

Candles light up Patna as city demands for Safe Childhood-Safe India

Patna, 2nd October 2017, Monday: The [Bharat Yatra](#), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, reached Patna on 2nd October, the twenty-second day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The Kailash Satyarthi Children's foundation and the Bharat Yatra marchers walked from Golghar to Gandhi Maidan, with candles symbolizing the movement from the darkness of abuse to the light of safety, security and justice for the children of India.

The march saw the participation of over 200 youth, take to the streets and demand necessary rights for the youngest citizens of our country.

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

Per National Crime Records Bureau and Census 2011, over 4000 children (reported) have gone missing in the state of Bihar, between 2011-2015.

These alarming numbers are merely indicative of the high amount of trafficking and kidnapping that takes place in this state.

The march also witnessed a nukkad natak, which sought to highlight the increase in the number of cases of crimes against children and how important it is to sensitize the masses about this growing menace.

If left unchecked, with more and more innocent lives being forced into sex work and labour or being trafficked and murdered, the country will continue to suffer. India as a country will be unable to progress socio-economically if action is not taken today

Earlier last month, Union Home Minister, Shri. Rajnath Singh, gave his assurance on passing the anti-trafficking law, which aligns with one of the key demands of the Bharat Yatra.

Ever since its launch, Bharat Yatra has been drawing enormous support from citizens across India, including Amitabh Bachchan who tweeted to his fans to support the Yatra. Earlier, Union Minister for Shipping and Finance Mr Pon Radhakrishnan had flagged off the Yatra from Kanyakumari along with Mr Satyarthi. In Trivandrum, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan assured whole hearted support from his government in eradicating the menace of child sexual abuse and trafficking.

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 Karnataka. Some of the key cities it covers include Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Guwahati, Bhopal, Jaipur, Srinagar among others.

The Karnataka High court will pay special attention to POCSO cases so the children can get justice.

The Yatra was also supported by Andhra Pradesh and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu walked with the Foundation to promote awareness about the cause. He also announced that the state of Andhra Pradesh would house a global policy institute dedicated to the well-being and security of children across the country.

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
Support the Bharat Yatra through - <http://ket.to/bharatyatra>

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