

Mammoth move: Loneliest elephant heads to Cambodia after Cher campaign

Following years of public outcry and campaigning by American pop star Cher, the "world's loneliest elephant" embarked yesterday on a mammoth move from Pakistan to retirement in a Cambodian sanctuary. The famed singer and Oscar-winning actress has spent recent days at the Islamabad zoo to provide moral support to Kaavan—an overweight, 36-year-old bull elephant—whose pitiful treatment at the dilapidated facility



Officials of Four Paws International and wildlife rangers move Kaavan, Pakistan's only Asian elephant.

sparked an uproar from animal rights groups and a spirited social media campaign by Cher. "My wishes have finally come true", Cher said in a statement thanking her charity Free The Wild. "We have been counting down to this moment and dreaming of it for so long and to finally see Kaavan transported out of (the Islamabad) zoo will remain with us forever." Kaavan's case and the woeful conditions at the zoo resulted in a judge this year ordering all the animals to be moved.

"Thanks to Cher and also to local Pakistani

activists, Kaavan's fate made headlines around the globe and this contributed to the facilitation of his transfer," said Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws International—an animal welfare group that has spearheaded the relocation effort. Experts spent hours coaxing a slightly sedated Kaavan into a specially constructed metal crate at one point using ropes to help pull him in—that was to be hoisted onto a lorry and taken to Islamabad airport. From there, Kaavan will be sent via a Russian transport jumbo jet for the lengthy flight to Siem Reap in northwestern Cambodia. The plane will stop for refuelling in New Delhi. Cher spent several days in the Pakistani capital to visit Kaavan before the trip to a 10,000-hectare (25,000-acre) Cambodian wildlife sanctuary, with Prime Minister Imran Khan personally thanking the 74-year-old star.

Cher was due to fly to Cambodia yesterday to be in the Southeast Asian nation when the elephant arrives. Officials said Kaavan will initially be kept in a small designated section of the park where he can see other elephants. "Sending him to a place where he can be with other elephants of his kind ... is really the right choice," climate change minister Malik Amin Aslam told AFP. "We will be happy to see him happy in Cambodia and we hope he finds a partner very soon."

'Loneliest' elephant

Dubbed by the press as the world's loneliest elephant, Kaavan is the only Asian elephant in Pakistan—the tiny number of other pachyderms at other zoos are African. A team of vets and experts from Four Paws have spent months working with Kaavan to get him ready for the trip to Cambodia, which has included training the elephant to enter the massive metal transport crate that will be placed in a cargo plane for the seven-hour flight.



Officials of Four Paws International and wildlife rangers pose for a photograph beside a crate carrying Kaavan, Pakistan's only Asian elephant, after placing it onto a trailer truck prior to transport it to a sanctuary in Cambodia, at the Marghaz Zoo in Islamabad on Sunday. — AFP photos

Zoo officials have in the past denied Kaavan was kept in substandard conditions or chained, claiming instead the creature was pining for a new mate after his partner died in 2012. But Kaavan's behavior—including signs of distress such as continual head-bobbing—raised concerns of mental illness. Activists also said Kaavan was not properly sheltered from Islamabad's searing summer temperatures. Kaavan's mate Saheli, who also arrived from Sri Lanka, died in 2012. Rights groups and

conservationists have said that the abysmal conditions at the Islamabad zoo resulted in part from the lack of legislation in Pakistan aimed at protecting animal welfare. "There's a lot of improvement to be made," said Rab Nawaz with the World Wildlife Federation in Pakistan. "Kaavan is just one animal. There's lots of animals in Pakistan... which are in miserable conditions." — AFP

DARTH VADER ACTOR DAVE PROWSE DIES AT 85

Dave Prowse, the British actor behind the menacing black mask of Star Wars villain Darth Vader, has died, his agent Thomas Bowington said Sunday. "It's with great sadness that we have to announce that our client Dave Prowse... passed away yesterday morning at the age of 85," Bowington wrote on Facebook. "May the force be with him, always!" the agent told the BBC. Bowington added that Prowse's death was "a truly and deeply heart-wrenching loss for us and millions of fans all over the world". Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the epic saga, tweeted that he was "so sad to hear David Prowse has passed." "He was a kind man & much more than Darth Vader," he wrote.

