**Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister joins Kailash Satyarthi to Make India Safe for Children**

*Close to a 1000 youth and children joined the Bharat Yatra in Srinagar*

**Srinagar, 9th October 2017, Monday:** The [Bharat Yatra](http://bharatyatra.online), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, flagged off the Northern stretch from Srinagar, on 9th October, the twenty-ninth day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The Nobel Peace Laureate and his co-marchers were received by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and Nayeema Ahmad Mahjoor, Chairperson, State Commission for Women

Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti welcomed the Nobel Peace Laureate on his first visit to the state warmly, by congratulating him on the Bharat Yatra, and the cause he is fighting for. She also expressed her happiness at Mr. Satyarthi’s presence in Srinagar.

Said the Chief Minister, “A child is abused at home, their parents ask them to remain silent which is very wrong. So, I appeal to the parents to speak up and not to tell their children to remain silent against sexual abuse or any sort of exploitation.
Parents should speak to their children regularly and ask them if they have any concerns at home or at school. Similarly, I also request my children to speak to their parents, friends or teachers and to talk to them about any wrongdoing that has happened to them, else they'll be exploited repeatedly. Children travel on the path of education and must not be used for violence”

Mr. Satyarthi, addressing the youth of the troubled state said, “I speak to the children of Kashmir, please don't go with violence, it will take you nowhere. If the youth or any child wants to study, I’ll stand for them. I have come here for the first time but will come here again to help them get education. I will speak to the governments for their education, but for that they must not to go with violence. If there is a single thing that can unite humanity, it is compassion. I have come to Kashmir with the message of love. I work with 140-145 countries for protecting children from child slavery and child abuse and have seen children from Syria, Sudan and Pakistan. We are working with the UN for their education and their safety.”

Recounting an incident, the Nobel Peace Laureate added, “One mother from Pakistan told me that, what you have done, our people have never done for us, and it was then I truly felt that there are no boundaries when it comes to love and compassion and we should and can learn this from our children.”

The impact of the Bharat Yatra can be seen through instances of positive action. Inspired by the Nobel Peace Laureate, a young boy called Kamrun Yusuf requested the Chief Minister and Mr. Satyarthi to conduct awareness camps in his village, and across the state as “It is necessary for all children to be educated on this and many children could not come, but wanted to be here, would benefit greatly from this”

Close to a 1000 youth and children joined the Bharat Yatra in Srinagar, pledging to ensure the education and the safety of the youngest citizens of India.

“We are honoured to be associated with Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation. Children in Kashmir suffer, due to socio-political reasons and I believe we must fight together to achieve their safety and security,” added Nayeema Ahmad Mahjoor.

The Nobel Peace Laureate also spoke on conducting the largest lesson on child protection and abuse with over 11,000 children in Jaipur on 11th October. He added that it was the largest lesson planned till date and that representatives from the Guinness Book will be coming to witness the same.

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](http://www.satyarthi.org.in)

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

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