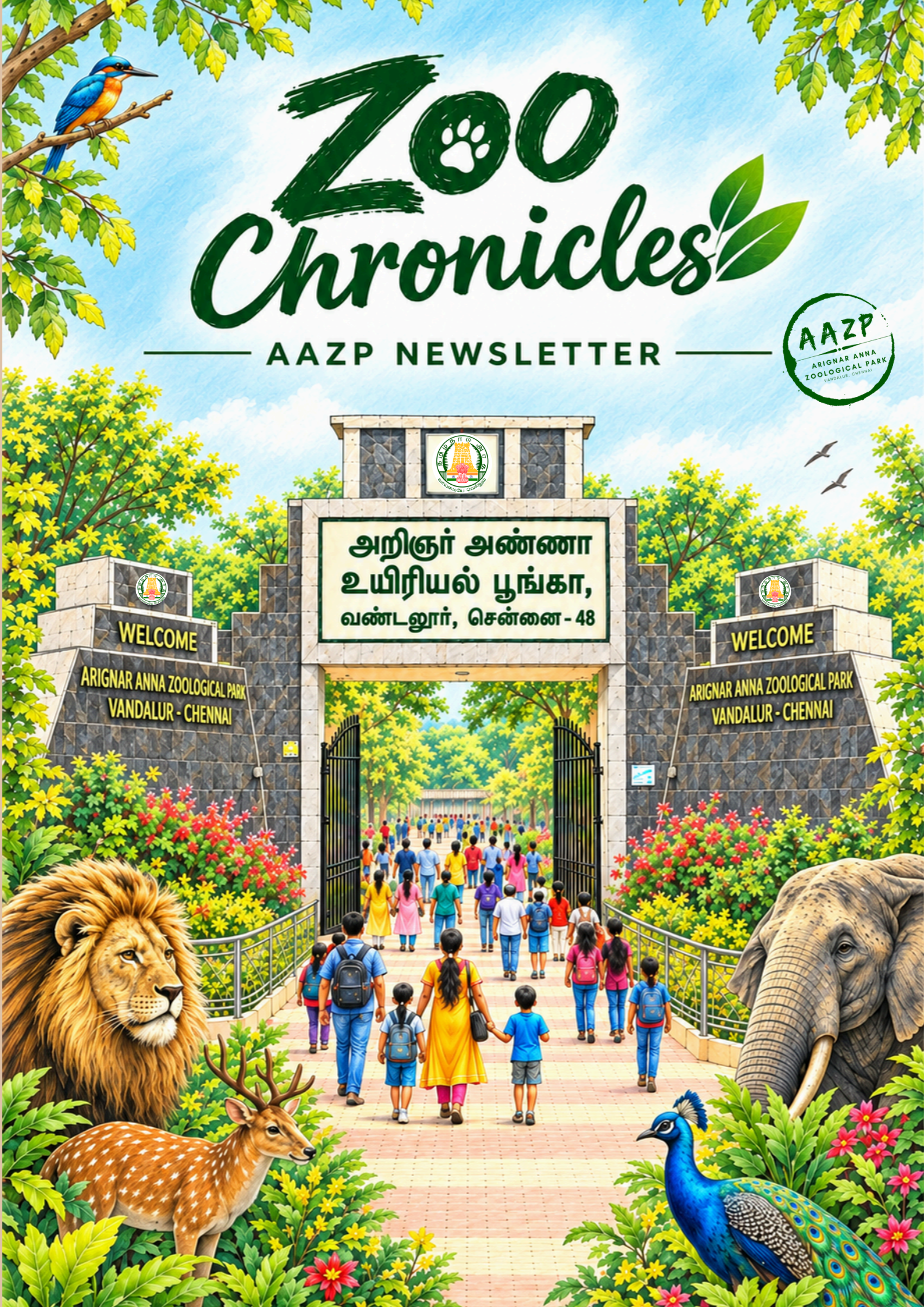
Zoo Chronicles

AAZP NEWSLETTER



Message from PCCF&CWLW

It gives me immense pleasure to present on this edition of AAZP Stories, reflecting the continued progress and commitment of Arignar Anna Zoological Park in animal welfare, conservation, education and public engagement.

The successful birth of a Nile crocodile, the arrival of a new pair of Asiatic lions, the State-wide Zoo Internship Initiative, and the revitalisation of visitor-learning facilities are significant milestones in AAZP Journey towards becoming a more progressive and conservation-oriented zoological institution.

Our strength lies in the dedication of the entire AAZP family. I appreciate the collective efforts of all staff and encourage everyone to continue embracing innovation, strengthening conservation efforts and inspiring society to develop a deeper understanding and respect for wildlife. Wishing the AAZP team even greater success ahead!"