"Actor-Husband-Father-Member of the Order of the British Empire-3 time British Weightlifting Champion. He loved his fans as much as they loved him." A former body-builder turned actor, Prowse's towering stature at almost two meters (6.5 feet) clinched him the role of the instantly-recognizable antagonist in the original Star Wars trilogy. But while he donned the glossy black armor and cape, the Bristol native's strong western English accent meant the filmmakers turned to James Earl Jones for the chilling voice that would emerge from behind the mask. Prowse nevertheless remained attached to the character, telling AFP in 2013 that he was "the greatest big-screen villain of all time".



This file photo shows David Prowse, the British actor behind the menacing black mask of Star Wars villain Darth Vader. — AFP

He was born in the southwest English city on July 1, 1935, to a working class family, winning a scholarship to the prestigious local school. Prowse soon developed a love for weightlifting and went on to represent his country at the Commonwealth Games in the early 1960s before forging a career in Hollywood. He trained Christopher Reeve for the role of Superman and was reportedly spotted by Star Wars director George Lucas as an extra in "A Clockwork Orange". Lucas asked him to audition for the roles of Vader and hairy giant Chewbacca, plumping for the dark side because "you always remember the bad guys," he once told the BBC.

At home, he is equally well remembered for playing the "Green Cross Code" Man, a superhero created as part of a public information campaign to teach children road safety.

He played the role for almost 20 years, and earned an MBE in 2000. Other film credits include 1972's "Minotaur" and 1977's "Jabberwocky", and he also appeared in many TV shows including "The Saint" and "The Benny Hill Show". Since the original Star Wars trilogy was released in the late 1970s and early 80s, Prowse had travelled the world meeting hardcore fans. — AFP



In this file photo (from left) US actresses Amelia Heinle, Sharon Case and Camryn Grimes pose during a photocall for the TV soap opera "The Young and the Restless" during the 59th Monte-Carlo Television Festival in Monaco. — AFP

US soap opera 'The Young and the Restless' hits 12,000th episode

"The Young and the Restless," one of the longest-running TV soap operas ever filmed, marks another milestone next week with its 12,000th episode in the US. "Since 1973, 'The Young and the Restless' has been part of daily life for millions of Americans," CBS, which airs the series, said in a release about the big day next Tuesday.

The show has tens of millions of fans in dozens of countries. It centers on families living in an imaginary Wisconsin town called Genoa City, and follows their personal dramas of love, marriage, separation and people vanishing before mysteriously reappearing. Some of the actors have played the same characters for decades. To celebrate episode 12,000, a special week for the show is planned, featuring flashbacks and the return of what CBS called beloved characters. — AFP

You're gonna need a bigger museum: 'Jaws' shark installed

Over four decades after terrorizing beachgoers in "Jaws," the blockbuster movie's 25-foot shark model has been installed at Los Angeles' long-awaited Oscars museum, it was announced Monday. "Bruce the Shark," rumored to have earned its nickname from director Steven Spielberg's razor-sharp lawyer, now lurks 30-foot (nine-meters) above the third floor of the Academy Museum, which is set to open in April. The fiberglass predator is the only remaining version created for the classic 1975 movie, but with jaws measuring nearly five feet wide, was too large for the building's elevators—and had to be levered in by crane through the window. "It's been a long journey for Bruce since he was acquired in 2016, and we couldn't be happier to welcome him to his new home," said museum president Bill Kramer.

