

Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi to launch Bharat Yatra from Kanyakumari

Chennai, 30th August, Wednesday: The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation announced that the Bharat Yatra Mr. Satyarthi will be undertaking to fight child sexual abuse and trafficking, will reach Chennai on the 13th of September 2017. Chennai will host the Nobel Laureate on the 13th and the march will progress to and reach Vellore on the 14th of September. The Bharat Yatra will flag off from Kanyakumari on 11th September and culminate in New Delhi on 16th October.

This Yatra, launched to work towards creating an India that is safe for our children, has received whole hearted support from the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi.

Dr. Paul Bhaskar, State Coordinator Bharat Yatra- Tamil Nadu & Kerala, Devanayan-Chennai City Coordinator, Bharat Yatra and Dr.K.Abdul Ghani, Green Man of India and Member Tamil Nadu State ,Bharat Yatra Committee,were hosted at the Chennai Press Club, where they addressed all present, about the rampant problems of child sexual abuse and trafficking in the state of Tamil Nadu and expressed deep regret at the many cases that have recently come to light about the rape of minors by family members or close friends.

According to NCRB and NFHS-3 ,child marriage is a cause of concern in Tamil Nadu with 2 ,15,212 girls and 1 ,64,763 boys being married off before the legal age.

Additionally, between 2013- 2015, the number of missing children that were reported were 1 0,586. These numbers are merely indicative of the amount of child trafficking that takes place on these states, and that these children are then sold multiple times and forced to endure physical, mental and sexual assault, consistently.

Mr. Satyarthi has often expressed his concern about the fear that exists in the society to stop victims or their families from speaking up. This fear emboldens the criminals to roam freely and commit more heinous crimes, thereby ruining many lives.

Said Dr.Paul Bhaskar, "The alarming nature of child trafficking in India today is an issue that needs to be voiced and highlighted across the country. Rampant trafficking of young girls and migrants from North India to South India has taken on the proportions of a well organized trade. We need to work towards ensuring the availability of good quality, free education and skills training for all our children so that they do not get sucked into the vicious cycle of child trafficking,labour and sexual exploitation."

Dr.K.Abdul Ghani, Green Man of India, emphasized on the long and arduous journey social activists take for their cause.

"Children are the future of our country and enshrine our hopes for a good future. They are our best chance at securing a healthy, peaceful and prosperous nation. Mr. Satyarthi has been fighting for the rights of children for over 30 years. Let us join hands with him and his foundation to ensure that our

voices resonate across the country and bring about the change we wish to see.”

Kailash Satyarthi has been campaigning for the freedom, safety and security for children across the globe for the past 36 years. He has led the historic Global March Against Child Labor in 1998 that prompted the ILO to pass international conventions against the worst form of child labour, in addition to the Shiksha yatra in 2001, after which the Right to Education was included as a fundamental right in the Constitution of India. Mr. Satyarthi has, as a prolific thought leader, played a catalytic role in influencing social and political policies of our country. He won the Nobel Peace prize (2014) for his continuous efforts and struggle for the rights of children.

The Yatra will flag off from Kanyakumari on the 11th of September, from the Vivekananda Memorial, commemorating the anniversary of the great leader's address at Chicago in 1893.

Mr. Satyarthi and his foundation KSCF have been preparing the ground for several months to launch the Yatra in September. As part of this ground work, Mr Satyarthi has travelled the length and breadth of country meeting citizens, faith leaders, employees and corporates, parliamentarians, social organizations among others, all of whom have pledged their whole-hearted support to the Bharat Yatra, terming it as a necessary fight for our country to embark on and a noble cause to work towards.

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.

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