

Do more to protect our wildlife

REFER to your comprehensive coverage on wildlife trafficking that involved a well known smuggler ("I got greedy" – *The Star*, Aug 10).

I read with so much sadness the rampant smuggling of wildlife that gives a bad name to our country. I cannot understand why Malaysia is a transit point for such illegal activities.

While I know that there are steps taken by our Wildlife Department to catch the culprits, I feel the efforts should be intensified. I urge

the Government to take proactive measures to ensure the animals are protected.

It is disturbing to know that animals in some national parks are poached and many left to die. In fact, it seems the poachers are very cunning, and are getting dangerous to the point of resorting to violent tactics.

While I am deeply touched by the efforts taken by our Wildlife Department and many NGOs, the smuggling activities must stop. I hope various parties like the humane societies and NGOs will pursue the matter and act

immediately and not wait until it is too late.

I think the law regarding wildlife protection is ineffective. It is time such laws are strengthened to ensure the inhumane activities are stopped once and for all.

Relevant laws and regulations should be reviewed and enforced to severely punish the culprits who inflict such cruelty.

Why can't Malaysia be a model country in taking measures to deter smugglers and other wildlife traders? It is very sad to see animals such as tigers, pangolins, bears, etc, ending up

in the cooking pot of inhumane persons.

Enforcement by our Wildlife Department should be improved. If the Government can lead by good example in curbing such activities, I am very sure one day Malaysia will be hailed as a champion of animal protection.

As Mahatma Gandhi put it: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated".

**SIVA,
Bangli, Selangor.**

Disappointed with response from D-G

WITH reference to "Perhilitan D-G: Illegal trading in wildlife an old story" (*The Star*, Aug 11), it is disheartening to note that the director-general of the department responsible for the protection of our wildlife is taking a very blasé attitude towards the report, and the allegation that convicted animal trader Anson Wong had benefited from a high-ranking officer.

His response to the latter – "story from the past" – indicates that the allegation is true

and corruption was a factor when Wong conducted his business.

If this is so, action should be taken against the high-ranking officer who had enabled Wong to conduct his business.

The D-G now has to clarify whether any action was ever taken against the high-ranking officer.

It may be an "old story" or "story from the past" to him, but the effect on our wildlife will be far more devastating if serious action

is not taken to address Malaysia's status as a hub for smuggling, and that our wildlife were let down by the very agency responsible for protecting them.

The fact that he called the illegal wildlife trade an "old story" does not augur well for the reputation of Perhilitan as it does not reflect any proactiveness by the department.

**AZRINA ABDULLAH,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor.**

Can ministry give an explanation?

I COMMENT *The Star* for pursuing with its probes, and the story of illegal trading in wildlife – an "old story" – is another example of good investigative and fearless journalism.

I find the response by the director-general of the Natural Resource and Environment Ministry facetious to say the least. Whether the illegal killing and smuggling of our precious wildlife is an "old story" or not, it's a very serious matter, and deserves a concerted response to wipe out the threat once and for all.

Regarding the issuance of special permits for the "extraction" of wildlife by the ministry, the DG could do the public a favour by stating, among other things:

> What is the duration of those permits issued, or are they "open-ended"?

> When these permits lapse, who does the monitoring to ensure that such permits do not continue to be made use of?

> Are specific quantities of certain species of wildlife allowed to be captured, or do the permits just give "blanket" approval?

> Are the destinations specified in the permits, and have there been subsequent confirmation of the receipt of those animals?

> Are there any guarantees by those given the permits, that they will not contravene the clauses and limitations stipulated, and if so, what are the penalties?

> Do permit holders have to give some form of performance bond?

A clear statement from the ministry will appease the doubts that the public have over such issues, and will show that there is nothing underhand in this matter.

**TAM YENG SIANG,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor.**

Selfish acts of children saddening

I FELT very sad reading "Feeling guilty about becoming a burden to daughter" (*The Star*, Aug 11).

I think the issue can help enlighten the young that what is happening to the elderly today can happen to them too in the future.

I love both my parents very much and I can only promise the best for them. I am very sorry Disillusioned had to suffer emotional pressure in his golden years.

It is very selfish of the siblings to want a piece of the cake when they didn't do anything for the parent. I think it is only right for the parent to leave the house to the child who has spent her life taking care of him.

She has sacrificed a lot; she could have selfishly closed one eye and ignored the needs of her parent.

