

## Saints give clarion call to ban cow slaughter by law Nagpur witnesses grand finale of Gou Gram Yatra

From Virag Pachpore in Nagpur

THOUSANDS witnessed the Shankaracharyas, saints and leaders from various sects including Islam, giving a clarion call to ban cow slaughter in India by enactment of a law by the Parliament, on the concluding ceremony of 108-day Vishwa Mangal Gou Gram Yatra at the historic Reshim Bagh Grounds on the evening of January 17.

The concluding ceremony was marked by the vow administered by none other than the Shankaracharya of Gokarna Peeth Swami Raghaveshwar Bharati to the vast gathering to save cow which he described as very soul of Bharat.

A galaxy of saints, thinkers and scholars descended on Nagpur to address the function. They included Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev, Shankaracharya of Karveer Peeth Swami Vidya Nrisingh Bharati, Acharya Mahasabha president Swami Dayananda Saraswati, RSS Sarsanghachalak Shri Mohan Bhagwat, Jain Muni Pavitra Sagar Maharaj, VHP president Shri Ashok Singhal, Buddhist saint Bhante Janan Jagat, Bhadant Rahul Bodhi, Maulana Bashir Qadri of Chhattisgarh, Haji Taiyab Qureshi, Swami Sahdevdas of ISKCON, Rashtra Sevika Samiti's Pramukh Sanchalika Pramilatai Medhe and famous thespian Suresh Oberoi.

Basappa Swami Nandi (a bull), Peethadhish of Sannakarai Mutt in Doddarasinkare village under Mandya district of Karnataka presided over the function. The Nandiswamy, who is said to have blessed with some divine powers, was the centre of attraction for the past couple of days at the exhibition that preceded the function. He was ceremoniously brought to the dais where he proceeded to the Shankaracharya Raghaveshwar Bharati and bowed to him with tearful eyes. The Acharya fondled him, wiped his tears and then only the Nandiswami occupied his seat at a corner of the dais where he stayed for nearly four and a half hours throughout the meeting. This was probably for the first time in the present history that a bull presided over a public meeting of such a grandeur and significance.

Swami Raghaveshwar Bharati, who conceived the idea of the 108-day-long public unique awareness campaign and presided over it all along its 25,000 km route, said this event heralded the rebirth of Goumata and Bharatmata. "I have no doubt that resurgence of Bharat will be through cow protection only," he assured the audience to a thunderous applause.

"This is not the formal end of the yatra. It is the beginning of a movement to protect the cow and its progeny in Bharat," the Shankaracharya said.

RSS Sar-sanghachalak Shri Mohan Bhagwat said that the thinking on cow and her place in our life is the 'post-modern thinking'. He laid three preconditions for all round development of human beings namely, decentralised planning, feeling of fraternity and harmonious relationship with the nature. He said this was the thinking and vision of the Hindus since the hoary past and cow was the centre of this thinking because cow teaches us all these three prerequisites for better and balanced development.

Describing cow as foundation of self-healing and self-realisation, Baba Ramdev said saving the cow would lead saving of Rs. 12 lakh crore of Indian currency from going out through chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Karveer Peethadhish Shankaracharya Vidya Nrising Bharati said tractors and chemical fertilizers are our enemies as both involve foreign investment and cause incurable damage to our soil and agriculture. He called for reviving traditional method of farming which was primarily based on cow.

Maulana Bashir Qadri, who is Alim of Chhattisgarh, vouched the whole-hearted support of the Muslims for protecting cow. Haji Taiyab Qureshi appealed to the people not to use articles made out of cow skin.

Swami Sahdevdas Maharaj of ISKCON, Hyderabad, said that India ranks third in export of beef. Brazil tops the list of beef exporting countries and Australia is at the second position. There is still time to understand this conspiracy of ruining the Indian farming and eliminating cows from India.

The cow was accorded top priority in Jain sect and in fact, the cow was the symbol of the first Jain Teerthankar Adinathji Maharaj. In the life of a Jain saint the cow bore immense respect and significance, said Jain Muni Pavitra Sagar Maharaj.

Pramukh Sanchalika of Rashtra Sevika Samiti Pramilatai Medhe in her brief but meaningful speech said as a society we have our own responsibility and commitment to save the cow. We should protect, honour and rear the cow and should not tolerate her insult at any cost.

Noted Buddhist saint Rahul Bodhi said all the Buddhists honour and respect the cows. He said that Lord Buddha had described various virtues of the cow.

Namdhari samaj has been at the forefront in cow protection since the historical times and even today we pledge our full support for this noble cause, said Namdhari saint Harpaldas Maharaj.

Stressing that the culture of Bharat was based on cow, Bhante Janan Jagat Maharaj said in all the Buddhist countries of the world cow is a symbol of respect and honour. We need to protect the cow for better future, prosperity and peace in Bharat and the entire world.

In her message, Mata Amritanandamayi described the cow as Kalpavriksha. Not only the cow milk is compared with nectar, her urine and dung also carry immense medicinal values, she said, adding that the value of panchgavya was best known to our ancestors.

The Vishwa Mangal Gou Gram Yatra is a commendable event and it aims at creating awareness about protection of cow and agriculture. The objectives of this event are not linked to any religion or sect or caste, said Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Guruji, who happens to be one of the promoters of this historic event.

Earlier, working president of the Yatra Dr HR Nagendra said that the Yatra began from Kurukshetra on September 30, 2009 and traversed the distance of more than 25,000 kms in 108 days in all parts of the country conveying the message of cow protection.

National secretary of the yatra, Shri Shankarlal said besides the main yatra, 10, 000 upyatrass were conducted in various parts of the country touching almost each

and every village in Bharat. Along with the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others also joined the movement in large number and exhibited their respect and honour for the cow. The signature campaign during the yatra was said to be the biggest one in the recent past.

The president of Vidarbha unit of Yatra Samiti Shri Balkrishna Bharatiya and Shri Vinod Mohta honoured and felicitated all the saints and dignitaries on the dais. The proceedings were conducted by Shri Hukumchand Sanwala.

During the programme nearly 40 persons who have done commendable work in the field of cow protection, propagation of panchgavya-based medicines and developing organic farming were felicitated.

