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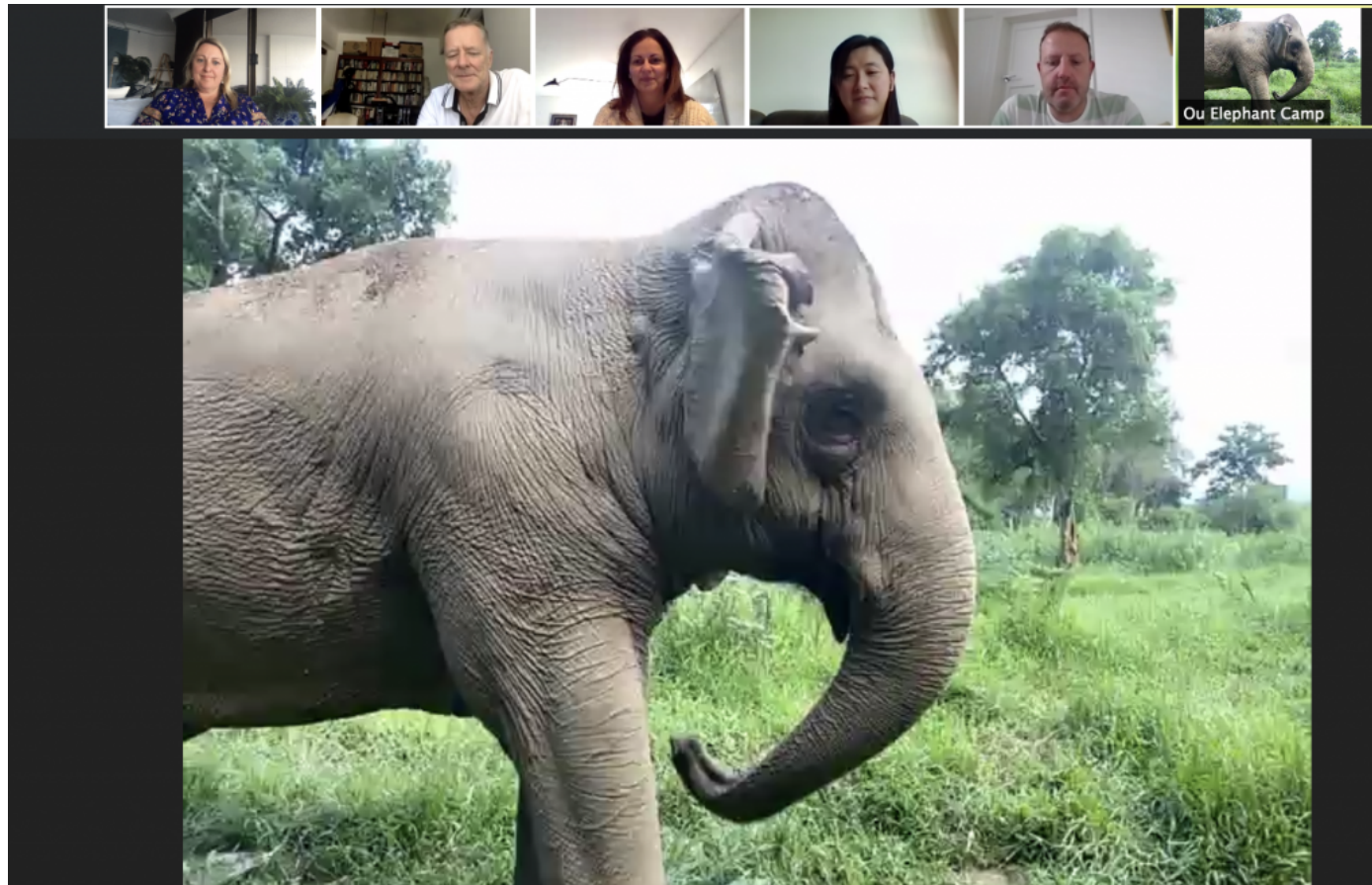
Cher Sheds Tears Of Joy As World's Loneliest Elephant Finally Finds Freedom

BY TREVOR HUGHES

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It's definitely the month of the elephant at Happy Ali!

