

Sanjay given million pledges against dowry

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LUCKNOW, Jan. 5 — Anti-dowry pledges signed by a million and six hundred people were presented to Mr Sanjay Gandhi by the UP Chief Minister, Mr N. D. Tewari, here today at a special function organised by the Education Department.

Earlier, nearly another one million people took the anti-dowry pledge by raising their hands at about 20 public meetings addressed by Mr Gandhi during his 'wo-day hectic 450 km. tour of four districts—Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Prayaggarh and Rae Bareilly — con-

cluded this evening. At two meetings he was also handed over written pledges.

Mr Gandhi was accorded a hero's welcome wherever he went. About a thousand welcome arches were erected along the route he passed lined on both sides by cheering crowds. Mr Gandhi, who flew to Delhi this evening, returns for another two-day tour of Basti, Faizabad, Gorakhpur and Deoria districts on Jan. 8 and 9.

Almost at all his meetings, Mr Gandhi laid special emphasis on the need of eradicating the evil of dowry, which forms part of his five-point programme. While the family planning programme had made fast progress in UP, the anti-dowry campaign had not made adequate headway, despite its great importance. He said the evil of dowry could not be eradicated by Government legislations or programmes alone. If the people decided to stop it, it could be done. Women could also play a decisive role in this regard by refusing to marry those demanding dowry.

He also made a frontal attack on the evil of casteism and said it divided the people and created artificial distinctions of high and low. There could be no progress unless this evil was eradicated and unless there was unity among the people and distinction between man and man because of his birth disappeared.

At his Fursatganj meeting, Mr Gandhi asked the villagers to concentrate on raising food production. He reminded them that the per acre yield in Punjab was two and a half times more than that in Rae Bareilly. The Sarda Sahayak Canal waters would soon be avail-

Continued on page 6 col 6

Big ovation for Sanjay

Continued from page 1 col 2

able to them and they should try to have two or three crops a year instead of one. If they could raise the per acre yield by two and a half times, the whole region would become prosperous.

Mr Gandhi also laid stress on farmers' taking to gohar gas plants and said besides using the gas as fuel, the gohar leftover could also be used as fertiliser. The nationalised banks were offering assistance and farmers should make liberal use of them and set up as many plants as possible.

Mr Gandhi also referred to the demand of Furseiganj people for raising the middle school to high school level and also for the opening a police chowki there and noted that the Chief Minister had left the decision to him. He approved of these demands and the Chief Minister had decided to accept them. A pucca road would also be built linking Dih with Parsadipur, he said.

Mr Gandhi laid the foundation-stone of the Rs 30 lakh bridge on River Sai on Jais-Salon Road.

Mr Gandhi opened a 30-bed hospital equipped with modern facilities at Salon. Mr P. N. Singh, the Health Minister said 80 big hospital complexes and 645 small ones would be opened before June 1977 in six districts of Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh, Lucknow, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Badaun.

The Central Government and the World Bank would also be approached for two such projects at Ghazipur and Deoria.

The Chief Minister said a water supply scheme for Salon had been sanctioned.

RAE BAREILY: The people of Amethi Lok Sabha constituency today requested Mr Gandhi to contest the next elections from this constituency.

The demand was made by the entire gathering by raising their hands at two huge public meetings held at Furseiganj and Deeh in this constituency.

Chief Minister Tewari said he was happy to hear of this invitation to Mr Gandhi to come forward and make this area his field of work.

Mr Gandhi in his speech, how-

ever, made no comments on the demand. He did not even refer to it.

Mr Gandhi visited a youth service camp at Jagatpur where 500 unemployed youth are working since Dec. 14. They were doing earth work in connection with the Sarda Sahayak project and in addition to food and lodging are being paid Rs 2 per day per head. They are also being given training in crafts, particularly wood and iron work.

The Chief Minister said this would be made a permanent youth work camp and the money spent on it would not be wasted. Other projects could also be taken up and youth could help in raising agricultural production. Even if the camp had to be closed, village industries would be set up here.

Mr Gandhi said he was happy to see youth working with their hands. The Chief Minister had said those joining such camps would be given preference in Government jobs. This was a method of selecting youth who were not afraid of work. A good beginning had been made with 500 campers. But real success would come if the number of such campers in the State rose to about 50,000 and as many camps as possible were held.

He wanted all possible encouragement to be given in this regard.

Mr Gandhi also addressed big public meetings at Lalganj, Dih Maharajganj and Sahgaon, before returning to Lucknow.