Berlin, 21 January 2022

Press release

A tower of hope

Construction progresses on the Rhino Pagoda at Zoo Berlin

Every day, thousands of travellers pass through Berlin's busy Zoologischer Garten railway station. In future, they will catch sight of a conspicuous new building on their way in and out: a striking 25-metre-high tower, which is currently under construction at Zoo Berlin. The tower will be a monument to species conservation and form the centrepiece of a new home for the Zoo's Indian rhinoceroses, warty pigs and tapirs. Construction is progressing nicely on the new habitat, which will cover an area of around 14,000 m² and emulate the animals' swampy grassland home in the wild.

Since the cornerstone for the new habitat was laid in late summer 2021, the construction site has been a hive of activity and the tower is now almost finished. Once completed, the tower will consist of 68 stacked concrete sections weighing up to 10 tonnes each and be topped with a golden spire of painted sheet metal that will glisten in the sun and be visible far beyond the Zoo's gates. Good progress has also been made on the interior structural work, which should be completed in a few weeks.

From spring 2023, Zoo visitors will be able to marvel at Indian rhinoceroses taking mud baths amid the tall grasses and idyllic watercourses of their new habitat, while an accompanying exhibition will take them on a journey to the rhinos' native home in north-eastern India. The 25-metre tower at the heart of the new habitat will contain a wishing well where visitors can make a direct contribution to saving the rhino. All donations will be channelled into species conservation projects, including for the protection of rhinoceroses living wild in the Indian state of Assam.

Making wishes come true

The Indian rhinoceros has been beset with difficulties for decades – once, it was even on the brink of extinction. Although numbers have now recovered somewhat, Indian rhinos are still considered threatened. The situation is just as critical for many other animal species. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) currently lists almost 37,500 animal and plant species as threatened, which is more than ever before. "We are facing a huge, complex and extremely worrying task," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "Wishes must be followed by action to ensure the long-term survival of threatened species like the Indian rhinoceros." He stresses the crucial importance of biodiversity: "Without it, all life on our planet is at risk. So this is a matter that concerns each

and every one of us." The new eye-catching tower is intended to draw attention to the important issue far beyond the borders of the Zoo.

Funding for the close-to-nature rhino habitat was secured before the outbreak of Covid-19, so construction could go ahead as planned. A total of around €20 million has been budgeted for construction of the exciting new habitat. Like the Panda Garden, the Rhino Pagoda was designed by Berlin architecture firm dan pearlman.