Thiru. Rakesh Kumar Dogra I.F.S.,

PCCF & CWLW

Content

- The roar returns: A new pride for AAZP Lion safari
- First nile crocodile birth of AAZP
- Elephant enrichment
- State wide zoo internship initatives
- Butterfly Park reopens with enhanced naturalistic features
- Hi-tech zootorium
- Basic tamil learning programme
- A new chapter for the zoo library
- Other Indian zoo authorities visit
- Exposure visit to Nehru zoo
- Free entry to zoo commemorating CM's birthday
- Independence day celebration
- Health advisory committee meeting
- Zoo Veterinary Corner
- Zooschool Corner
- Zookeeper's story

Editoral board

Thiru. Manish Meena I.F.S.,
Deputy Director
Thiru. P. Manikandaprabhu
Assitant Director

Editor, Articles & Design

P.Shankari, Zoo Educator

Director Corner

It gives me immense pleasure to present this edition of the AAZP Stories, showcasing the meaningful initiatives and achievements of our zoo in animal care, conservation, education and visitor engagement.

This period has brought several encouraging milestones. The arrival of a new pair of Asiatic lions has brought back the energy to our Lion Safari, while the first successful birth of a Nile crocodile at AAZP marks an important achievement in captive care and breeding.

The Zoo has come up with state-wide zoo internship initiative, providing B.Sc. and M.Sc. students opportunities to gain practical exposure to wildlife and zoo management across zoos in Tamil Nadu. Our visitor facilities have also been strengthened with the reopening of the Butterfly Park with enhanced naturalistic features and the remodelling of the Zootorium with modern, hi-tech and interactive learning facilities.

Investing in our people is equally important. The Basic Tamil Learning Programme was introduced for zoo staff to strengthen their reading and writing skills. Zoo staff were sent for exposure visit to hyderabad zoo. AAZP also welcomed officials from other zoological institutions for professional learning and knowledge exchange.

Animal health and welfare remain our foremost priority. The Health Advisory Committee meeting provided valuable expert discussions on strengthening animal healthcare and welfare practices. Meanwhile, the Zoo School continues to expand its conservation education programmes and inspire young minds to develop a deeper understanding and respect for wildlife.

These achievements are the result of the dedication of the entire AAZP family. As a modern zoological institution, our responsibility extends beyond maintaining animals under human care. We strive to create a zoo that conserves, educates, inspires and contributes to scientific knowledge, while ensuring a safe and enriching environment for animals and visitors.

I sincerely appreciate the commitment of every member of the AAZP family.

Together, let us continue to inspire people to understand, respect and protect wildlife and the natural world.

Thiru. T. Ritto Cyriac I.F.S.,
Director, AAZP

The Roar Returns: A New Pride for AAZP's Lion Safari

There was a time when the Lion Safari at Arignar Anna Zoological Park echoed with roars. Visitors would wait with bated breath as a pride of lions lounged in the sun, walked the scrubjungle, and reminded everyone why the king of the jungle is called just that. At its peak glory, safari housed more than 25 lions. Prides of lion ruled over the 50-acre safari area as their vast kingdom. It was, quite simply, the crown jewel of AAZP.

But seasons change. Over the years, our pride dwindled. We lost many during the pandemic and many died later dure to old age-related troubles. Today we have only four lions in the safari and we are not able to release them together due to comparability issues. On some days, they will be just taking rest in the shade of trees and visitors leave with a little disappointment in their eyes. "We came all the way to see the lions," they say. And we hear them.

The new beginning



Recently, AAZP welcomed a very special pair of guests from Indore Zoo — a healthy, young pair of Asiatic lions. Their arrival is not just a regular Zoo animal exchange. It is the first step towards bringing our Lion Safari back to its old glory. The new pair has settled in well after quarantine and health checks. Keepers report they are curious, strong, and already exploring their yard. More importantly, they bring fresh genes which would pave foundation for a new lineage which is going to rule over the Vandallur safari for next few decades. And aptly we named them Zimba and Nala.

Our plan is clear and simple. Breed, grow, Restore. With this new pair, we hope to build a thriving pride again. In the coming months, our veterinary and animal care teams will closely monitor the lions, create optimal conditions for breeding, and ensure the safety and welfare of both adults and future cubs.

Why It Matters

The Asiatic lion is an iconic species and a flagship for Indian conservation. At AAZP, the Lion Safari is more than an exhibit — it is where children first feel awe, where families create memories, and where we tell the story of wildlife conservation in India. A full, active pride means more sightings for visitors. It means more educational programs. And most importantly, it means we are doing our part in the national effort to secure the future of this majestic species.

Looking Ahead

We know the wait has been long. We've heard the feedback at the exit gate. But with this new pair from Indore, and the dedication of our keepers and vets, we are confident. Give us some time. The grasslands will be busy again. The rocks will have silhouettes at dusk. And the roar you've been missing will return to Vandalur.

The Lion Safari is coming back.

And this time, it's coming back with a pride.

