

A Special Report: Pet lion living on a Rooftop in Kabul rescued by the Kabul Zoo Team

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The Kabul Zoo staff heard from Zoo Outreach Organization, some London friends and other international media that Mohammad Shafiq, a 42 year old Afghan businessman kept a lion cub in his house in Kabul. He was very proud of his growling pet, which spent its days on a roof terrace at his home in a posh residential area at central Kabul. He bought this pet lion from his friend who lived in Kandahar province.

We at the zoo thought this was not a correct environment for the lion who was all alone with no other lion companionship. We began to plan how to rescue the lion but there were many challenges to confront.

Finally we found the real address of the owner who kept the lion in Kabul. We shared this with the National Environmental Protection Agency, NEPA. NEPA sent a report to the police and other departments, but they could not find the lion.

At the same time we were worried for the life of that wild animal because it had become very weak. Finally we used our personal friendships and found the house and the lion cub on 08 October 2013 at 07:30 pm. When we saw the condition of the lion, we were shocked. His condition was very bad and after more debate we could make an agreement with the owner. We got the lion by the truth, that the lion needed treatment and we transported him to the Kabul Zoo. As said earlier he was very weak and had numerous problems:

1. The lion couldn't stand and move about. It was dehydrated, hypoglycemic and had very low blood pressure.
2. The lion was in a very bad condition, e.g., his front legs couldn't do any activity or moving. We thought he had palsy.
3. His four canine teeth had been cut by his owner and the lion had an eating problem.
4. His body weight was only 36 kg.

The owner of this lion wanted to have him treated and he paid a vet to do so. That treatment couldn't do anything for the health of the lion, however. We obtained a complete health report from the Vet for the lion. The owner wanted our help but when we went there we didn't accept his suggestions. We decided to carry the poor animal to the Zoo. Considering its condition, we felt the lion was in some danger and may expire even after a few hours. The lion was very weak by now and it needed immediate treatment. Kabul Zoo Animal Health Clinic

Vets took the responsibility for it and began the treatment.

We started the following medication and diet for the lion:

- Serum with Calcium, Veterinary Powder and Multi-vitamins and minerals every day up to 15 days.
- We prepared good food for the young lion, e.g., pigeons, rabbits, chicken meat and liver.
- Exercise and massage every day.

We could see positive improvements in the lion's body and soon he became very active with normal activities such as playing, jumping, eating, and running. He had a little problem on his back feet and as a result, couldn't run normally. Also he had a kind of shaking in this back legs and feet.

The young lion was kept in a warm room of the Kabul Zoo Clinic and we checked it every day. We were optimistic and hoped that this problem will be solved after allowing the lion to move to a large enclosure. Where it can do more exercise.

Per day our lion can eat 6 kg with body weight of 70 kg. Now his teeth are stronger and the vaccination process is also completed. Dr. Jalil also visited the zoo and lion in his last trip and he was really happy for our new lion and had some direction too. This male cub lion will be a good friend for our lonely female lion very soon.



First day - Photo in Shafiq's house

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Second day at the Kabul Zoo with the Lion being examined by Dr. Jamshid



The veterinary doctors massage their patient and move its limbs and head around until the lion could move his head and take exercise on his own



Dr. Jamshid Noori and Dr. Abdul Q. Bahawi urge and assist the Lion to eat in its first few days at the zoo



Above: New condition and exercise out of room by Director, AzizGul and other staff



Left: A recovery of health and spirit and the right kind of loving care from the Kabul Zoo staff