



PINKISH PACHYDERM. A mahout takes a white elephant for its daily ride in Naypyitaw, Myanmar (also known as Burma), in this November 27, 2013 file photo. Myanmar says it has found a rare, white elephant in the jungles of the western Ayeyarwaddy region. Forestry official Tun Tun Oo said the seven-year-old female was captured by his department in late February, six weeks after it was initially spotted in a reserve in Patheingyi township. (AP Photo/Khin Maung Win, File)

Ninth rare white elephant captured

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — Myanmar says it has found a rare, white elephant in the jungles of the western Ayeyarwaddy region.

Forestry official Tun Tun Oo said the seven-year-old female was captured by his department in late February, six weeks after it was initially spotted in a reserve in Patheingyi township.

“We had to be careful,” he said. “It’s wild. We didn’t want the elephant or the forestry department officials to get hurt.”

White elephants, actually albinos, have for centuries been revered in Myanmar (also known as Burma), Thailand, Laos, and other Asian nations.

Often pinkish in color, with fair eyelashes and toenails, the animals were normally kept and pampered by monarchs as a symbol of royal power and prosperity

— and many people still believe they bring good luck to the country.

Myanmar has eight white elephants in captivity, most from the Ayeyarwaddy region. Five are now in the zoo in the capital, Naypyitaw, and three in Yangon.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), there are between 25,600 and 32,750 Asian elephants remaining in the wild. Only males carry tusks and are the exclusive victims of poaching for their ivory.

The capture of wild elephants for domestic use has become a threat to wild populations. India, Vietnam, and Myanmar have banned capture in order to conserve their wild herds, but in Myanmar, elephants are still caught each year for the timber industry or the illegal wildlife trade, according to WWF.

Malaysia vows action if controller slept when MH370 vanished

Continued from page 4

plane’s data recorder had expired more than a year before the jet vanished because of a computer data error that went unnoticed by maintenance crews.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott



South Koreans happy for recovering U.S. ambassador Lippert

By Hyung-jin Kim
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. ambassador Mark Lippert vowed not to change his “open and friendly” approach to diplomacy as he left a South Korean hospital five days after being attacked by a knife-wielding man screaming about Korean unification.

Lippert told reporters assembled at Seoul’s Severance Hospital that he felt “pretty darn good, all things considered” after the “scary incident” earlier this month, when police say an anti-U.S. activist slashed his face and left arm during a breakfast forum in Seoul.

Lippert, his face bandaged and his arm in a brace, would not comment on the specifics of the attack because of the police investigation. He refused to discuss possible new security measures, except to say U.S. officials would take “a hard look” at procedures in South Korea and then make a decision.

He said that since arriving in Seoul this past fall, he has “felt embraced and welcomed by the Korean people.”

“In return, we have made it our mission to be open and friendly. And that will not change,” he said.

Lippert has endeared himself to South Koreans by regularly walking his basset hound around his compound in downtown Seoul and giving his newborn son a Korean middle name. He said he was deeply moved by the messages of support he received, and that the attack would only strengthen an “unbreakable bond” between Seoul and Washington.

Media images of the bleeding ambassador shocked many in South Korea, a strong U.S. ally, and caused an outpouring of public sympathy. President Park Geun-hye and other senior officials visited Lippert in the hospital, while activists held a series of pro-U.S. rallies near the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

Hundreds of activists rallied again in Seoul, waving U.S. and South Korean flags and holding signs with congratulatory messages for Lippert on his hospital release.

Doctors removed the 80 stitches needed



STITCHING UP RELATIONS. Injured U.S. ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert, right, gets into a car on his way to a hospital in Seoul, South Korea. Lippert was attacked by a man wielding a razor and screaming that the rival Koreas should be unified, according to South Korean police and media. (AP Photo/Yonhap, Kim Ju-Sung)

to close the cut on Lippert’s face. Hospital officials said the ambassador was still feeling some pain in his arm, but that it was manageable with medicine.

The alleged attacker, known as an anti-U.S. activist who was previously convicted of hurling a piece of concrete at the Japanese ambassador in Seoul in 2010, was arrested. Kim Ki-jong could face charges including attempted murder.

Police said Kim’s motive was not known, but that he shouted after the attack that he opposes the ongoing annual U.S.-South Korea military drills that North Korea condemns as a preparation for a northward invasion. Seoul and Washington call the drills defensive.

North Korea has called the knife attack “a deserved punishment,” but has denied involvement.

South Korean critics have raised fears that President Park’s conservative government might use the attack to crack down on those seen as pro-North Korea. Already they say Park’s government infringes on freedom of speech in the name of coping with North Korea sympathizers.

Last year, a Korean-American woman accused of praising North Korea was deported, and the Constitutional Court ordered the dissolution of a small leftist party that officials say advocated a North Korean-style socialist system.

The U.S., which fought alongside South Korea during the 1950-1953 Korean War, stations about 28,500 troops in the South as a deterrent against the North.

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