First Nile Crocodile Birth at AAZP

G.Kamaraj, Biologist



Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP) received a pair of Nile crocodiles in 2022 through an animal exchange programme. On 20 June 2026, AAZP recorded the first successful birth of Nile crocodiles at the Zoo.

As part of enclosure improvement, the soil in the Nile crocodile enclosure was loosened and a fresh layer of river sand was added, providing a suitable nesting substrate. This naturalistic habitat improvement supported successful nesting and resulted in the birth of the new offspring, marking an important achievement in the Zoo's conservation breeding efforts.

Enrichment for Elephants

G.Kamaraj, Biologist



Elephant enrichment, such as using hanging feeders for fresh forage, promotes natural behaviors and mental stimulation. Suspending food encourages elephants to stretch and work for their meals, mirroring wild foraging habits. This physical and cognitive activity reduces boredom, prevents stereotypic behaviors, and enhances their overall well-being.



State-Wide Zoo Internship Initiative

Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur, has introduced a structured internship framework to provide students with practical exposure to wildlife conservation, scientific research, animal welfare and zoo education across zoological institutions under the Zoo Authority of Tamil Nadu (ZAT).

The initiative extends internship opportunities beyond AAZP to Guindy Children's Park, Kurumbapatti Zoological Park, Salem, and Amirthi Zoological Park, Vellore, creating a state-wide learning network. Decentralised approval through the Director, AAZP, is expected to make the process faster and more accessible to students.

The 21-day internship focuses on non-invasive learning, including animal behaviour observation, biodiversity surveys, species identification, data collection and scientific documentation. Handling animals, specimen collection and entry into restricted areas are prohibited.

Students are guided by zoo scientific team biologists and zoo educators. Controlled intake ensures adequate guidance and meaningful field exposure. Internship opportunity is open throughout the year and the programme follows a controlled intake system to ensure that students receive adequate guidance and meaningful exposure. At any given time, each Division Office may accommodate a maximum of 10–12 Bachelor's degree interns and 5–6 Master's degree interns. This ensures that the number of interns remains manageable and that each student receives adequate professional guidance, meaningful field exposure and individual attention throughout their internship.

Each applicant/group shall submit a formal request through the Head of the Department/Institution, along with a one-page project abstract, Bonafide Certificate and Student ID, seeking permission to undertake the internship at any of the four zoos in Tamil Nadu mentioned above.

At the end of the internship, the students shall submit a final internship report and present their findings and learning outcomes to the Director, either in person or through video conferencing, as directed by the Zoo.

The initiative has received positive interest from students and academic institutions across Tamil Nadu, with students from various colleges showing enthusiasm and coming forward to apply for internships at Arignar Anna Zoological Park. The structured programme provides students with an opportunity to gain practical exposure to wildlife, conservation, research and zoo management in a professional learning environment.

Butterfly Park Reopens with Enhanced Naturalistic Features and Visitor Experiences



The Butterfly Park at Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur, one of the zoo's most popular attractions, has reopened following a comprehensive renovation aimed at creating a more naturalistic, engaging and enriching experience for both butterflies and visitors. Spread across 2.7 hectares near Otteri Lake, the Butterfly Park is specially designed to support the complete life cycle of butterflies. Dedicated host and nectar gardens provide essential plants for breeding, feeding and habitat enrichment, while creating a vibrant landscape where visitors can observe butterflies in a naturalistic setting.

A Caterpillar-Shaped Conservatory

The centrepiece of the Butterfly Park is its indoor butterfly conservatory, uniquely designed in the shape of a caterpillar. The facility is supported by larval and pupal rearing rooms, providing an opportunity to understand the different stages of a butterfly's life cycle. An interpretation centre further enriches the experience by introducing visitors to butterfly species, their behaviour, life cycles and ecological importance.





A More Naturalistic Experience

The renovation has enhanced the Butterfly Park with colourful polycarbonate sheets, natural bamboo railings, durable stainless-steel mesh, renovated fountains and vibrant murals, creating a safer, more attractive and naturalistic environment for visitors and butterflies.

Interactive Learning for Visitors

The renovated interpretation centre offers an enhanced learning experience through improved displays and self-learning kiosks. Visitors can explore information about different butterfly species, discover the fascinating stages of their life cycle and even design their own virtual butterflies.

Two new photo points have also been created, giving visitors dedicated spaces to capture and share memorable moments from their Butterfly Park experience.



