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Tekst 9



Monkeys cross the road outside the presidential palace in Delhi.

Delhi monkeys around with primate problem

By Jo Johnson in New Delhi

“Softly, softly catchee monkey” is all very well but for Delhi, finding a home for hundreds of Rhesus macaques that have been rounded up in snatch raids across the Indian capital is proving a real difficulty.

Overcrowding at a special monkey prison at Rajokari on the outskirts of the city is causing headaches for the authorities, who are under pressure to comply with a 2004 Supreme Court order requiring the city to be monkey-free.

The state of Madhya Pradesh this week filed an objection to a court order requiring it to take a shipment of 300 Delhi monkeys, arguing that they would destroy habitats, run amok in villages and spread diseases among humans.

An earlier batch of 250 Delhi monkeys released in the forest of Palpur Kuno near Gwalior had been “creating problems” for locals and had upset the ecological balance of their new habitat by eating birds’ eggs, the state government said.

Last month Himachal Pradesh turned down monkey shipments and four other

states may follow suit, which might force Delhi to use its meagre resources for infrastructure development in the form of building more monkey prisons.

Man-monkey conflict is intensifying, with an estimated 100 people a day being bitten across the country. Extermination drives are not a serious option because of the popularity among many Hindus of Hanuman, a deity with simian features.

Since India banned the export of monkeys for medical experimentation in 1978, its Rhesus macaque population had soared from 200,000 to over 500,000 in 1999, with more than half of them living in human habitations.

Environmentalists say the problem is not the rising number of monkeys but the increase in the urban population and its encroachment on forest land. Delhi's human population increased by 50 per cent to 13.8m between 1991 and 2001.

"There is an increase in man-monkey conflicts and in the absence of a management plan of both forests and commensal monkeys, the problem of man-monkey conflict is only going to

increase," says Dr Iqbal Malik, a primatologist. "Building more monkey prisons would not be the answer at all. The construction of the cage was one of many many things that the government has done wrong. We need monkey sanctuaries across the country."

Before the export ban, India used to ship tens of thousands of Rhesus monkeys to the West for all types of research by pharmaceutical and biomedical companies, as well as by government-run military, space and nuclear research institutes.

Since 1978, illegal trapping of forest monkeys has continued for research within India. Dr Malik says research has shown that haphazard trapping leads to "chaotic fissioning" of their groups and to their dispersal into human habitations.

Most government offices in Delhi have opted for a direct approach. Although keeping leashed monkeys is illegal, many have chained langurs, an aggressive species of monkey that is used to scare away the Rhesus.

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Tekst 9 Delhi monkeys around with primate problem

- 3p **42** “Delhi monkeys around with primate problem” (kop)
- Geef van elk van de volgende mogelijkheden aan of deze wel of niet als oplossing wordt gebruikt voor het probleem in Delhi.
- 1 De apen in aantal terugbrengen.
 - 2 De apen opsluiten.
 - 3 De apen vangen en naar elders transporteren.
 - 4 De apen opvangen in een reservaat.
 - 5 De apen intimideren.
- Noteer het nummer van elke mogelijkheid, gevolgd door “wel” of “niet”.