

**MOST URGENT**

Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel ji  
Hon'ble Chief Minister  
Government of Gujarat  
CM Office, Swarnim Sankul – 1  
Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar  
Ahmedabad – 382010

28 June 2025

**Subject: Appeal for a policy decision to end the use of live elephants in processions following elephants running amok during the Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad**

Respected Chief Minister:

I am writing from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals India (PETA India) deeply appreciative of Government of Gujarat initiatives, such as Karuna Abhiyan, to help animals. Today, we write to recommend one more way to help animals and humans, too—to have a policy against the use of live elephants for processions after elephants ran dangerously amok during the Rath Yatra, and to consider using mechanical elephants or other non-animal means instead.

The use of elephants in processions raises serious animal welfare and public safety concerns. As per multiple media reports, three of the eighteen elephants used in the Rath Yatra procession ran amok, triggering panic among the crowd. Several people were reported to be injured. Screaming devotees were seen in viral videos fleeing for safety risking persons falling and getting injured or crushed. There is an inherent risk in using live elephants in public events.

Despite assurances that all 18 elephants had undergone veterinary checks, clear signs of psychological distress, such as swaying and head bobbing, is visible in [news video footage](#) taken prior to the event. This footage also shows the use of ankush weapons (hooked iron rods) to control the elephants, which have been prohibited through an order of the Hon'ble Rajasthan High Court.

Elephants are wild animals whose use in processions and public events routinely results in injuries and fatalities for human attendees. In 2024, at least 14 incidents across India were reported where captive elephants attacked their handlers or others. Already in 2025, more than 20 captive elephants used in processions in Kerala alone became distressed and turned aggressive, resulting in six human deaths and multiple injuries.

As a compassionate and safe alternative to using live elephants, PETA India has introduced the concept of using life-like mechanical elephants in temples and for processions. Now, at least nineteen mechanical elephants are used in temples across South India—10 of which have been donated by PETA India. These mechanical elephants can move their trunks, flap their ears, swish their tails, and be climbed upon for ceremonial purposes. Made of rubber, steel, and fibre,

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they are safe, awe-inspiring, and cruelty-free. Please see a video of a mechanical elephant in use [here](#).

For all of these reasons, we respectfully appeal to you to make a policy decision to replace the use of live elephants in the Rath Yatra and all future public processions with mechanical elephants or other non-animal means such as palanquins or chariots. To support this compassionate initiative and a solution that upholds the cultural sanctity of the event without endangering lives, we are prepared to donate a life-size, fully functional mechanical elephant (free of cost) to the Jagannath Temple or any temple of your choosing so long as the temple commits to never owning, keeping or hiring a live elephant and allows any elephant(s) they may currently keep to be sent to Jamnagar's Vantara or another sanctuary.

Respected Chief Minister, we urge you not to wait for a human fatality to act. We look forward to the Gujarat government's leadership in the use of mechanical elephants or other non-animal means in processions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I may be reached at [PoorvaJ@petaindia.org](mailto:PoorvaJ@petaindia.org) or via our Director of Advocacy, Khushboo Gupta, at 9910397382.

Sincerely,



**Poorva Joshipura**  
Director  
PETA India