

Julia Buruleva

Email: burulevajulia@gmail.com

4th April 2026

Dear Julia,

I am Dr Mini Aravindan, Senior Director of Veterinary Affairs, with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals India (PETA India), a charitable organisation with over two million members and supporters and many programs focused on elephant protection (as well as other species) in India. I am writing to urge you to either **immediately take down** the print depicting the elephant Chanchal, who was used in your photoshoot and has been reported to have died, **or to donate all proceeds** of the [sale of the pink elephant print](#) toward keeping elephants in their forest homes in India, such as to PETA India's mechanical elephant project, or to a genuine elephant sanctuary like [Wildlife SOS](#) or [Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre](#) where rescued elephants are kept unchained, never controlled with weapons, and have the company of other elephants. If you choose the latter, please ensure the prints go with a clear message discouraging the use of captive elephants for rides or other reasons and please post the same on your website.

I watched your [Mo of Everything interview](#) in which you said the paint could not have caused Chanchal's death several months later, and that you were told she died of old age. Some media reports claim she was 70 years old. Please know, under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change Project Elephant "Guidelines for Care and Management of Captive Elephants", captive elephants are recommended to be retired at 65 years of age.

Allow me also to clarify that it is not possible to wholly rule out the health impacts of the paint on Chanchal's ultimate death. The paint was near the elephant's eyes, ears, trunk, mouth and genitals. Coating an elephant's skin—especially around sensitive areas—can pose risks, including irritation, especially for animals in vulnerable health, ingestion during grooming/feeding, stress, and aggravation of pre-existing conditions, even when products are marketed as "safe." You state that Jaipur's elephants are often painted—this is true and unfortunate—but that does not make it acceptable or safe to do, and elephants are not usually painted whole, using so much product.

You further state that you trusted the elephant keeper to know best, but that person is reported to be Saddik Khan, seemingly the same person who owned elephant Malti. [Malti was rescued after a campaign by PETA India](#), as she had been documented being severely beaten on multiple occasions (one time by eight men wielding sticks). And you should have been warned that frustrated elephants in Jaipur have attacked humans and each other. In 2024, [a Russian tourist was hospitalized](#) after an elephant use for rides, Gouri, slammed her to the ground, breaking her leg.

In the interview, you also ask what will happen to families who depend on captive elephants if their use is phased out. PETA India's mechanical elephant campaign donates mechanical elephants to places like temples and for processions, allowing real elephants to stay with their families in their jungle homes and traditions to continue. Inspired by this, mechanical elephants are now increasingly being used for other purposes in India, like rides, weddings, and even political rallies. The use of

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS
INDIA

PETA India
PO Box 28260
Juhu, Mumbai
Maharashtra 400049
022 40727382

Info@petaindia.org
PETAIndia.com

Entities:

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (UK)

Registered Office:
F-110, First Floor, Jagdamba Tower
Plot No 13, Community Centre
Preet Vihar, New Delhi
Delhi 110092

CIN: U74899DL2000NPL103217

mechanical elephants creates job opportunities for artisans and engineers, and *mahouts* (elephant keepers) are routinely retrained to help take care of rescued animals in sanctuary environments.

You refer to the use of captive elephants as “tradition” but tradition is never a good justification for illegal activity, cruelty or public danger. Many elephants in Rajasthan are illegally kept, and thus linked to criminal wild elephant capture. They are also chained and kept on concrete when not in use, like cars in a garage, and controlled with weapons often carefully hidden under costume and decorations.

You are selling prints of this elephant for up to over 3 lakh Indian rupees each. Such sales can go a long way toward helping India’s elephants and to transitioning families reliant on them to better opportunities. While this will not bring Chanchal back, it can help other elephants like her, especially with clear messaging from you against further use of captive elephants.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Dr Mini Aravindan
Senior Director of Veterinary Affairs
PETA India

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS
INDIA

PETA India
PO Box 28260
Juhu, Mumbai
Maharashtra 400049
022 40727382

Info@petaindia.org
PETAIndia.com

Entities:

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (UK)

Registered Office:
F-110, First Floor, Jagdamba Tower
Plot No 13, Community Centre
Preet Vihar, New Delhi
Delhi 110092

CIN: U74899DL2000NPL103217