

Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (GMFER) in Hyderabad, 2017

In a movement to celebrate the beauty of the world's wildlife, groups in over 130 countries including India, Kenya, New Zealand and the United States organise local demonstrations known as Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (GMFER). The march is symbolic of the proverbial last straw the world has had against poaching.

It is difficult to acquire exact statistics for poaching as many countries are afraid to give away how their protection schemes may have had loopholes, no matter what measures they have taken to protect the wildlife.

Challenges

On September 29, three elephant poachers were arrested for allegedly culling an elephant for ivory in Bonai Forest, Orissa. However, reports later turned up that the elephant had died from natural causes, but the 1kg ivory derived from the body was found with one of the suspects.

Nevertheless, the ivory trade resulting from the deaths of animals is a huge part of the battle GMFER is fighting. GMFER also calls for the end of *phajaan*, the crushing of an elephant's spirit, the use of elephants in temples and parades, and elephant trekking, practices commonly used on Asian elephants.

Additionally, Kanha and Pench's tiger reserves have seen the use of tiger and leopard paws, claws and whiskers for tantric rituals. Earlier this month, a forest superintendent went undercover as a tantric priest to catch poachers who culled tigers in Kanha for such products, proving the forest divisions in India are doing everything they can to prevent the senseless commercialisation of the deaths of endangered species.

Bringing the fight home

GMFER is grateful for the international efforts taken in India. Bangalore and Chennai had a march last year on October 4, World Animal Day. In fact, over 160 cities across the world participated in the movement last year. Hyderabad is the only city in India to do so this year, according to GMFER's website. The event in Hyderabad has been placed for October 7 to allow for maximum participation from the city.

The march in Hyderabad will allow people to sign letters to international governments, known as Group 19, calling for a universal ban on animal product trade; these countries include New Zealand and Australia. The event will also feature donation boxes for anyone willing to pitch in for the greater efforts of the organisation. Additionally, the march in Hyderabad run by Visala Katamneni and Nikhita Patibandla will be supplying placards, banners and stickers for the march.

"Nikhita and I have been organising the marches for the past four years. If we don't encourage people to take pride in our wildlife heritage and act on it as a global community, within the next ten years, these species will be extinct; and museums will be the only way to actually see these animals," Visala explains, "Additionally, we have to fight corruption which is furthering the money-making side of it. Many poachers don't see any other way to have an income, so we want to direct an interaction with local communities about other options for a sustainable income and about conservation."

On Saturday October 7, the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos will take place at KBR National Park from 4pm till 6pm. For more information visit the [event page on Facebook](#), or the

[main wesbite for GMFER.](#)

Jaggi Vasudev's Rally for Rivers claims they will, but this is not based on the most nuanced science

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