Disillusioned understands his condition may deteriorate and is afraid that his daughter may have to make more sacrifices. He carries this burden and worries because of love for his child.

I know my father or my mum would be similarly worried. But I feel very sad that Disillusioned wishes the child doesn't have to take care of him for very long. He has a point.

When children grow up, they think of themselves and how important it is for them to lead their own lives. They think about their family first and try to ignore the importance of the parent who taught them the meaning of family.

Since when have we forgotten that heaven is right beneath our parents' feet?

**TONG WEN HUI,
Kuala Lumpur.**

Standard of Bahasa on the decline

I AGREE with "Some lost in both languages" (*The Star*, July 3). Most of us pay no heed to the current level of proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia among the younger generation.

We can see that the younger generation of non-Malays hardly speak proper Bahasa Malaysia. The younger Malays also speak Bahasa *rojak* (with English mixed in) in their daily conversation.

It's a shame that foreign workers from India, Bangladesh and Nepal speak better Bahasa Malaysia than some locals.

The Education Ministry and Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka should seriously look into the declining level of Bahasa Malaysia among the younger generation.

The Government should strengthen the use and proficiency of Bahasa Malaysia among the younger generation to ensure the 1Malaysia concept is successful. Let us not forget the language that unites Malaysians.

**NASRUL JAN,
Tanjong Tokong, Penang.**

Educate Penangites about status

I REFER to the announcement by the Penang state government to declare July 7 a public holiday in Penang from 2010 to commemorate George Town's heritage status.

The heritage status award given by Unesco is similar to the one given to Malacca city.

The question is, how many Penangites are really aware of the status given to George Town?

I feel we have too many public holidays, including state-declared holidays without

knowing their real purpose and significance.

Instead of declaring a public holiday, the Penang government should undertake positive measures to promote all heritage sites to the people and tourists in general.

Educating them on the real significance of the heritage status is more important than declaring a public holiday.

**N.A. SUNDRASEKRAN,
George Town.**

Guilty about not being fair to son

I REFER to "Feeling guilty about becoming a burden to daughter" (*The Star*, Aug 11). I also feel guilty about having my only son support me for 37 years.

I have two other daughters – a step-daughter from a previous marriage who has not given me any money as she is a housewife, and the other who lives in Australia and only chipped in over the last few years.

My husband did not leave me any money, only a house. He left some shares to my daughters but did not leave anything to his son. He left houses to his other family.

The girls bought houses by selling the shares during the boom time in the 1970s and 1980s.

I asked my son to sell the house that I had bequeathed to him but I took all the money for my nursing home, dialysis and

other medical expenses.

I made a new will naming my two daughters as beneficiaries as well after my friends said it's only fair that all my children should get my money.

But I feel my son who has been my sole financial supporter, and who has been taking care of me as well, should be the beneficiary. After all, my daughters already got something from my husband.

Since my monthly expenses are extremely high, I am afraid that my selfish action in taking all the money has hurt my son's feelings.

What if my money runs out and I need to ask him for money? He is retired and has young children to support. Am I going to be a burden to him?

**S.L. YAP,
George Town.**

Love is the key to better parent-child relations

I REFER to "Feeling guilty about becoming a burden to daughter" (*The Star*, Aug 11).

My late father used to say, "a parent can take care of 10 children but 10 children cannot take care of one parent".

I grew up with a drunkard for a father. When I was 11, my mother went away to work, leaving us kids with my father. My one wish from a child's little heart was to feel the love of my parents, that they wanted me for who I am.

My father passed away when I was in my mid-20s; I had already left home when I was 18.

Maybe this background made me determined to succeed in life. Today, I wish that I could pamper my father with whatever luxury he had missed. Although he was drunk most of the time, I know he loved me.

My old, frail mother is now living with me. She is in end-stage renal failure and I wish to think that she had changed in her perspective

of her children.

Despite being grown up now, I still cannot shake off the emptiness of not having been loved as a child, and always have this need to compare when my brothers and their families come around.

I am grateful for my son, whom I love and will provide for, as he is very special to me. I do not expect him to take care of me in my old age but I know I have done good knowing he loves me.

I have been blessed, and I wish to tell all parents that it's easy to have children, but you must love them. It's the amount of love and time that you give them that matters, not material things.

To the sons of "Feeling guilty about becoming a burden to daughter", giving does not, and will not, empty yourselves.

**BROKEN BUT STILL USEFUL,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor.**