

Assam Elephant ‘Mangal Singh’ Undergoes Critical Dental Procedure Following Brutal Tusk Hacking by Poachers

In a major medical intervention following a horrific case of wildlife crime, a 16-year-old captive elephant named ‘Mangal Singh’ has undergone a specialised dental procedure in Margherita, Assam.

The procedure follows a brutal attack in April 2026 in the Dhulijan forest area of Lakhpathar, Digboi, where poachers hacked off both of the elephant’s tusks, leaving the animal with life-threatening injuries and exposed pulp cavities. The incident sparked widespread outrage of such a heinous crime and concerns on security of captive elephants under the custody of some private ownership.

Mangal Singh is owned by an individual in Margherita. Following the attack, his distressed cries alerted local residents, who immediately informed the Digboi Forest Department. Government veterinary teams responded promptly and initiated emergency medical treatment.



WTI and Assam Forest Department veterinarians treating the elephant “Mangal Singh”.

Dr. Mehedi Hassan, Veterinary Surgeon, WTI, said, “During the initial days following the incident, the elephant remained in critical condition and suffered from severe bleeding. As both tusks had been cut from near the roots, the pulp cavities were left exposed, resulting in persistent infection despite regular monitoring and treatment.” Dr Mehedi, along with local veterinary experts, continued to attend to the elephant to ensure life-threatening infections did not occur.

Elephants are social animals, and Mangal Singh is a captive-born calf with strong social bonds with the family and the surroundings he grew up in. The Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) team decided to keep the elephant in his familiar surroundings, denying transport to other unfamiliar surroundings, which would put him under further undue stress and prevent further complications from arising.

In view of his prolonged suffering and the continuing risk of infection, a specialised partial pulpotomy procedure was performed by a joint veterinary team under the leadership of Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury from WTI on 26 August 2026 at Margherita. Such intensive procedures require multidisciplinary teams, and the CWRC team ensured this was done most professionally. Dr Bhupen Sarma, professor (retired), Deptt of Surgery and Radiology and an expert on elephant anaesthesia; a special team of Orthodontics from Tinsukia led by Dr. Abhishek Ojha; senior veterinarians from the Animal Husbandry Department, Dr. Rabi Shankar Choudhury, Dr. Bishwajit Barua and Dr Mehedi Hassan of WTI; were part of today's procedure.



The team capturing the X-ray before Mangal Singh's partial pulpotomy treatment.

Rohini Kumar Das, DFO Digboi, said, “Our local veterinarians with experience of handling elephants were also rendering treatment over the past few months. But the exposed pulp cavity requires closure in both tusks, which is possible only with a partial pulpotomy. Today, we successfully initiate the procedure and will be ensuring post-operative care for the next 7 days.”

Dr. Bhaskar Choudhury, CWRC Centre Manager and the lead veterinarian at WTI, said, “It is disheartening to see this majestic sub-adult tusker suffer such brutality. The circumstances surrounding the loss of his tusks are deeply concerning and highlight the need for greater protection of elephants, including those under private ownership. At this point, our priority is to ensure Mangal Singh receives the care and treatment he needs to recover.”



The team from WTI and the Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Assam, led the treatment of “Mangal Singh”.

Jose Louies, CEO, WTI said, “The case highlights the severe physical and psychological consequences of illegal ivory-related activities and underscores the need for continued vigilance, stronger protection measures and swift action against wildlife criminals.”



The Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC), near Kaziranga National Park, is jointly run by the Assam Forest Department, the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), and IFAW.