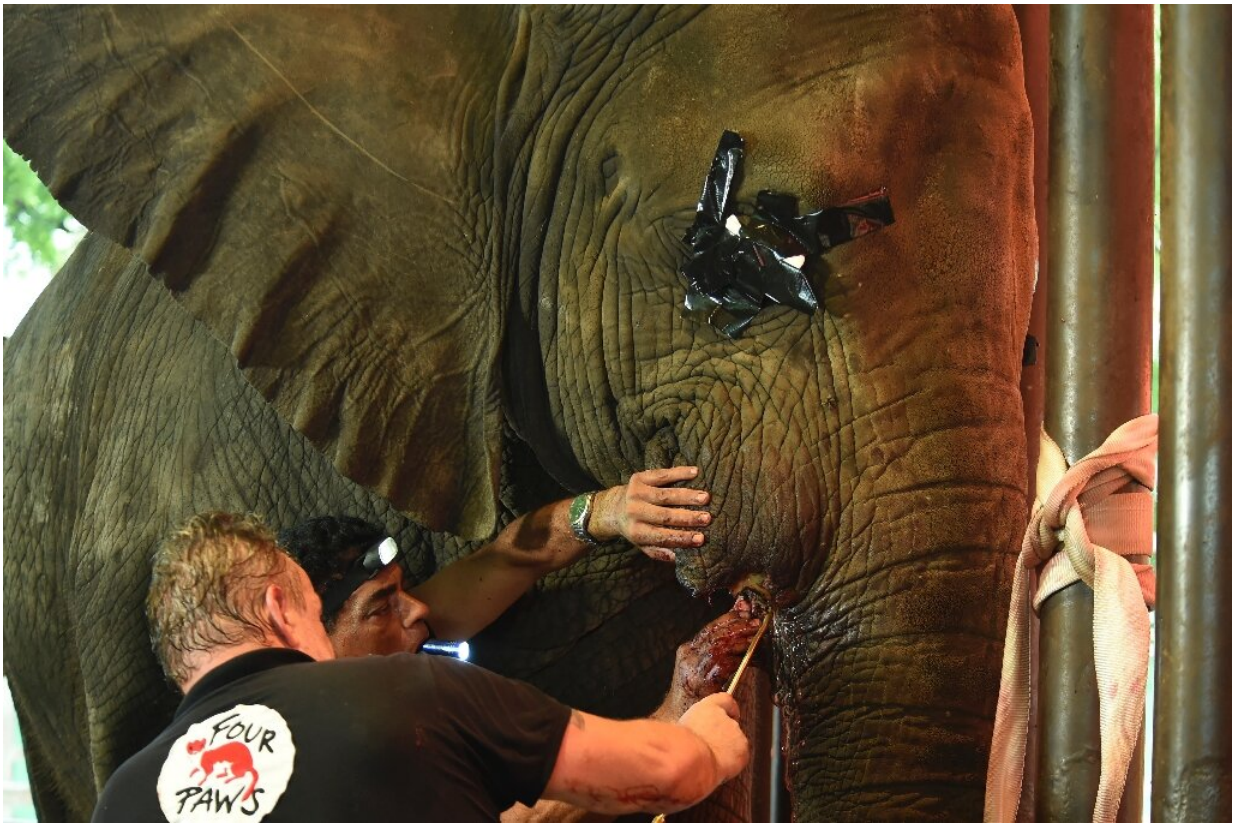


Vets tackle jumbo tusk task on Pakistan zoo elephants

August 18 2022



Sixteen-year-old Madhu Bala underwent surgery for an infection on a broken tusk after being given a delicate standing sedation.

A team of international vets armed with specially-designed dentist drills began operating Wednesday on a pair of elephants "in incredible pain" at

a colonial-era zoo in Pakistan.

The Austria-based Four Paws organisation was asked by the Sindh High Court to step in to treat the animals after activists reported their miserable condition.

Sixteen-year-old Madhu Bala—named after a Bollywood actress—underwent surgery for an infection on a broken tusk after being given a delicate standing sedation because the zoo in the southern city of Karachi lacks the facilities and space for full anaesthesia.

"She is in the worst pain," Four Paws vet Frank Gortiz told AFP.

"On the right side there is an abscess. The root of her tusk is sticking into her skull and the distance to her eyes is very close."

She had her eyes covered and was fastened with thick rope and propped up with steel bars to prevent her from falling during the standing sedation, which required specially-adapted equipment.

"We developed very long tools to be able to clean the wound," vet Marina Ivanova said.

During the hours-long operation, Madhu Bala occasionally snorted as the team of vets in blood-stained clothes jostled to remove the remains of the broken tusk.



The elephant had her eyes covered and was fastened with thick rope and propped up with steel bars to prevent her from falling during the standing sedation.

Noor Jehan—named after the wife of Mughal emperor Jahangir—is suffering a similar broken tusk infection and will be operated on later in the week.

Two elephants at another nearby zoo in the port city will also be treated for abscesses.

Pakistani zoos come under frequent criticism for disregarding [animal welfare](#).

In April 2020, a court ordered the only zoo in the country's capital

Islamabad to shut after poor facilities and mistreatment of the animals there were revealed.

The facility had drawn international condemnation for its treatment of an Asian elephant named Kaavan, who was later airlifted to retirement in Cambodia in a project spearheaded by US popstar and actor Cher, and carried out by Four Paws.

Earlier this month, a zoo in the eastern city of Lahore called off plans to auction 12 lions to [private individuals](#) after overbreeding, saying it would instead create new enclosures for the big cats.

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