Weighing more than 1,200 pounds (540 kilos), it is the largest object so far in the collection of the upcoming Academy Museum of Motion Pictures—a project by the body organizing Hollywood's Oscars, first dreamt up nearly a century ago but



This undated handout photo shows the sole surviving full-scale model of the 1975 Jaws shark, donated by Nathan Adlen. — AFP photos

beset with delays. Billed as "the world's premier institution inside a seemingly-suspended glass, steel and concrete orb designed by Renzo Piano, connected by sky bridges to a converted department store housing the main galleries—and the shark. "We look forward to our opening when museum visitors can engage with our exhibitions, experience our beautiful Renzo Piano-designed building, and come face to face with one of the most iconic characters in film history," added Kramer. — AFP

The futuristic museum contains a 1,000-seat theater inside a seemingly-suspended glass, steel and concrete orb designed by Renzo Piano, connected by sky bridges to a converted department store housing the main galleries—and the shark. "We look forward to our opening when museum visitors can engage with our exhibitions, experience our beautiful Renzo Piano-designed building, and come face to face with one of the most iconic characters in film history," added Kramer. — AFP



In this file photo workers clean the roof of the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, in Los Angeles, California.

Chihuly: Creating in the glass bubble

Leslie Chihuly, the wife and business driver behind glass artist Dale Chihuly, believes these are fighting times, especially for artists. "If we don't have our paintings and art and music and culture and civility, then what do we have?" said the president and chief executive of Chihuly, Inc, who chaired the board of the Seattle Symphony for nine years until 2018. "What art does is create that thin veneer that separates us from our more base instincts. Without it, I don't like how life looks." Chihuly, 59, had a chat with Reuters about her personal, professional and philanthropic choices. Edited excerpts are below.

Q. What did your first job teach you?

A. My first job was probably when I was around 14 or 15. I worked in a small boutique store on the Main Street in my hometown (Guyton, Oklahoma), and it was called The Vogue. I wanted to save up for a Christmas present for my mother. I loved having a job, having my own little bit of money in my purse. I also learned how to perfectly wrap gifts. I'm really good at gift wrapping.

Q. What was your toughest job?

A. Doing multiple jobs at the same time. I was doing the job of being a mother. I was doing the job at Chihuly with a lot of complexity and a lot of projects and issues. I was also simultaneously board chair of the Seattle Symphony, which is a huge job. It's more than a full-time job at times. Having all of those jobs at the same time and trying to balance the load, I found out that I can really push myself. I had to learn how to prioritize and also delegate.

Q. It's a particularly bleak time for creative professionals such as artists and musicians. Do you have any advice for creative types?

A. I know it's a difficult time, but it's also a very fertile time. Dig deep and keep making work. Keep writing, keep making music, keep doing what you do. It's so essential.

Q. What has been your biggest challenge this year?

A. We had to figure out how to blow glass safely. We closed our glass shops for quite a while. We have fewer people on our team now, but we're still spread out in three locations. We can't travel and so many of

our projects involve working all over the world and in different parts of the country. We had three different gallery shows - in London, Toronto and Seattle. Not being able to travel, we had to show those galleries how to install the shows without us.

Q. What's the best piece of job advice you've received?

A. Learn how to listen. If you can listen to others and you can listen to your employees and subject matter experts, you're going to make better decisions. It's great to be proactive, to be leading and guiding, but you still have to have that back and forth.

Q. Do you have tips for someone just starting out right now?

A. In every dark time or challenging time there are still opportunities, and there are opportunities for creative approaches on how to do things. There are always goods and services that people need and there are always those needs to be filled. There's always a path forward. You need to draw a support team around you and know that you can't do it by yourself.

Q. What is your work-from-home set up?

A. I like to move around a lot, so I don't have one desk where I sit and work. I use the couch in our TV room for doing my Zooms because I like having a piece of art behind it. It's a Samuel Levi Jones, one of his paintings, and it's made of book covers.—Reuters



Glass artist Dale Chihuly and his wife Leslie Chihuly.