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Serious fun to mark Men's Day

On Nov 19, men in Bangalore plan to draw attention to government policies that weigh heavily against them

GETTY IMAGES

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Not many men in this part of the world know that November 19 is celebrated as International Men's Day. That's why the National Coalition for Men (NCFM) has decided that it's about time they made a big deal about their day — through a Save the Male campaign.

But it won't be the regular slogan-raising, crying-on-each-other's-shoulders event but an awareness campaign with a twist. Instead of lamenting on the 'pitiable' condition they are in, November 19 in Bangalore will be a time for some fun and frolic.

Kumar Jagirdar, a men's activist, said, "It has become fashionable to support only Women's Day, but what about men? We are proud to be men and we need to celebrate it. In fact, 82 per cent of the taxes in the country are paid by men, but the government policies are lopsided. There is a ministry for welfare of animals, but not one for men. Why should men be taken for granted?"

Jagirdar said they were not against women, but only wanted men to be given equal importance and the best way to open the communication channel for men is by celebrat-



ing International Men's Day in a high-decibel manner.

As part of the celebration, men's activists will gather at the Forum Value Mall in Whitefield and organise a frolic session for a couple of hours in the evening. Virag Dhulia, India liaison officer for NCFM, said, "One such game is a bow-and-arrow one called Save the Male. There will be a rotating circular disc with the picture of a man in the middle. The participants, especially women, will be asked to shoot the arrow and if it doesn't hit the man's face, the male is saved." Winners will receive goodies. He said women would be as much part of the celebrations as men and the event was only to highlight the fact that "we are proud to be men". Well, has the battle of the sexes just got bigger?

WHY SAVE MEN?

According to the National Coalition For Men (NCFM), here's how men have been pushed to the edge of sanity:

- » About 1.7 lakh married men have committed suicide directly due to domestic violence in the last 12 years
- » More than 13 lakh men have lost their jobs between 2001 and 2005
- » Every year, about 57,000 married men commit suicide in the country; the number of women ending their lives is 30,000
- » Men pay 82 per cent of taxes, but not a single rupee is spent for their welfare.
- » On an average, at least 98 per cent of men have faced domestic violence in three years of marriage.