

FLOOD-RESCUED ELEPHANT JOYMOTI AIRLIFTED TO VANTARA FOR SPECIALISED HOSPITAL CARE

53-year-old elephant rescued from floodwaters in Assam to receive specialised treatment for multiple chronic and severe injuries

Jamnagar, Gujarat: Joymoti, a 53-year-old female elephant rescued from the devastating floods in Nagaland and Assam in July, is being airlifted to Vantara, Jamnagar, for immediate and specialised veterinary treatment.

Joymoti was swept away by floodwaters in Nagaland during the second week of July and was subsequently rescued by local communities with the assistance of government agencies. She sustained multiple injuries during the incident, including wounds to her forehead, right ear, the area above her tail, left inner thigh and abdomen, as well as a deep, maggot-infested wound around her external genital area. Her right eye is severely damaged, leaving her blind in that eye, with persistent tearing. She also has longstanding lameness in her left hind leg, resulting from a fracture sustained during logging, which affects her ability to walk normally and access food and water.

Following her rescue, Joymoti received first aid and primary veterinary care locally, including wound dressing, pain medication, multivitamin and mineral supplements and supportive treatment. However, given the severity and multiple locations of her injuries, her advancing age and existing mobility challenges, she requires immediate treatment in a specialised hospital setting.

Joymoti's transfer to Vantara is solely for immediate and specialised veterinary treatment. The decision to airlift her has been taken with her welfare and medical needs at the centre, allowing her to reach a specialised elephant hospital while minimising the duration and physical demands of ground transportation. Upon arrival at Vantara, Joymoti will undergo a comprehensive veterinary assessment and receive specialised treatment for her injuries and eye condition, along with nutritional and supportive care as required.

Ensuring the highest standards of welfare during air transport

Transporting an elephant by air as part of intensive hospital care is a first-of-its-kind undertaking in India and requires extensive veterinary, animal-care and logistical preparation. Joymoti's transfer is being planned and carried out with careful attention to her health, comfort and safety at every stage, from her veterinary assessment and preparation before travel to loading, monitoring during the flight and her arrival at the hospital.

Air transport can significantly reduce the duration of a long-distance journey for an animal requiring urgent medical attention. For elephants with serious injuries, chronic health conditions or mobility challenges, reducing journey time and avoiding prolonged ground travel can be an important consideration in protecting their welfare.

Joymoti's story highlights the need for specialised veterinary care facilities closer to where wildlife emergencies occur

Joymoti's case also highlights the importance of having specialised elephant veterinary care facilities closer to areas where elephants are affected by floods, human-wildlife conflict and other health emergencies.

Vantara has proposed the establishment of three wildlife veterinary care centres in Assam, including a dedicated centre for elephants, to strengthen local capacity for wildlife emergency veterinary care. The proposed centres would include species-specific facilities and veterinary support, enabling animals in need to receive timely and appropriate treatment closer to where emergencies occur. The centres would be operated completely independently by the Assam Forest Department.

The aim is to strengthen local capacity so that elephants and other wildlife in Assam can receive high-quality care closer to home, avoiding the need for long-distance transportation whenever specialised treatment is required.

Joymoti's journey to Vantara is not a permanent relocation, but an urgent medical transfer undertaken solely to provide the specialised lifesaving treatment she currently requires. Her case underscores the importance of strengthening local veterinary capacity while ensuring that animals requiring advanced care can access it safely and without delay. At Vantara, the immediate priority is to provide Joymoti with the specialised treatment she needs and the best possible chance of recovery and a healthy, safe and dignified life.

About Vantara

Vantara, founded by Shri Anant Ambani, Executive Director of Reliance Industries Limited, is an animal welfare and conservation organisation.

Its ex situ programmes (care provided outside the natural habitat) include rescue, rehabilitation, treatment and long-term animal care (where required), supported by advanced veterinary medicine, species-specific nutrition, specialised infrastructure and multidisciplinary teams. Conservation breeding programmes are also undertaken to support the future restoration of viable populations in suitable natural habitats through rewilding.

Its in situ conservation work (conservation in animals' natural habitats) supports native species restoration, habitat restoration and human-wildlife conflict mitigation efforts led by government authorities, conservation institutions and other partners in India and internationally.