**Kailash Satyarthi’s Bharat Yatra reaches the holy city of Varanasi**

Thousands of citizens join the Bharat Yatra for a Safe Childhood-Safe India

**Varanasi, 5th October 2017, Thursday:** The [Bharat Yatra](http://bharatyatra.online), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, reached Varanasi on 5th October, the twenty-fifth day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The Bharat Yatra and the marchers marched from Ambedkar Pratima, where they were joined by students from Gramodaya ITI,100 Battalions from U.P. college, Association for People Section, Apex College Of Physiotherapy and Nursing, Asmita Childline, Childline Varanasi, Mano Vikaas Sewa Sansthan. Mahila Samakhya and over 150 college students from various parts of Varanasi and neighbouring areas.

“We are marching under the leadership of Mr Satyarthi. This issue of child sexual abuse and trafficking is a serious one. We are here, in this city to spread the message of child abuse and trafficking and the message can only spread through you. No victim should every be silenced, so speak up and report crimes. It is the perpetrator who must hang his head in shame,” said a spokesperson from the Foundation.

At Maa Saraswati Intermediate College, Kisan intermediate college, SBP intercollege, LBS Intermediate School, the Yatra saw the participation of over thousands of students, all of whom marched with the foundation to create awareness about the need for the safety and security of children across the country.

The Foundation also emphasised on the need for better execution of existing laws and institutions.  
While there have been improvements, with education being included as a fundamental right under the constitution, children are still not receiving the education promised, there are no teachers in schools, there is still the prevalence of female foeticide and now sexual abuse is happening in school as well. They appealed to the power of the youth to drive the change necessary and join hands with government and law institutions in the country to fight against child sexual abuse and trafficking.

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>

*For more details on the Yatra, contact:*

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