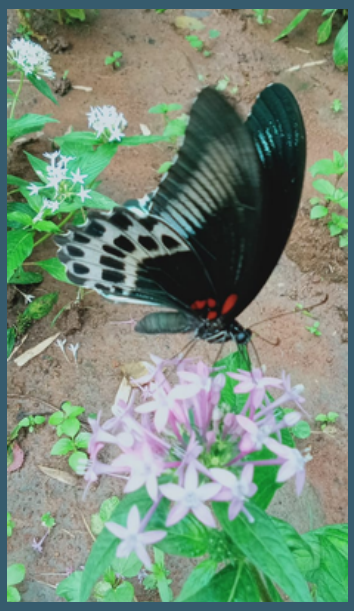


Connecting Visitors with Butterflies

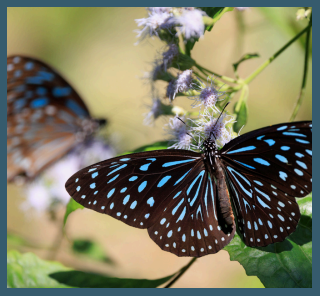
As part of the park's renewed visitor engagement initiatives, a butterfly release programme will be conducted every Saturday at 11:30 a.m., subject to the availability of hand reared butterflies for release. The programme offers visitors an opportunity to witness the release of butterflies and gain a deeper appreciation of their role in nature and the ecosystem.

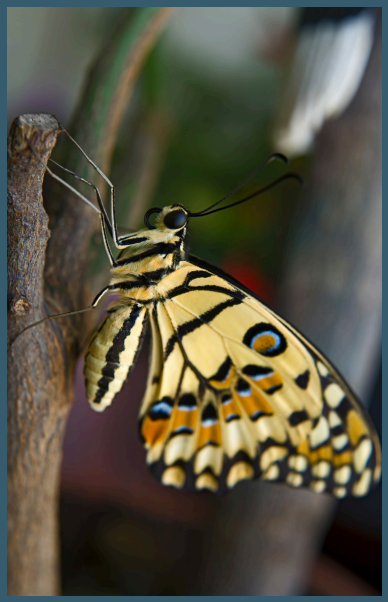
With its improved facilities, naturalistic landscaping and interactive learning opportunities, the renovated Butterfly Park is set to offer visitors a closer connection with the fascinating world of butterflies while strengthening awareness about their conservation and ecological significance.

Visitors are invited to explore the renewed Butterfly Park and discover the beauty, diversity and remarkable life cycle of these delicate yet ecologically important creatures.







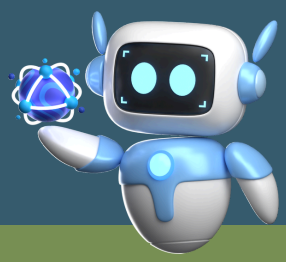






Glimpse of butterflies visiting Butterfly Park

ZOOTORIUM FOR NEXT-GENERATION WILDLIFE LEARNING



Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, has remodelled its Zoo Interpretation Centre exclusively for school groups, offering an engaging and technology-enabled learning experience that promotes wildlife education and conservation awareness.

The Zootorium reception has been creatively designed on a Western Ghats theme, providing visitors with an immersive introduction to the rich biodiversity of one of India's important ecological regions.

The remodelled Interpretation Centre (Zootorium) features a range of advanced technology-based interactive interpretation models designed to make learning about wildlife more interesting, experiential and child-friendly. Instead of conventional display panels, students can explore concepts through interactive models and digital learning experiences.

The centre also features an interactive zoo layout, with the locations of animals marked on the map.



This enables students to understand the spatial arrangement of the zoo while simultaneously learning about the different animal species housed at Arignar Anna Zoological Park

MULTIFUNCTIONAL TABLE

One of the key attractions is an Interactive multifunctional table with holographic technology, which combines education and visual experience. A specially designed interactive study table helps students understand important ecological concepts such as the food chain, food web, prey and predator relationships through an engaging learning approach.





The facility includes two innovative selfie points, where students can capture photographs using different wildlife-themed frames. The photographs can also be shared directly through WhatsApp, adding a digital and memorable element to the educational visit.

Another interactive feature is the BMI Calculator, which allows students to compare human height and weight with those of different animal species. This provides an interesting way for children to understand the remarkable physical differences between humans and wildlife.

A unique interactive paw-mark feature enables children to step on animal paw marks, triggering information about the respective animal. This innovative "Play and Learn" concept makes wildlife education interactive, engaging and memorable.

The Interpretation Centre also demonstrates the Zoo's commitment to sustainability and waste utilisation. Around 500kg of discarded rubber tyres have been creatively reused to construct animal models. This initiative demonstrates an important message about reuse, recycling and environmental responsibility among visitors.

This technology-enabled interpretation facility benefits young learners by making wildlife education interactive, experiential, and enjoyable. It inspires children to explore and develop a deeper understanding of biodiversity and conservation.

Basic Tamil Learning Programme for Zoo Staff



A Basic Tamil Learning Programme is being conducted at Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur, in coordination with the Education Department, Chengalpattu District, for casual labourers working in the Zoo.

Arignar Anna Zoological Park has more than 170 casual labourers, among whom a few staff members had discontinued their formal schooling and require basic support in reading and writing Tamil.

