



Press release – for immediate publication

Date: April 15, 2008

DONKEYS DUMPED BY ROADSIDE SIGNAL A NEW CRISIS IN ANIMAL WELFARE FOR KATHMANDU

The discovery of two critically abused and injured donkeys dumped by the main roadside in the Kathmandu city has signalled a new crisis in animal welfare for Nepal.

The rapid urbanisation of Kathmandu has created a booming brick factory industry in the city. Around 1,000 donkeys have recently been introduced to work in the brick kilns.

The two donkeys were discovered on April 5 near one of the busiest main roads in Kathmandu. Unfortunately one had already died from its injuries, starvation, overwork and exposure.

The other was found to be suffering not only from a broken leg but also from multiple large open sores and serious leg wounds. Locals said the donkeys were dumped there five days before. The local children and community tried to help the donkeys by feeding them grass and covering them with plastic to protect them from torrential rain.

When local people realised the animals needed serious medical treatment, staff from the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre (KAT) rushed to the scene and took the live donkey for immediate veterinary care.

KAT Manager Khageshwaar Sharma said: "Although KAT does not have facilities to house large animals, this was an extreme case of animal cruelty which we could not ignore."

Dr. Dar, an Israeli vet volunteering with KAT and who is caring for the donkey, named Asi by staff, said: "I have never seen such a case of abuse in my life. It seems to be that this mule underwent multiple severe prolonged abuses in the past, since there is an old untreated fracture on her fore left limb that caused a twisting of that leg. The poor body condition indicates severe starvation and malnutrition. Poor hoofs and atrophy of the hind legs are also present. In spite of all the lesions, somehow this stoic jenny (female mule) could maintain and manage to stay alive up to the point of the recent rescue. A severe open on her fore right limb probably was the one that finally became too much for her."

KAT resident vet Dr Kiran Pandey added: "The fact that she was neglected while on the ground and could not move herself created further severe pressure sores all over her body side and dehydration. This supports the assumption that this animal was subjected to a severe abuse and heartless cruelty for a long period of time."

Both donkeys are thought to be seven years old.

KAT Founder Jan Salter said: "I despair at this new development. We have done so much important work mainly with the stray dogs in the Kathmandu ring road area and are just starting to see the results with much healthier animals on the streets. Now we have another new crisis to face. Information gathered from the local NGO in the area which is helping the community that labour in these brick factories suggests that the working conditions for these beasts is appalling.

"The brick factories destroy the surrounding vegetation so there is very little for the donkeys to eat. It appears that they are just worked until till they drop. We need desperately to educate the factory owners and workers in the care of these long suffering animals in the future. We hope that 'Asi' will become a a symbol for the future wellbeing of all suffering working animals in Nepal."

KAT was founded in 2004 and carries out a programme of animal birth control and rabies vaccination amongst street dogs to reduce suffering and benefit the community.

Street and community dogs are caught each day, taken to KAT Centre, treated for conditions such as worms, fleas and mange, and then sterilised and vaccinated against rabies. Once they are fully recovered they are released back where they came from with an identity mark on their ear.

KAT receives no government funding and is reliant on donations.

Since it began, KAT has sterilised and vaccinated over 5,400 dogs – preventing around 55,000 unwanted puppies being born.

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Notes to Editors:

For interviews and pictures of the donkeys please contact:

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