

Surakshit Bachpan is a moral and social responsibility of every Indian; Kailash Satyarthi
Nobel Peace Laureate's Yatra receives an enthusiastic welcome from nearly 2000 students

Ranchi, 25thSeptember 2017, Monday: The [Bharat Yatra](#), led by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi reached Ranchi in Jharkhand today. The 35 day long Yatra that started from Kanniyakumari will reach Delhi on October 16, 2017, marching across India.

The Nobel Peace Laureate and his co-marchers flagged off the Yatra at Ranchi Medical College (RMC) and were accorded a grand welcome by Aarti Kujur, Chairman Bal Sanrakshan Aayog, Jharkhand, Padmashri Awardee, Shri. Ashok Bhagat, Vikar Bharati, Smt. Draupadi Murmu, Governor, Jharkhand, Shri. Dinesh Oraon, Speaker, Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha and Cardinal T. Toppo.

Mr Kailash Satyarthi said, "Jharkhand could attain greater socio-economic development if every child in the state is educated and remains safe and healthy. Children should have the freedom to dream and discover a good life for themselves. If parents can't be the friends of the children and can't listen to their problems, then they should not be referred to as parents. In this Bharat Yatra we have to improve the condition of the families, otherwise we cannot refer our country as a fast developing nation. Surakshit Bachpan is a moral and social responsibility of every Indian in this country. We have to provide our children a safe childhood. Everyone including the society, the government, and the corporate world has to unite to develop and improve the condition of the children."

"We've been taught to remain silent, our children are not encouraged to speak out and report on things that make them feel uncomfortable. According to government data, approximately 53% of the population has been sexually abused as a child. This is why the Bharat Yatra has taken shape. We are fighting so that our children can move from fear to freedom and from the darkness of rape and abuse to the light of safety and justice," added Mr. Satyarthi.

Thousands of supporters, mainly youth and children pledged to join the Bharat Yatra to ensure the realisation of Surakshit Bachpan-Surakshit Bharat to sensitise people about the issues of child trafficking and child sexual abuse. The march witnessed participation of over 2000 people from all walks of life – youth, children, political leaders, faith leaders, survivors and members of the civil society.

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

Said Smt. Darupadi Murmu, "In a country where children are worshipped by all in the form of lord Krishna, Durga and Ram, it is ironic that India is also the country where innocent children are raped, trafficked and abused. We always say that the children are our future, but we don't act like that. Today we are in the 21st century, where we try to adapt the western culture. But before adapting to it, we must take cognisance of where India stands on the issues of according respect and rights to its children. Today we are making those innocent little hands work under duress, the same hands which are meant to hold the pens to write. Time has come where we should change the situation and start fighting for the future of our country. Mr. Satyarthi, we are with you in your fight for our children."

The Bharat Yatra launched on 11 September at Kanyakumari by Mr Satyarthi is marching across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

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. People cutting across faith, geography, profession and vocation are coming together to support the Yatra and the creation of a safe India for our children. They are collectively striving for better laws, stronger implementation and faster modes of redressal for victims of abuse and trafficking

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

For more details on the Yatra, contact:

Preeti Rawat

Preeti@thequtenberg.com

Paroma Bhattacharya

paroma@satyarthi.org