The identified staff members have been enrolled in a Basic Tamil Learning Programme to improve their basic literacy and enable them to communicate and carry out their day-to-day activities more effectively. The programme was formally inaugurated on 17.07.2026 by Thiru. T. Ritto Cyriac, I.F.S., Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park, along with the Tmt. R. Thiruvalarselvi Chief Educational Officer, Chengalpattu District, senior officers from both department and participating Zoo staff.





The programme marks a meaningful step towards promoting inclusive learning and staff welfare at Arignar Anna Zoological Park. By strengthening their basic reading and writing skills in Tamil, the participating staff will be better equipped to communicate confidently, understand instructions and carry out their day-to-day duties more effectively. The initiative reflects the Zoo's commitment to the overall development, empowerment and well-being of its workforce.

A New Chapter for the Zoo Library

K.C. Jeshwanth, Research Assistant



A new chapter has begun at the Zoo Library! Following renovation, the library has reopened as a refreshed space dedicated to reading, learning and discovering the fascinating world of wildlife. With a collection of around 1,000 books and resources covering zoology, biodiversity, wildlife conservation and natural history, the library offers a treasure trove of knowledge for students, researchers, staff and wildlife enthusiasts. From fascinating animal behaviour to the secrets of biodiversity, every book opens a new window into the natural world. And there is more to look forward to! The Zoo is planning to open a new library for the public within the zoo premises, giving visitors an opportunity to pause, explore and discover the world of wildlife through books during their zoo visit.

Other Indian Zoos authority visit to AAZP

On 14.08.2026 senior officers from Himachal Pradesh Zoo and Conservation Breeding Society – (HPZCBS) visited the zoo





On 22.08.2026 senior officers from Assam State Zoo, Guwahati visited the zoo

Exposure Visit to Nehru Zoological Park

S.Subash FRO I

An exposure visit to Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, was organized for the staff of Arignar Anna Zoological Park from 18.05.2026 to 20.05.2026, with the objective of enhancing practical knowledge in modern zoo management and animal welfare practices. A total of 29 staff members, including Forest Rangers, Forest Guards and field staff from various ranges, participated in the visit.

During the visit, the team explored various sections including the Nocturnal Animal House, Reptile Area, Mouse Deer and Vulture Breeding Centres, Veterinary Section, Aviary, Cat, Primate, Ungulate and Canine Sections, Safari areas and visitor facilities. The team also interacted with zoo officials, veterinary officers, educators and animal keepers to understand animal husbandry, enrichment, feeding, veterinary care, breeding programmes, enclosure maintenance and visitor management systems.

The visit also provided valuable exposure to feed management, animal kitchen, meat preparation, veterinary care facilities, fodder cultivation and digital visitor ticketing systems. The staff observed several innovative practices such as sprinkler-based summer management, modern animal handling facilities, organized visitor services, thematic canteens and systematic feed storage.

The two-day programme was a highly informative and enriching experience, providing practical insights into scientific zoo management and animal welfare. The knowledge gained through the visit will contribute towards improving day-to-day management practices, staff efficiency and animal care at Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur.









Free entry to Zoo commemorating CMs birthday



Thiru R.V. Ranjithkumar, Hon'ble Forest Minister handed over the cheque to Thiru.Srinivas R Reddy PCCF (HoFF) for the cost of entry fee for the visitors in presence of Thiru D. Sarathkumar, Minister for Human Resources Management of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. S. Thiyagarajan, MLA for the Chengalpattu constituency along with senior officers of Forest department

On the occasion of the birthday of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, free entry was announced at Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur, on 21.06.2026 (Sunday) and 22.06.2026 (Monday). Anticipating a significant increase in visitor footfall, the Zoo Management made extensive arrangements in coordination with the various line departments to ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of visitors while safeguarding animal welfare.

Anticipating the crowd, Online advance ticket booking was facilitated through zoo website to reduce waiting time and avoid long queues at the entrance. At the same time, offline ticket counters were kept operational to facilitate visitors who opted for spot booking.

Visitors with online pre-booked tickets as well as those without prior bookings were permitted entry into the Zoo. Six ticket counters were operated on both days, through which counter tickets were issued.

Separate parking facilities were arranged for two-wheelers within the Zoo premises and heavy motor vehicles at the additional Zoo parking area. Continuous free shuttle services were provided using 10 vans and buses to transport visitors between the parking area and the Zoo entrance.

Children below 8 years of age were provided with wrist tags bearing their parents' contact details for safety and easy identification. More than 5,000 children benefited from this facility.

Adequate RO drinking water points and clean toilet facilities were made available throughout the Zoo. In addition, 10 additional RO water points, 20 bio-toilets and additional dustbins were installed at designated locations.

