

World Animal Protection Appeals to Chief Minister of Rajasthan to End Elephant Rides on Occasion of World Elephant Day

Category: Business

written by International Khabar | August 12, 2026



Launched on August 12, 2012, World Elephant Day is an international annual event dedicated to the preservation and protection of the world's elephants. The initiative brings together conservation organisations and citizens from all backgrounds to voice support for better protection measures and to combat illegal poaching, habitat loss, and the

mistreatment of elephants in captivity. On the occasion of World Elephant Day, World Animal Protection has appealed to the Government of Rajasthan to end elephant rides in Amer Fort in Jaipur by writing to the Chief Minister Of Rajasthan. World Animal Protection seeks a phased out but permanent cessation of elephant rides at the historic Amer Fort in Jaipur. This campaign highlights the severe physical and psychological trauma inflicted on these endangered animals. It proposes a swift transition toward a sustainable, cruelty free model of Indian heritage tourism that highlights the historical and cultural artifacts of Rajasthan, excluding elephant rides in Jaipur that abuse people and endangers safety of humans. On this occasion, more than seventy five individuals expressed their opposition to elephant rides in Amer Fort and raised their voice for keeping elephants free in the wild.



Citizens raising awareness on wild elephants and captive Amer

Fort elephants in Jaipur at Patrika Gate Photograph: Shubhobroto Ghosh

Amer Fort remains one of India's most iconic tourist destinations. Yet, its global reputation faces significant risks due to the practice of using captive elephants for daily tourist entertainment. Decades of scientific research, veterinary assessments, and investigative wildlife reports reveal a grim reality. The elephants suffer from chronic foot infections, painful arthritis, and severe psychological distress. These conditions stem directly from walking on hard concrete surfaces under scorching heat while carrying heavy iron howdahs and multiple tourists.

The welfare issues inherent in the Amer Fort elephant rides are systemic and deep rooted. Captive elephants are wild animals by nature. They undergo a brutal training process known as 'the crush' to break their spirit and make them submissive to human commands. At Amer Fort, many elephants are forced to work despite advanced age and serious medical ailments. Investigative audits have consistently found that a vast majority of these elephants suffer from compromised vision, permanent limb deformities, and severe nutritional deficiencies from poor diets.

Furthermore, the public safety risks associated with this practice are escalating rapidly. Elephants are highly intelligent, social, and emotional animals. When subjected to prolonged stress, isolation, and physical abuse, they can experience sudden bouts of psychosis, that results them in running amok. Over the years, multiple incidents at Amer Fort have seen stressed elephants turn aggressive, endangering international tourists, handlers, and local people. In an era where global travellers actively seek responsible tourism experiences, the continuation of animal exploitation severely

damages Jaipur's tourism brand. An elephant named Chanchal was painted pink by the Russian artist Julia Buruleva for a photoshoot in 2025 and this elephant died earlier this year.

World Animal Protection is not merely demanding an end to the rides but presenting a viable solution. Under the phase out plan there lies a new framework whereby tourists can observe elephants in a natural sanctuary setting. This model promotes educational tourism, allowing visitors to watch elephants walk, bathe, forage, and socialise safely from a respectful distance.

Crucially, this proposed transition protects local livelihoods. The plan will propose that the current elephant handlers, known as mahouts, receive specialized training to transition into sanctuary guides, educational instructors, and caretakers. Financial models demonstrate that global tourists are willing to pay a premium for ethical wildlife encounters. This shift will secure stable, long term revenue for local communities while elevating Jaipur as a global pioneer in sustainable heritage tourism.

"As the international community celebrates World Elephant Day 2026, the eyes of the world are on Rajasthan. Progressive travel agencies worldwide are removing elephant rides from their itineraries. Global travel platforms are refusing to promote venues that exploit captive wildlife. Thirty companies have undertaken the wildlife friendly pledge of World Animal Protection in India to not offer elephant rides in their itineraries. World Animal Protection urges the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to act decisively and end elephant rides in Amer Fort and retire the elephants. Ending the Amer Fort elephant rides will honour India's wildlife protection laws and secure a humane future for these gentle giants which are India's National Heritage Animal," says **Gajender Kumar Sharma, Country**

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