Two weeks ago we reported on a new funding initiative from an elephant sanctuary in northern Thailand which features its elephants in Zoom meetings as they no longer have enough income from tourists. Last week the Happy Ali team was delighted to see an elephant in the Zoom – a 23-year old pachyderm named Sara who photobombed the meeting.



We also featured a beautiful story of an English pianist who, again in Thailand, plays his piano for sick and injured elephants.



Elephants Love Classical Music

Now we report on an elephant in Pakistan who reduced Oscar-winning actress and Grammy-winning singer Cher to tears. It's a story that began more than 30 years ago and is only now coming to an end.

In 1988 Kavaan, a one-year-old bull elephant was presented by the government of Sri Lanka to the then Pakistani president, Zia al Huq. Kavaan was sent to Murghaza Zoo in Islamabad. In 1990 he was joined by

Saheli, a female elephant from Bangladesh.



Kaavan the Elephant via [NBC News](#)

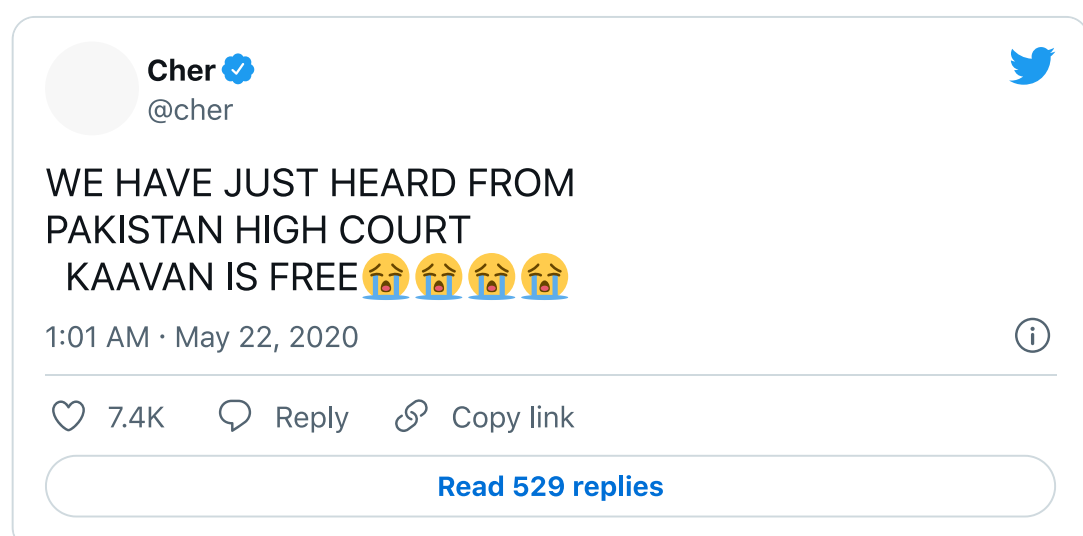
However, Kavaan became increasingly disturbed by the tiny cramped quarters in which the two elephants were kept and when he hurled a half brick at a group of visiting journalist he was put in chains, although no one was injured. Kavaan's circumstances became even worse when his mate died in 2012. The elephant was kept in a tiny enclosure with just a small pond. His food was often stolen by wild boars and, sadly, even by his own keepers who took away his fruit and so Kavaan, starving, alone and in chains earned the sobriquet of 'the world's loneliest elephant.'

In 2015, Pakistani student Samar Khan started an online petition detailing the sad conditions of Kavaan and asking for his release from captivity.

In the US, singer and actress Cher, together with businessman Mark Cowne and his wife Gina, had co-founded an animal charity called 'Free the Wild'. When news of Kavaan's sorry plight reached them they began a four-year campaign for his release.

Earlier this year their lawyers took the case to an Islamabad court which ordered the release of Kavaan to a wildlife sanctuary. When Cher received the news she reportedly broke down in tears.

Her tweet, thanking the government of Pakistan, went viral.



Eventually, an elephant sanctuary in Cambodia was found and Kavaan is now getting accustomed to the cage in which he will travel. Soon, the sorry saga will, hopefully, have a happy ending.