Five medical help desks with ambulance facilities were established at strategic locations inside the Zoo and provided assistance to 160 visitors. Four visitor help desks were also established, assisting 370 visitors. Further, one fire engine was stationed within the Zoo premises to ensure emergency preparedness and public safety.





Visitor movement was continuously monitored through the CCTV surveillance system from the Control Room, while appropriate navigation instructions were provided to regulate and guide the movement of visitors.

For effective crowd management and visitor assistance, 100 uniformed Forest Department personnel, 150 police personnel, two units of Singappen Special Force (SSF), and 50 volunteers were deployed.

Information and directional signboards were installed at key locations across the Zoo to facilitate easy navigation and enhance the overall visitor experience.
Separate exit gates were provided for visitors proceeding towards the Zoo parking area and the MTC bus stop, thereby ensuring smooth and orderly dispersal of visitors.





Arignar Anna Zoological Park witnessed an overwhelming response during the two free-entry days. On 21.06.2026, a total of 17,182 visitors visited the Zoo, comprising 14,554 adults, 1,995 children and 633 children below five years of age. On 22.06.2026, the Zoo received 13,012 visitors, including 11,670 adults, 978 children and 364 children below five years of age. Thus, over the two days, a total of 30,194 visitors visited Arignar Anna Zoological Park, reflecting the strong public interest and enthusiasm towards the Zoo.

Independence Day Celebration at Arignar Anna Zoological Park



Arignar Anna Zoological Park proudly celebrated Independence Day with great honour and patriotic spirit. The National Flag was hoisted by Thiru. T. Ritto Cyriac, IFS, Director, AAZP. Senior Forest Officers and dedicated Zoo staff participated in the celebration, reaffirming their commitment to the nation and to the conservation and protection of wildlife and natural heritage. The occasion was marked with a strong sense of patriotism, unity and dedication to the service of the nation and wildlife conservation.

Health advisory committee meeting

The Zoo Health Advisory Committee meeting was conducted on 28.08.2026 at Arignar Anna Zoological Park. The meeting highlighted on the critical role of the Zoo Health Advisory Committee in regularly reviewing, updating and providing guidance on animal health, welfare and management protocols, with a view to further strengthening and elevating the standards of animal care at the Zoo.

It was also emphasized that the Zoo Health Advisory Committee may be convened once every six months on a regular basis. Such periodic meetings would facilitate continuous review of animal health status, identification of emerging health concerns, evaluation of existing veterinary and management practices, and timely guidance for improving the overall standards of animal healthcare and welfare at the Zoo.





ZOO VETERINARY CORNER

Unraveling Hematuria in an Indian Wild Ass (Equus hemionus khur)

P. Kamalanathan, K. Sridhar, M. K. Ramees, K. Kavin Kumar and S. Bharathidhasan



Adult female Wild Ass

An adult female Indian wild ass (*Equus hemionus khur*), recently brought from Sakkarbaug Zoo through animal exchange program, was reported for reddish brown unrination for four days. Hematuria is red blood cells in urine and hemoglobinuria is haemoglobin in urine which is predominantly noticed in hemoprotozoan disease which poses high risk to the animal. On screening the urine sample which collected from the floor by aspirating in a sterile syringe, no RBC is noticed leading the diagnosis towards hemoglobinuria.

But as the animal had normal feed and water intake and exhibited normal behavioural patterns, the hemolysis is suspected because of urine being aspirated from floor. Further on urine analysis an elevated leukocyte (WBC) count was noticed. Hence empirical tentative diagnosis was arrived as urinary tract infection (UTI) and a course of oral antibiotic and supplements was initiated immediately.



Blood-tinged urine collected from Wild Ass for urinalysis

In equids, UTIs pose severe health and conservation risks if not attended promptly, as systemic progression could compromise the fertility and could be life threatening. Timely diagnosis and interventions are therefore warranted with utmost care. In this case, clinical sign was resolved by the third day of treatment, with normal urination and defecation. A follow-up urinalysis at day seven demonstrated a drastic reduction in WBC levels, confirming recovery. This case highlights how routine laboratory investigations and early clinical diagnosis are vital for the successful therapeutic management of infectious diseases in endangered wild animals.

Management of deep and extensive gore wound management in a Gaur (Bos gaurus)

Dr.K.Sridhar,M.V.Sc., Dr.K.Kavin Kumar, B.V.Sc , Dr.P.Kamanathan, M.V.Sc., and Dr.K.Mohaed Ramees, B.V.Sc.

The gaur (*Bos gaurus*), also known as Indian bison, is a large bovine species primarily found in the semi-wet evergreen forests and evergreen forests of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. It has been listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. AAZP has highest population Gaurs in captivity in India, with an outstanding breeding performance, evidencing to the appropriate management. Eventhough with all the strict good management practice, some un expected incidences of infighting is not avoidable, specially during breeding.



