

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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MOST URGENT

Dr OP Chaudhary Joint Secretary (NLM/PC)
Room No 245, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying Ministry of
Fisheries,
Animal Husbandry and Dairying
Krishi Bhawan
New Delhi 110001

11 January 2024

Re: Request to Immediately Advise the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to Enforce the Ban on Cockfighting

Dear Sir:

I am writing from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India, on behalf of our 2 million members and supporters, regarding the rampant cockfights planned brazenly and openly in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana regions.

We are disturbed to note press reports that in preparation for the upcoming harvest festival, numerous illicit cockfighting arenas are being readied in Andhra Pradesh,¹ roosters are being sold at high prices,² and the birds are being administered steroids and alcohol.³ As you will know, cockfighting is illegal, and conducting it is a complete violation of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960, the Constitution of India, and letter no. 9-17/2021-2022/PCA (dated 11 January 2022) issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) (**Annexure 1**). As such, may we request that you please urgently direct the state governments to enforce the ban on cockfighting?

We commend state efforts that have been made to curtail illegal cockfights and hold offenders accountable. However, despite state intervention, cockfights are now being openly planned in remote villages⁴ – so much so that it is being

¹Lanka V. Huge cockfight arenas in the making in coastal AP districts. *The Times of India*. 8 January 2024. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/huge-cockfight-arenas-in-the-making-in-coastal-ap-districts/articleshow/106622335.cms>

²Lanka V. Fighter cock prices touch Rs 2.5 lakh in Andhra Pradesh, “foreign” breeds flood markets. *The Times of India*. 8 January 2024. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/cost-of-fighter-roosters-hits-2-5lin-ap-mkts-ahead-of-sankranti/articleshow/106622404.cms>

³Lanka V. Andhra Pradesh cockfights: roosters getting addicted to steroids and alcohol. *The Times of India*. 9 January 2024. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/as-roosters-get-high-on-steroids-magic-shots-become-expensive/articleshow/106653611.cms>

⁴Reddy SB. Cockfighting to take centre stage in AP border villages. *The New Indian Express*. 9 January 2024. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/teelangana/2024/jan/09/cockfighting-to-take-centre-stage-in-ap-border-villages-2649316.html>

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reported in the media. It is in this context that I write to emphasise the grave and immediate need to remind these states to enforce the strict ban on inciting or organising animal fights under sections 11(1)(m) and 11(1)(n) of the PCA Act and to rigorously penalise the participating rooster owners and organisers of such events.

Roosters raised for fighting are often kept in cramped cages and tormented to incite violent behaviour. Razor-sharp metal spurs or knives are attached to their feet to make the fights bloodier. During cockfights, two birds are forced to fight. Their eyes may be gouged out, their wings and legs broken, their lungs punctured, or their spinal cord severed. One of them may die during the event, and both are often critically injured.

In the landmark judgement of *Animal Welfare Board of India vs A Nagaraja and Others* in 2014, the Supreme Court of India made it clear that inciting sentient animals to fight for human entertainment is barbaric, cruel, speciesist, and must end. The apex court ordered the AWBI and state governments to “take steps to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on the animals” and explicitly directed the AWBI to ensure that “the person-in-charge or care of the animal shall not incite any animal to fight against a human being or another animal”, in line with Section 11(1)(m)(ii) of the PCA Act. The A Nagaraja judgement also emphasises the duty of the government to enforce the PCA Act and states that if the provisions of the act and the directions and declarations of the Supreme Court are not properly and effectively complied with, disciplinary action may be taken against erring officers so that the object and the purpose of the PCA Act can be achieved.

Furthermore, in 2016, the High Court of Andhra Pradesh⁵ reiterated and emphasised the ban on cockfights on the basis that these events glorify violence and that it is common to observe roosters being forced to cut each other with knives, resulting in severe loss of blood and grievous injury. The High Court observed that not only is the event itself illegal under the PCA Act, it also desensitises spectators to the immense pain and suffering of these animals while encouraging people not to discharge their fundamental duty, under Article 51-A(g) of the Constitution, to have compassion for living creatures. The observations in this order were reiterated and reinforced by the High Court through its order dated 4 January 2018. Appeals against both these orders were dismissed by the Supreme Court in 2018. Reportedly, the High Court once again passed an order earlier this week directing that the ban on cockfights be implemented rigorously.

In addition to cruelty to animals, cockfighting is often linked to other crimes, such as illegal gambling, robbery, and even murder. Betting is part of the cockfights, and hundreds of crores of rupees change hands during these events. Last year, two

⁵Judgement dated 26 December 2016 in Narahari Jagadish Kumar vs State of Andhra Pradesh and Ors. WP (PIL) No 320 of 2014 and WP (PIL) MP No 305 of 2016 in WP (PIL) No 177 of 2016.

humans were killed on the spot at cockfights in Andhra Pradesh, incurring deep injuries from being attacked by roosters with knives tied to their legs.⁶ Last year in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, NTR district police registered 180 cases and arrested 480 people in raids on cockfight arenas and poker zones.⁷

In light of the above, I humbly request that you advise these states' chief secretaries, their director-generals of police, and the state animal welfare boards to scrupulously implement the ban on cockfights.

May I please request a copy of any letters issued in this regard? I can be reached 9910397382 or at KhushbooG@petaindia.org. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Thank you

Kind regards,



Khushboo Gupta
Director of Advocacy Projects

⁶Naidu TA. Two persons killed in cockfights in Andhra Pradesh. *The Hindu*. 16 January 2023. Accessed 10 January 2024. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/two-persons-killed-in-cockfights-in-andhra-pradesh/article66382097.ece>

⁷TNN. 480 arrested for cockfights in Andhra Pradesh. *The Times of India*. Updated 19 January 2023. Accessed 10 January 2024. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/480-arrested-for-cockfights/articleshow/97113725.cms>