

# RISING STARS



## Stories about Mollah Nasiruddin

**S**TORIES about Mollah Nasiruddin has been passed on from generation to generation for about a thousand years in many different countries. Most people say that the origin of such stories is in Turkey, where Nasiruddin's birthday is celebrated every year.

It is hard to describe Mollah Nasiruddin's character from his stories. In some he seems to be quite foolish while others show that he was a quick-witted person. You can analyze him for yourselves by reading the following stories of him:

Nasiruddin bought one kilogram of meat from the market. Handing it over to his wife, he said, 'We shall have kabaab today, cook the meat deliciously.'

But his greedy wife ate all the meat herself after it was cooked. Of course, she could not tell her husband that, instead she said, 'The cat ate it.'

'The cat ate all of the 1 kg of meat?' asked Nasiruddin.

'Yes, all of it.'

The cat was nearby. Mollah Nasiruddin put it on the pan balance. It was found to weigh exactly 1 kg.

'If this is that cat, then where is the meat?' asked Nasiruddin, 'and if this is the meat, where is the cat?'

One day the king set out hunting. Mollah Nasiruddin was the first person he met on the way. Getting angry he said, 'This man is a bad omen. My hunting is ruined!'

'Whip him out of my sight!'

The king's order was carried out.

But the hunting turned out to be quite fruitful.

The king called for Nasiruddin.

'I was mistaken, Nasiruddin, said the king, I thought you were a bad omen. But now I see that is not so.'

Nasiruddin jumped up 3 feet into the air.

'You thought I was a bad omen? On seeing me you hunted 20 deer and on seeing you I received 20 whippings. How do you see who's the bad omen?'

One day Nasiruddin heard footsteps of two people in his own house. Getting afraid, he

by Satyajit Ray  
Translated by Zinnia Ahmad

hide inside an *almirah*. The two people happened to be thieves. They opened all the drawers and cupboards. On opening the *almirah*, they saw Nasiruddin sitting there huddled up.

What happened Mollah

reminded me after I returned home.

The villagers once decided they would tease Nasiruddin. They came to his house, greeted him saying, 'Mollah



Sahib, where are you hiding? In shame,' answered Nasiruddin, 'there is nothing in my house worth taking. So I am hiding myself in shame.'

A quarrel in Nasiruddin's village decided to have an argument with him. So he fixed a date and time but arrived at Nasiruddin's house only to find that he was not at home. He got extremely angry and wrote on Nasiruddin's front door: Idiot.

Nasiruddin came home to see this. Then ran to the quarrelers house. 'I am so sorry,' said Nasiruddin, 'I had completely forgot that you were supposed to come over to my house today. It was your name on the front door that finally

Sahib, you are a very wise man. We shall feel very grateful if you would deliver a lecture at our mosque.' Nasiruddin agreed at once.

Nasiruddin went to the mosque on the particular day, fixed earlier. He greeted everybody, then said, 'Does anyone know what topic my lecture is based on?'

'No, we do not know that,' replied everybody.

Mollah said, 'If you don't even know that then what shall I talk about? I definitely don't want a bunch of ignorant as my listeners.'

Saying this Nasiruddin left the mosque and went home fuming with anger.

But the stubborn villagers pleaded to him again for a lecture. Nasiruddin agreed and

went to the mosque. On asking the previous question, everybody answered, 'Yes, we all know.'

'You all know? Then I have nothing more to say,' said Nasiruddin and returned home.

But the villagers won't accept this defeat. They coaxed him fervently and Nasiruddin agreed once again. He arrived at the mosque and asked that question again. This time half the people said, 'We know and the other half said, 'We don't know.'

'Fine,' said Mollah, 'those who know speak and those who don't know listen.' And once again Nasiruddin set off towards his home.

Nasiruddin entered the inn and commented, 'The moon is more useful than the sun.'

How's that, Mollah Sahib, asked everybody.

