.

Social [media](#) users first posted about the birth of the elephant—which has not been named yet—late last month.

Historically, white elephants were considered extremely auspicious in Southeast Asian culture, and the region's ancient rulers acquired as many as they could to boost their fortunes.

But the ruinous cost of keeping the beasts in appropriately lavish style gave rise to the modern expression in which a "white elephant" is a useless, if beautiful, possession.

There are currently six white elephants in captivity in the military-built capital Naypyidaw, according to [state media](#)—mostly from Rakhine state and the southern Ayeyarwady region.

With Myanmar reeling from a military coup last year and its bloody crackdown on dissent, the reaction of many on [social media](#) was muted or sceptical.

"Am I colourblind if it just looks brown to me?" posted one user.

"Elephants were important only in the old eras," said another.

"Now the poor elephant will have to go to jail."

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