

Sumit Kharbanda
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20th June 2018

Dear Sumit Kharbanda ji,

Subject: Declaration to not use animals in magic shows and encouraging Jadugar Anand (Anand Avasthi) to do the same

I write to you from the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO). We are India's apex animal rights group. As the collective voice of the animal rights movement in India, FIAPO is the catalyst that protects the interests of animals at the local and national levels - through education, research, mobilisation, networking, training and direct action. Created for the movement, by the movement, FIAPO is India's only national federation. It has 83 members and over 200 supporter organisations, active in 70 cities across the country.

Magic has had a long history in India and is indeed one of the greatest form of entertainment for the public. The skills and the talent of our magicians are highly appreciated. At the same time, we strongly condemn the use of animals in magic shows. I would like to highlight that use of animals for magic shows is cruel and unnecessary. The amount of pain and trauma animals go through in such captive conditions while being trained and forced to perform tricks cannot be overlooked as they are living, sentient beings and it is our moral and legal responsibility to protect them from unnecessary pain and suffering. Even the highest Court of India, the Supreme Court of India in *Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja* (2014) has condemned the use of animals for mere entertainment and held that animals have a right to live with dignity and honour and have inherent worth.

I would like to bring to your notice the use of an elephant named Rajini by Aanand Avasti, popularly known as Jadugar Aanad at Ravindra Natya Grah, Indore. At present, a case is going on against the magician in the Madhya Pradesh High Court against the use of Rajini for his magic shows and the Court has ordered that she cannot be used for any further performances. Rajini is in a miserable state and in extremely poor

health conditions. She is suffering from arthritis, has multiple wounds and can barely walk. Despite being in such a deplorable condition, she was used for magic shows. The magician completely overlooked Rajini's condition and her interests. As of now, Jadugar Aanand cannot use Rajini for performances, however he may use another elephant or any other animal.

Use of animals for magic shows is a form of archaic entertainment where extremely cruel methods and intimidators are used to make animals perform unnatural acts. Their "spectacular performances" are a result of physical torture, hunger and fear. Any such show also needs to be mandatorily registered with the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) under the Performing Animals (Registration) Rules.

The cruelty begins from the point when the animals are acquired, then confined in inhuman, unhygienic and stressful conditions. They are deprived of adequate food, exercise, opportunities to socialize with their own kind, and are constantly moved from one camp to the other. These conditions cause permanent physical and mental trauma to the animals, sometimes causing them to behave violently as well.

I therefore appeal to you to declare that you and your affiliated magicians will take an ethical stand for animals and will not be using any animals or birds in magic shows. I urge you to direct Jadugar Anand to refrain from using animals in magic shows and ensure that no living being is harmed while spreading joy and entertainment to the public.

Hoping for a positive action on your end.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely



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