'The moon gives us light at night,' said Nasiruddin, 'and what's the use of light during the day?'

A neighbour came to Nasiruddin with a request. 'Mollah Sahib, can you please lend me your donkey for a few days. I need it desperately.'

'Sorry,' said Nasiruddin, 'I have lend it to somebody else.'

Just then the donkey brayed from the back-yard, acknowledging his presence. 'What's that Mollah Sahib? Isn't that your donkey's bray we just heard?'

Nasiruddin got very angry. He shut the door on the man's face saying, 'How can I lend my donkey to someone who believes more in my donkey's bray than my own word?'

It was a tradition in Mollah's country that good news bearers received tips. Knowing this a man, told Nasiruddin.

'There is a good news for you, Nasiruddin.'

'Polao is being cooked at your neighbour's house.'

'What is it to me?'

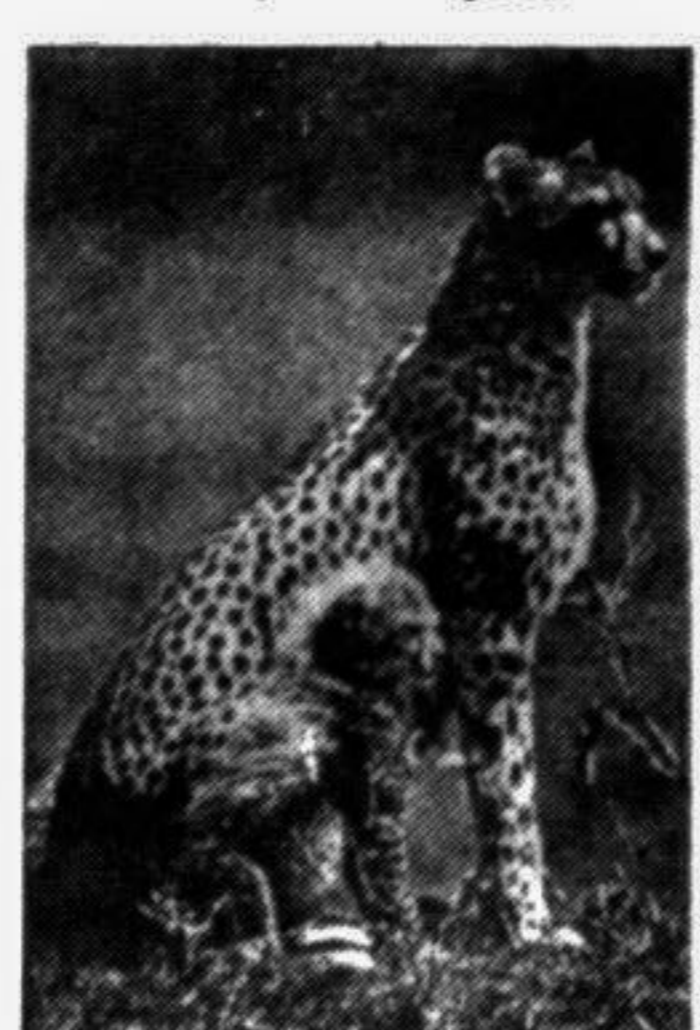
'They said they will send some for you.'

'What is it to you?'

## Poaching — A War on Wild Life

by Trishna and Shahreen Munir

**D**URING the 19th century, passenger pigeons were so numerous that flocks of a billion birds would darken the skies of North America for three full days. It was a great joy for the hunters and home-steaders — they shot the pigeons a hundred at a time, sometimes just for sport.



Cheetahs, the world's fastest land animals, have been tracked down for their spotted pelts.

During this era, the world's wildlife seemed to be a vast, never-ending resource. Yet less than a century later, the passenger pigeon was extinct. In 1914 'Martha' — the last of her kind — died in a cage at the Cincinnati Zoo in Ohio, USA.

While extinction is a natural part of the evolutionary process, man has drastically altered the timetable. In the past, extinctions took thousands of years to occur — today this happens within decades.

