

## Farmers conclude 4,000-km march against GM seeds

Nearly 150 farmers ended a rally here Saturday after marching through five states opposing the government policy on genetically modified seeds and seeking attention to the plight of peasants in the country.

The Bija Satyagraha Yatra (non-violent seed march) that started from Champaran in Bihar March 26 and moved through Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

'We started our movement from Gandhiji's favourite Champaran and ended in Rajghat, his samadhi. We strictly kept it a farmers' movement and discussed related issues across our route,' said renowned activist Vandana Shiva.

'Our governments are talking about genetically modified seeds and crops but have forgotten that crops should be promoted as per the local need and climatic condition.

'Bundelkhand is facing drought for last few years but authorities are giving seeds that require lots of water. Farmers are being pushed into seed slavery with growing dependence of genetically engineered patented seeds. They are not good for our soil and health,' Shiva told IANS.

During the 4,000 kilometres of march farmers spread the message of seed sovereignty. They interacted with over 52,000 farmers and distributed 42 quintals of seeds in 32 varieties.

Shiva said instead of GM seeds and crops, India should go for organic farming and help farmers earn better.

'India is facing a food crisis but the government is not bothered about the state of our farmers. While farmers die due to falling incomes, food prices rise because of corporate hoarding and speculation,' she added.

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