Fig:1 Open lacerated wound in the left abdomen region

Infighting mostly occurs between adult bulls, particularly during competition for dominance and access to females during the breeding season between December and June. An adult male gaur was report with an extensive deep lacerated wound in the left ventral abdomen region along with non-weight bearing lamness of left hindlimb, due to infighting with another male (Fig:1). An immediate treatment protocol with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory was initiated through remote drug delivery system using pneumatic dart system (Fig.2). Following parenteral medication, oral medication was followed for 7 days by baiting the medicines in banana. Efforts were taken to flush the wound daily with an antiseptic solution (normal saline with Povidone iodine) and neem oil in 1:10 dilution. After the course of antibiotic topical flushing with above mentioned mixture was carried out for 30 days. After 30 days, complete wound healing was noticed, along with scar formation in the left ventral abdomen region (Fig:3)



Fig:2 Parenteral anti-biotic, anti-inflammatory and anti-parasitic drugs were injected using remote drug



Fig:3 complete wound healing along with scar formation was noticed

Management of mixed bacterial infection in captive Indian cobras (Naja naja)

M. K. Ramees, K. Sridhar, P. Kamalanathan, K. Kavin Kumar & S. Bharathidhasan

Three Indian cobras (*Naja naja*) maintained in the serpentarium were found dead, while several other cobras housed in the same facility subsequently developed anorexia and reduced feed intake. Necropsy of the deceased snakes revealed gross lesions suggestive of a systemic infection with involvement of multiple organs. Based on the clinical presentation and necropsy findings, an empirical therapy was initiated in the affected snakes using broad-spectrum parenteral antibiotics, multivitamin supplementation, steroidal anti-inflammatory medication and supportive fluid therapy. During scheduled feeding days, to ensure feed intake, snakes were separated in individual cubicles with appropriate bedding. Controlled sun-basking was also incorporated into the husbandry protocol twice weekly. Respective snake enclosure was flamed and also disinfected.



Parenteral drug administration in an Indian cobra under physical restraint

Cytological and bacteriological examination of tissue impression smears obtained during necropsy of the deceased snakes revealed mixed bacterial infection involving Escherichia coli, Enterococcus sp. and Staphylococcus sp. These organisms may occur as part of the normal microbiota of reptiles, particularly within the gastrointestinal tract. However, under conditions of stress, immunosuppression or compromised husbandry, such organisms may behave as opportunistic pathogens and contribute to systemic disease.

Following initiation of therapy and supportive management, the clinically affected snakes showed progressive improvement, with voluntary feed intake resuming approximately two weeks after commencement of treatment. This case highlights the potential role of opportunistic bacterial infections in captive snakes and emphasizes the importance of appropriate husbandry, environmental management, nutrition, stress alleviation clinical evaluation and early intervention in maintaining the health of captive serpentarium populations

ZOOSCHOOL CORNER

Connecting Children with Autism to Wildlife and Nature

Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), in coordination with the Centre of Excellence for Persons with Autism (CoE), Tamil Nadu, organised an exclusive wildlife awareness session for children with autism. The programme provided an inclusive opportunity to learn about wildlife and develop appreciation for animals and nature, with active participation from parents and caregivers. The children showed great enthusiasm and curiosity in observing the wild animals, making the programme a meaningful learning experience that promoted awareness, compassion and sensitivity towards wildlife. The initiative reflects AAZP's commitment to inclusive wildlife education and creating accessible opportunities for all sections of society to connect with nature and wildlife.





AAZP–Rotary Initiative for Underprivileged Students

In coordination with the Rotary Club of Madras, AAZP facilitated a visit for over 3,500 underprivileged students, providing them with an opportunity to explore the Zoo, observe wildlife and gain awareness about animal conservation and the importance of protecting nature.





SFS training

64 SFS trainees from the Kundal Forest Academy, Maharashtra, attended a one-day Zoo Exposure Training Programme at Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), gaining practical exposure to zoo management, wildlife conservation and animal care practices.

Awareness programmes





World Environment Day

On the occasion of World Environment Day, uniformed Forest Officials carried out a mass tree plantation activity within the Zoo campus. A week-long E-Waste Awareness Campaign was also organised, with dedicated e-waste collection bins for visitors and awareness activities promoting responsible disposal, recycling and sustainable waste management.

International Tiger Day











On the occasion of International Tiger Day, AAZP conducted a mass awareness campaign reaching a wide range of audiences, with around 700 participants. The programme included classroom sessions, field visits, keeper talks and interactive activities, providing participants with engaging opportunities to learn about tiger conservation and wildlife protection.

World Elephant Day

On the occasion of World Elephant Day, AAZP conducted an awareness campaign near the elephant enclosure, highlighting the vital role of elephants in forest ecosystems and their importance as a keystone species. Visitors were also educated on responsible practices and appropriate behaviour around wildlife. online quiz contest was hosted over 600 members participated and get their certificate.



