

Popular Yogi Confronts Corrupt Indian Ruling Elite

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Swami Ramdev or 'Baba' (father) Ramdev, as he is respectfully known to his 30 million followers, is taking on the thoroughly corrupt Indian ruling elite by conducting a fast to the death (satyagraha) if authorities fail to address and remedy the overt and systemic corruption in the Congress government of Manmohan Singh.



Baba Ramdev

Baba Ramdev left his ashram in Haridwar to conduct his hunger strike/protest in the Indian capital, New Delhi; however, panicked authorities conducted a violent police raid on the non-violent protest in Delhi and forcibly removed the Yogi from the capital.

The police action against a peaceful protest was a monumental blunder as it only strengthened local support for the yogi and gained the attention of the international media! Indeed, parallels could easily be drawn with a previous (successful) peaceful protest campaign against British colonial rule. Corrupt Indian authorities would do well to consider their actions in future, as Indians once aroused are a mighty social force to be reckoned with.

Baba continues his fast from his Haridwar ashram and has called for calm in the face of unnecessary police/government violence.

If the Yogi's protest gains nationwide popular support, as this culturally specific form of protest usually does, then watch out corrupt officials at every level of government in every Indian province/State!

NDTV report follows:

Supreme Court asks government to explain Baba Ramdev eviction

New Delhi: The government has been asked by the Supreme Court to explain why yoga icon Baba Ramdev was evicted from his camp in Delhi on Saturday night. "This will reinstate people's faith in the judiciary. I thank the Supreme Court for the notice to the Centre," the Baba said addressing his supporters in Haridwar, where he has resumed his fast.

The action - which included a lathicharge and teargassing by the Delhi Police - has created a political tsunami for the central government. Various opposition parties and activists have described the government's action against the Baba as "a murder of democracy." The BJP has compared the government's decision to the atrocities committed by the British at Jallianwala Bagh.

Baba Ramdev was on a hunger fast against corruption along with 65,000 followers when the police, on the government's orders, decided to dismantle the elaborate camp that had been set up at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan. 65 people were reportedly injured.

The Baba was caught dressed as a woman while heading away from the camp towards the railway station. He was deposited via special plane in Uttarakhand and has been banned from entering Delhi for 15 days. His hunger fast continues.

The Baba wants the government to agree to a charter of demands that focuses largely on recovering black money that has been stowed away in foreign bank accounts. Last week was spent in fraught negotiations with the government. On Saturday evening, the talks fell apart with both sides accusing each other of betrayal.

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[Comments from our Indian readers would be welcome.]

Om Shanti

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Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-2538.html>