

## Cartier Elephant Polo Cup faces opposition

Cartier Elephant Polo Cup 2006 to be held here Nov 18 is drawing flak from animal activists.

People for Animals (PFA), a Haryana-based NGO, has served legal notice to the chief secretary, principal conservator of forests and director general of police of Rajasthan seeking immediate ban on the use of elephants for entertainment.

'We have served legal notice to the officials and we will wait till Thursday after which we plan to file a public interest litigation in the Rajasthan high court Friday against the use of elephants for entertainment,' Mahendra Singh Kachhawa, PFA's counsel, told IANS.

Another NGO, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (India), has also come out against the polo match.

Said the NGO: 'Elephants forced to participate in polo matches are captured from the wild and taken away from their families and natural homes. They routinely suffer chronic physical ailments, social and emotional deprivation and premature deaths and are confined to extremely tiny spaces.'

Asking people to support its cause, PETA India has demanded that Cartier withdraw its sponsorship for this cruel 'sport' immediately.

'Tell Cartier that it should find ways to promote its fine jewellery without causing harm to animals,' the NGO said through one of its alerts.

But despite the criticism, Elephant Family, a London based body involved with conservation of elephants globally in association with Help in Suffering (HIS), an NGO in the area of animal welfare, is going ahead with its plan to organise the Cartier-sponsored event.

'The event is an attempt to draw global attention towards Asian elephants which suffer heavily because of the bloody slaughter for ivory. HIS has organised the jumbo show to raise funds for the conservation of elephants,' organisers say.

Brother-in-law of Prince Charles, Mark Shand, who is an activist and is involved with Elephant Family, feels that all those criticising the elephant polo match have done little to conserve the animal.

'Elephant polo is being played in