

**More than 10,000 students and youth give a rousing welcome to Kailash Satyarthi at Andhra border**

*Government of Andhra Pradesh and ministers to strive for safe childhood-safe India*

**Anantapur, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, Monday:** The [Bharat Yatra](#), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, reached Anantapur on 18<sup>th</sup> September, the eighth day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The march to the Andhra Pradesh border and to Anantapur, led by the Nobel Peace Laureate, was received by officials of the government of Andhra Pradesh, Smt.Paritala Sunitha, Minister for Women & Child Welfare and Shri.Kalava Srinivasulu, Minister for Housing and I&PR and Shri. Devinani Umamaheshwara Rao, Irrigation Minister and District Incharge Minister

Mr. Satyarthi and his co-marchers were welcomed at the border with cultural programmes and traditional dances, post which Mr. Satyarthi spoke on the issues of child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The march saw the participation of over 10,000 youth, and working professionals take to the streets and demand necessary rights for the youngest citizens of our country.

The Yatra marchers called upon the youth of the country to step up and fight for children across India. They urged people of Anantapur to strive towards building a safe childhood and a safe India.

Said Mr. Satyarthi, "Andhra Pradesh is the land where Sun rises. I want the Sun to rise to dispel the darkness of fear, perversion, vulgarity, which have become not only a heinous crime but a moral epidemic in the form of child sexual abuse in India and in Andhra Pradesh"

"I urge all ministers, MPs, MLAs, collectors, SPs and other elected politicians and bureaucrats not just in Andhra Pradesh but across India to go back to your schools at least once – even if it is for one hour – not as a VIP but as ordinary citizens, as a father, brother, mother and sister. It will help restore confidence among parents in ensuring safety of children" he added.

The ministers, MP's and MLA's present at the event also pledged to go back to school and see for themselves the provisions of safety and security that have been provided for the children of their state, terming this as a necessary and right step in ensuring Safe Childhood-Safe India.

Ever since its launch, Bharat Yatra has been drawing enormous support from citizens across India, including celebrities like Amitabh Bachchan who tweeted to his fans to support the Yatra.

The Chief Minister of the state, Shri. Naidu, has also supported the Bharat Yatra in a twitter post to Mr. Satyarthi. People cutting across faith, geography, profession and vocation are coming together to support the Yatra and Creation of a safe India for our children.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sent a personal letter to Kailash Satyarthi extending his support to the Yatra, which will cover 11000 kilometres across 22 States, including Tamil Nadu. Some of the key cities it covers include Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Guwahati, Bhopal, Jaipur, Srinagar among others.

At Kanniyakumari during the flag off Mr Satyarthi had declared, "I will not rest till children of this country are not safe. I am not going to stop fighting if the raping and abuse do not stop. I cannot sleep in peace until we win our war against rape and abuse. This moral epidemic haunts our nation, and it is time we fight against it, together."

Re-iterating his mission behind launching the Bharat Yatra, he said "Why am I marching? Because my children are being raped. I refuse to accept that eight children go missing and two are raped every hour. Each time if a single child is in danger, India is in danger. Bharat Yatra is to make India safe again for our children."

Kailash Satyarthi has been campaigning for the freedom, safety and security for children across the globe for the past 36 years. His Nobel Peace Prize (2014) was for his continuous efforts and struggle for the rights children.

The Yatra is the launch of the three-year campaign against child rape and child sexual abuse which is aimed at increasing awareness and reporting of the cases, strengthening intuitional response including medical health and compensations, ensuring protection for victims and witnesses during trials and increasing convictions of child sexual abuse in a time bound manner.

**About Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation**

The Foundation's mission is to create, implement and advocate child-friendly policies that ensure the holistic development and empowerment of children. For achieving these goals, the Foundation encourages government, businesses, civil society as well as children and the youth to participate in strategies and action that will safeguard children from the worst forms of abuse, including lack of education and health. For more information, visit: [www.satyarthi.org.in](http://www.satyarthi.org.in)

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