

Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi to launch North-Eastern stretch of Bharat Yatra from Guwahati

Guwahati, 1st September, Friday: The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation announced today, that the Bharat Yatra Mr. Satyarthi will be undertaking to fight child sexual abuse and trafficking, will flag off from Guwahati on the 22nd of September 2017. Guwahati will host the Nobel Laureate on the 22nd of September and the march will progress to and reach Siliguri on the 27th 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.

Professor Mridul Hazarika - Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University and Ms.Hasina Kharbhiih - Founder of Impulse NGO, were hosted at the Guwahati Press Club, where they addressed all present, about the rampant problems of child sexual abuse and trafficking in the state of Assam 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 National Crime Records Bureau and National Family Health Survey-3 ,child marriage is a cause of concern in Assam with 1,28,554 girls and 1,34,214 boys being married off before the legal age.

The report also highlights the percent share of POCSO (Section 4 & 6 Only) cases where perpetrator was known to the survivor and it stands at 93%

Assam also registers 1317 cases, which account for 38% of the national figure.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 Professor Hazarika , "Violence against children, all forms of it are unacceptable. This menace will see a decline only when the citizens of our country come forward and declare their displeasure and zero tolerance for these crimes. I urge you to come forward, join the Bharat Yatra and be part in scripting a new India for all of us to live in "

Ms.Hasina Kharbhiih emphasised on the situation in North East India and said, " The 8 sisters of the east are vulnerable to child trafficking and exploitation. Surakshit Bachpan-Surakshit Bharat is the need of the hour to sensitize the people of our country about the magnitude that this crime has escalated to. Our children are our future and we must do everything in our power from letting that future fall to ruins. Let us demand the country we want to see our children thrive in and where we can live with pride and compassion."

Mr. 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.

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

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