Prayers for Baba fill the air in Coimbatore

Coimbatore: All buses bound for Bangalore from Coimbatore on Sunday were filled beyond capacity by Sathya Sai Baba devotees, who were very much eager to reach Puttaparthi to get a last glimpse of their departed spiritual guru. They chanted hymns and found relief by saying mass prayers.

More than 1,200 taxis and private vehicles also left the city on Sunday to Puttaparthi, transporting almost all members of the Sri Sathya Sai Samithy. Small gatherings of older devotees and those unable to travel were seen at the Samithy’s prayer hall at Race Course in the heart of the city. Bhajans and prayers filled the air at the hall constructed over two decades ago.

As far as the devotees in the city were concerned, Baba was a permanent source of inspiration, who found time to visit Coimbatore and bless its people at regular intervals. Baba has visited the city over a dozen times. His last visit to Coimbatore was in May 2008. He came from KodaiKkanal by road and addressed hundreds of devotees at Ramakrishna marriage hall at Avarampalayam.

Baba’s demise was a severe shock to Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev of Coimbatore-based Isha Foundation, who is currently touring US to meet followers. “Shri Sathya Sai Baba is indeed a phenomenon of the 20th century, not only in India but across the world,” he said in a statement mailed to The Times of India from the US.

“A proponent of egalitarian values, Baba worked hard to create a world free of the divisions of caste, creed, religion, race and gender. His social initiatives, notably in the fields of education and public health, have been a great service to the world. His demise brings to a close an enigmatic persona that has been a great inspiration and source of faith for a whole multitude of people across the world,” he said.

Physically challenged M Narayanan was sitting in front of the television at his home, since the news of Baba’s death flashed around 7.30 am. He was seen visibly upset at his Sreepathy Nagar residence at Nanjundapuram because of his inability to travel to Puttaparthi. However, his wife N Girija took part in the prayer meetings at Race Course.

“I am not sure what time I will reach Puttaparthi. There is no assurance that I can have a glimpse of Baba’s body. But it is my duty to be there to share the grief of thousands of his devotees,” said T Harirhan, a resident of Karamadai who took a bus from Gandhipuram this afternoon.

Prayer meetings were also held in areas like Mettupalayam, Vadamally, Kovai pur and Kuniyamuthur.

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