We are in the midst of the greatest mass extinction in human history. Species such as the great auk, the Steller's sea cow, the West Indian monk seal, the Tasmanian wolf and — most recently, in 1987 — the dusky seaside sparrow, have all perished at the hands of man.

Plants and animals are disappearing at a rate of more than 40 species each day. By some estimates, between 15,000 and 40,000 species go extinct each year.

Some animal species have properties that are useful to medical science. The venom extracted from the Malaysian pit viper is used to prevent the formation of blood clots, while some species of sharks may

phant, or the primeval howl of the wolf. If these creatures disappear forever, it will be a lonely world indeed.

All things are interconnected. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the people of the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to himself,

A tigress nicknamed 'Mika' stands guard over her single cub. As both a hunter and a devoted mother, her abilities are unparalleled. She cuddles and licks her cub with such ardent affection that you wonder if the stripes will wash off. Yet at the slightest pound of a human footstep, she seizes her cub in her mouth and retreats in terror. Mika has already lost her mate and two litters of cubs to poachers — she will fight to the death to save this last baby.

In a very real sense, Mika is fighting not only for her cub — but for her entire race. Tigers are so rare in the wild that even a single cub may make the difference between life and death of the entire species.

The tiger and the rhinoceros are the most critically endangered mammals on earth. They are literally on the brink of extinction.

Tigers are so powerful and charismatic — most people just assume they will be around

turbid. After closer scrutiny the agents were stunned to discover that the fish were swimming in liquid (dissolved) cocaine.

Many shipments containing smuggled wildlife have been labelled 'spare parts,' 'electrical equipment,' or even 'poisonous snakes.'

Over the centuries, man has viewed wildlife as a commodity to be used for his own benefit and amusement. A photograph shows three British officers and their servants with the body of a two-week hunt in India. In their laps are tiny, orphaned tiger cubs. The officers are posing, with great pride, lounging on tiger skins. They see no contradiction in mixing the live and the dead — or in placing the cubs on the remains of their dead parents.

Animals such as the elephant and dolphin possess an incredible intelligence, spirit, and sensitivity that are also characteristics of the human race. This new awareness has led to the will — and the need — to protect wildlife in both scientific and ethical grounds.

In crowded street markets and shops, visitors can find an endless array of animal products ranging from the tacky to the bizarre: ashtrays made from tiger skulls, stuffed caimans (crocodiles) dressed in miniature tuxedos, tableaux

Poaching is literally a war on wild life because the profit is so high, the poachers are willing to take any risk.

The international ban on ivory ended much of the public demand — and thus most of the poaching. Unfortunately, the rhino has not been so fortunate. In a desperate effort to



Giant Panda: This beloved symbol of endangered wildlife numbers less than 1,000 in the wild.

save the last 400 black rhinos in Zimbabwe, officials started sawing off the animals' horns to deter poachers. Unless the medicinal trade is curbed, it is only a matter of time before the rhino will be extinct. The medicines are made from animals that are cultural symbols. They use the products of tiger, bear, and rhino — animals endowed with strength, vitality and power.

In addition, many animals get caught in the crossfire of war. In Vietnam, a group of 80 Asian rhinos who had survived the warfares, land mines, and destruction of habitat, were found. It's a miracle they survived.

Now that most of the bears have been wiped out in Asia, the poachers are going in the West to kill bears. Park rangers are finding bodies of huge bears with only the gall-bladders missing.

While the general public does not see much appeal in the rhino, it has great interest in the world's colourful and chatty parrots. In fact these birds are being 'loved to death'. Private collectors and pet dealers import an esti-



Orangutans: highly prized in the illegal pet trade.

imated 415000 live birds annually into the US alone. At least 10,000 are smuggled illegally, contributing to their demise in the wild.