World Snake Day

On the occasion of World Snake Day, AAZP conducted an awareness campaign highlighting the ecological importance of snakes, the distinguishing features of venomous and non-venomous snakes, and the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act relating to snake conservation and protection.



World Lion Day



On the occasion of World Lion Day, AAZP conducted an awareness programme for school groups, highlighting the importance of lion conservation, with special emphasis on the Asiatic lion population and its conservation in Gir, Gujarat. The programme sensitised students about the need to protect lions and their natural habitats.

Zoo Orientation Programmes





AAZP organises Zoo Orientation Programmes for visiting school and college students, providing them with an opportunity to learn about wildlife, animal behaviour, conservation, zoo management and the importance of protecting natural ecosystems through interactive and educational sessions.

Internship programme



B.Sc. and M.Sc. students who completed their 21-day internship at Arignar Anna Zoological Park presented their findings, observations and learning outcomes from the internship programme.

Zoo Ambassador Programme

Arignar Anna Zoological Park organised the Zoo Summer Ambassador Programme, a flagship zoo education and wildlife awareness initiative that has been successfully conducted since 2018. The programme goes beyond engaging students by creating awareness about wildlife and highlighting the role of citizens in protecting natural spaces and wildlife around us. Around 200 ambassadors enrolled in the programme and were sensitised towards wildlife conservation, environmental responsibility and the importance of protecting nature





Zoo Venture programme

AAZP conducts the Zoo Venture Programme free of charge for Government school students, now entering its second academic year. The programme provides students with opportunities to learn about wildlife, animal behaviour and conservation through engaging educational activities. Interested Government schools can register through the AAZP website (www.aazp.in). The programme has received an enthusiastic response, with several Government schools showing keen interest in participation.







ZOO KEEPERS STORY

A Keeper's Journey: Three Decades of Care, Commitment and Conservation

E. Padmanaban, Animal Keeper, Arignar Anna Zoological Park



My journey with wildlife began in 1988, when I joined the Velachery Nursery as a daily-wage worker. In 2000, I moved to Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, where caring for migratory birds opened my eyes to the fascinating world of wildlife.

In 2010, I joined Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, as an Animal Keeper. My first responsibility was the lions at the Lion Safari. I soon discovered that animals, just like people, have different personalities and needs. The more I observed them, the more I learned.

In 2012, I was entrusted with a pair of Asiatic wild asses. Watching them settle into their new home and later seeing their calves being born was among the happiest experiences of my career.

But wildlife keeping also comes with moments of deep sadness. In 2022, we lost the mother during a difficult delivery despite the best efforts of the veterinary team. After caring for her for many years, saying goodbye was one of the hardest moments I have experienced.



Birth of newborn calf in 2016

Over the years, I have cared for lions, wild asses, white tigers, jaguars, wolves and tigers, and every animal has taught me something new—patience, observation and, above all, respect for their individual behaviour.

Today, I care for the Tiger Breeding Centre, hoping to see healthy cubs born and play my part in conservation. After nearly four decades with wildlife, I have learned one simple truth: being a keeper is not just about feeding animals or cleaning their enclosures.



It is about knowing them, noticing even the smallest change, celebrating their births and carrying the memories of those we lose. Wildlife keeping became my profession in 1988. Somewhere along the way, it became my life.

Two Tigers Two Worlds
At Vandalur Zoo

The word tiger can remind us of two very different creatures.
The majestic Bengal tiger commands attention with its size, strength and bold orange-and-black stripes.
Hidden closer to the ground is the much smaller Indian tiger centipede,
painted in striking bands of dark and golden colours.

One rules through power and presence the other survives through speed and stealth.
One is measured in metres, the other in centimetres.
Yet both are perfectly adapted to their worlds.
Nature does not make every predator big or strong.
Sometimes survival belongs to the smallest creature that knows exactly when to hide—and exactly when to strike.

It's never about where you are
How big you are how small you are
That matters

It's what you can do that matters..

Pu. Vasantha Priyan, Forester



Tiger Centipede



Tiger

Fascinating Indian Wildlife Word Puzzles

1. **UGAR** — A large wild ox native to the Indian subcontinent, known for its massive horns and powerful build.
2. **O O O L H K G I B B N** — India's only ape species, known for its distinctive loud calls echoing through the northeastern rainforests.
3. **U S N H G I C O A** — A unique antelope found in Indian forests that is notable for having four horns instead of two.
4. **L I G I A N**— Asia's largest antelope, with males sporting a bluish-gray coat and a short mane.
5. **N I R U T G O N B** — Often called the "bearcat," this arboreal viverrid is famous for smelling remarkably like warm buttered popcorn.



@AAZPChennai @vandalurzoo @vandalurzoo @vandalurzoo -arignarannazoo5265

aazpdirector@tn.gov.in 044-29542301 www.aazp.in +91 99401 27177 aazpfeedback@gmail.com