



**For further information, including photos and videos, please contact:**

Max Bearak, Quicksand

[max@quicksand.co.in](mailto:max@quicksand.co.in), (+919650067585)

Sabrina Aggarwal, WASH United

[Sabrina.aggarwal@wash-united.org](mailto:Sabrina.aggarwal@wash-united.org), (+919958295877)

Charu Raizada, PR Pundit

[charu@prpundit.com](mailto:charu@prpundit.com), (+919811783347)

### **PRESS NOTE**

## **Nirmal Bharat Yatra's call for a clean and happy India continues to gain momentum in Gwalior as India's biggest ever sanitation and hygiene mela reaches halfway point**

*After 1,000 kms on the road crossing three states, organizers reveal exciting new formats for the last three stops of the Yatra*

### ***Sewagram, Maharashtra (Oct 3-5):***

Only a few kilometres down the road from Mahatma Gandhi's famous ashram, the Nirmal Bharat Yatra loudly and colourfully burst onto the scene, despite heavy monsoons and soaring heat.



At this first stop, after the rains passed, over 13,000 yatri (attendees) pioneered specially designed games, performances and workshops. Below, Emcee Maddy hosts one of the Yatra's 25 games.



Additionally, over 1,000 children were trained in sanitation and hygiene behaviour in local schools. On the final day of the mela, organizers from WASH United and Quicksand Design Studio, as well as **Hon. Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation** and other government officials, all gave passionate speeches encouraging an end to open defecation and better hand-washing habits.



*Dev Guradia (Indore), Madhya Pradesh (Oct. 14-15):* The Nirmal Bharat Yatra arrived just outside of Indore, India's fourteenth largest city, just in time to celebrate **Global Handwashing Day (GHD)**, an international event that focuses on handwashing as an effective way to combat disease. Children mastered the key steps to a full hand wash at the mela and in surrounding schools.



One special highlight was the “Soap Lab”, where visitors learned to build their own “**tippy taps**”, ingenious hand-washing contraptions that cost less than USD \$1 to create, and can check their hand-hygiene status using ultraviolet light. Tippy-taps were built in local schools too.



But perhaps most notable was the introduction world’s *largest* handwashing ambassador, **Bullbule** (Hindi for bubbles). Bullbule is a fully-grown elephant that sported the Nirmal Bharat Yatra logo, and handed out soap to attendees who demonstrated excellent handwashing technique.



**Sangod (near Kota), Rajasthan (Oct. 20-21):** The Yatra's third stop in its third state was easily its most rambunctious and colourful, aided in large part by the wonderful welcoming people of Rajasthan, who added unexpected flair and passion to the event.



Hon. Jairam Ramesh and a number of state and local officials continued their support for the event, playing the Yatra's games, giving supportive press conferences and inspiring the nation to consider sanitation and hygiene as crucial to India's development and dignity. Below, Ramesh gives the three-finger **WASH pledge** with WASH in Schools Director, Ina Jurga, while on the main stage.



The stop in Sangod also saw the riveting premiere of **Nirmal Bharat Idol**, a song and dance competition that sees contestants from around the Yatra's stops showing off their flair, as well as their commitment to sanitation and hygiene advocacy. Faizan Khan, below, was our first winner. He will travel to Bettiah along with winners from following stops for our grand finale, which Jairam Ramesh, Vidya Balan, and members of the WASH United and Quicksand teams will judge.



**At the end of this third stop – the Yatra's halfway point – over 61,000 yatris have flowed through the gates of the mela, interacting with the songs, games and workshops, all loaded with encouraging and fun messages on how to improve sanitation and hygiene at both a personal and community level. Countless others have received those messages through local, regional and national media, schools programmes, and, hopefully, through word-of-mouth from those who the Yatra has inspired with its message.**

**Thorsten Kiefer, Executive Director of WASH United**, says: “We have looked at the things Indians really are passionate and excited about and transposed them into a sanitation and hygiene context. What we are trying to do with the Yatra is to make toilets and hygiene cool and sexy, and thus desirable.”

**Nirat Bhatnagar, Principal at Quicksand**, adds, “The Yatra will play a significant role in that it will catalyse innovation in sanitation and hygiene campaigning and behaviour change communication, giving the sector better tools to create demand and facilitate that change.”

Catch us at the following locations:  
GWALIOR (Jalalpur): Oct 31 – Nov 1  
GORAKHPUR (Sahjanwa): Nov 8 – 9  
BETTIAH: Nov 17 – 18 – 19

Also look out for these exciting new initiatives:

- **A World Record setting Facebook campaign:** We're launching a viral Facebook campaign that will achieve 6.26 million likes (symbolizing the 626 million Indians who openly defecate) and also the set the official Guinness Book record for the most number of Facebook likes in 24 hours (626,000).
- **A Sanitation & Hygiene Themed Talent Show (WASH Idol) on national TV:** This will be aired on national TV in a grand finale at Bettiah. Auditions have begun and regional finals wherein kids are singing / dancing to sanitation themed music take place at each stop, with one individual chosen as a finalist.
- **Crowd-sourced Music Contest:** Leading Indian & international bands along with folk musicians will create remixes or original renditions of the Yatra sanitation & hygiene song (titled “Khullay Mein” – available on our website, [nirmalbharatyatra.org](http://nirmalbharatyatra.org)). The winners will be selected through Facebook voting and the winning songs will be packaged into an album.