

TAMIL NADU

Captured elephant relocated to Mudumalai



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The male elephant, which was captured in Dharmapuri, was released at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve on Sunday.

Animal fitted with radio-collar to keep tab on its movement

A male elephant captured in Dharmapuri and released in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) is acclimatising itself to his new habitat, said Forest Department officials.

The elephant, known as Gover, was brought to the tiger reserve in the Nilgiris around 10 p.m on Sunday, and was released into the surrounding forests at midnight, said Deputy Director of MTR, S Senbagapriya.

Ms. Senbagapriya said the animal was fitted with a radio-collar to keep tabs on its movement within the reserve and prevent it from straying into farms and agricultural fields surrounding Mudumalai.

“The animal is getting used to his new habitat, but he seems to be healthy,” said Ms. Senbagapriya.

Some people residing around the tiger reserve and political outfits in Gudalur have voiced their displeasure over the release of the elephant in the area, complaining that the animal is a known crop-raider and has a violent history leading to loss of human life in Hosur.

However, Field Director of MTR, K K Kaushal, said previous instances of human-elephant conflict involving Gover in Hosur might have occurred as the elephant lived in a highly disturbed and fragmented habitat.

“Mudumalai is a pristine habitat for elephants, which have vast grazing grounds and they can travel to other areas like Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary and Bandipur Tiger Reserve,” said Mr. Kaushal.

The Field Director said that a team of eight department personnel, headed by a ranger, are monitoring the health of the elephant. He appealed to the public to not believe in rumours.

“The Forest department is monitoring the animal and ensuring that it does not approach human habitations. People need only remember that the other elephant that was recently released here, known as Vinayaga, has acclimatised itself to its habitat and is not causing any problems to villagers,” said Mr. Kaushal.