If a species goes extinct, the exotic bird collectors will be to blame. People should buy only captive bred birds. Smuggled birds are often crammed into crates, their beaks and wings tightly taped. Some are hidden in the false bottoms of suitcases, stuffed up coat sleeves or even concealed in underwear. Black palm cockatoos sell for as much as \$2500. Ironically they are being purchased by so called bird lovers.

By working together countries are building an 'ark' to protect endangered species at the global level. Armed guards who diligently patrol the preserves have driven out poachers. Ironically, man — once Mika's enemy — is now her protector.

Source — Rotarian



A bloody business: Poachers leave the remains of a rhino, taking only its horn.

forever. But this is far from reality. In less than 2 years the wild tiger population has been decimated by half. Fewer than 5,000 survive today. Sadly, more tigers exist in zoos than in the wild.

The tigers are not being slaughtered for food or fur but to supply ingredients for the huge medical trade in Asia. Everything from tiger whiskers to bone is used to cure a multitude of ills. In the last fifty years three subspecies of tigers have gone extinct.

Similarly, the number of African black rhinos have plummeted from 65,000 in 1970 to fewer than 2,000 today — a faster rate of decline than any other large land mammal this century! Rhino horn, sold as a medicine to reduce fever, commands remarkable prices on the East Asia market. The rhino will be even harder to save than the tiger. As it is not cute and appealing like the panda or the elephant, it is more difficult to mobilize public support to save it.

Wild life smuggling is big business, reaping profits of at least \$1 billion a year. It is SECOND only to the drug trade in profits and the two often go hand in hand. Wild life smuggling has become increasingly sophisticated with traffickers using expertly forged documents, secret trade routes, and shipping containers with false bottoms and hidden compartments. If caught, smugglers receive little more than a slap on the wrist. Recent sting operations in the US have uncovered illegal trade in reptiles, walrus tusks, and exotic parrots.

Many drug traffickers combine wildlife and drugs in a single shipment. If caught, the smuggler will often plead guilty to the lesser charge of wildlife smuggling. In a recent case, US customs officials were inspecting hundreds of styrofoam cartons containing bags of tropical fish when they noticed that the water was



A purse made from Margay, an endangered small cat species.

of stuffed mongooses attacking cobras (complete with painted blood), glass tables mounted on antelope antlers toilet seats decorated with the wings of endangered butterflies, and perhaps one of the most disturbing sights — a once stately elephant, reduced to a waste-basket.

In the late seventies, the Kenyan government declared a particular elephant — named 'Ahmed' — to be a national treasure. Ahmed, one of the last great bull elephants to roam the Eastern Plains of Kenya became a symbol of a wild and pristine Africa. When he died of old age his body was preserved and displayed at the National Museum. The largest black markets are for reptiles and crocodile products, large parrots, spotted cat skins, rhino horn and bear parts.

Some animals, such as the big cats and monkeys are in great demand by zoos, circuses and private collectors. A snow leopard was confiscated by authorities in Southern France. The trader was trying to sell him to the highest bidder on the black market.

In addition, primates such as orangutans and chimpanzees are popular commodities in the illegal pet-trade. Some extremely rare primates such as chimps, are being poached for the wild biomedical research. Unfortunately the poachers usually kill the mother so they can capture babies.

Brandishing automatic weapons such as AK-47 assault rifles, the poachers mow down entire herds, often slaughtering even the baby rhinos for their tiny horns.

Baby elephants, if they are lucky enough to escape the poacher's pullets, will linger for days by the butchered carcasses of their parents until they collapse from starvation and thirst.

Adult animals who survive the attacks will return to their fallen comrades, trying desperately to arouse the corpses.



THE FIREMAN by Sharier

The bees sing hymns And I quote poetry The Blue Jay dances And the scene goes merrily.

The bold eagle screeches The field mice squeaks I listen by As the old oak creaks.

The ground snake hisses The tree lizards tick To hear the sounds Never heard before Creates the Forest Music.

The Forest Music by Yasir Karim

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