

Donkeys get a home

Years of torture come to an end

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COIMBATORE: A donkey stands on the middle of a road, its head bent and its back grotesquely bruised. Flies circle around its open wounds.

Vehicles snarl menacingly around it, a few of them occasionally slowing down to shoo the creature away. After much persuasion by drivers, the animal slowly drags its body to a side of the road, to escape the din of the traffic.

Travellers on Trichy Road, especially near the Ramanathapuram Junction, may have got accustomed to this sight they confront almost everyday.

Most of these donkeys are owned by people who work in quarries. Once they realise the animal has lost its strength, they abandon it on the roads unfamiliar to it.

Abuse

The hapless animals then stray on to the main roads in search of food and water often obstructing traffic.

They are abused by their owners, not given proper food and are made to carry heavy bags of stone and sand from the quarries, authorities of the People for Animals (PFA) allege.

The PFA, along with two other animal welfare organisations in Coimbatore, recently rescued four such donkeys from in and around Ramanathapuram.

"All of them were dehydrated and in very bad shape and we couldn't prevent the death of one of them in spite of the treatment given," says Nalini Shanmugham, secretary of the PFA.

Warning

"We have met some of the owners of the animals and have warned them against assaulting them," says Kalpana Vasudevan, Coordinator of PFA.



AT THE OWNER'S MERCY: A donkey that had portions of both its ears cut off by its owner in Coimbatore.

— PHOTO: M. PERIASAMY

Most of them have wounds on several parts of their body with blood oozing out of them.

These are inflicted upon the animal by the owners when they brand it with hot iron in order to identify it, leaving the animal in severe pain.

One of them rescued recently had been run over by a vehicle and suffered serious injury to its spine.

Some of the owners use the animals to ferry loads to hilly areas. The animal, especially an ageing one would not be able to walk up a slope very fast. It slows down as it finds it hard to breathe in higher altitudes.

Nostrils slit

So, the owners sometimes slit the nostrils of the animals thinking that these would walk faster, the PFA authorities point out. "One of the donkeys had its nostrils slit and it was bleeding profusely at the time we picked it up from the street.

● Most of them belong to quarry owners

● They are abandoned once they lose strength

● They are now rehabilitated at a farm in Masanagudi near Udhagamandalam

The agony it causes to the animal is unthinkable," says Mini Vasudevan, Coordinator of HUMAN, an animal welfare organisation in Coimbatore.

The animals were treated immediately and they have been rehabilitated at a donkey farm in Masanagudi, near Udhagamandalam. The farm owned by the Indian Project for Animals and Nature (IPAN), has over 200 animals.

The donkeys are now recovering at the rehabilitation centre.