

## Press Release by Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

June 28, 2011

1. Ever since Bhagavan Baba was admitted to the hospital there has been a flurry of news reports in the print and electronic media about His health, Treatment, His attaining Mahasamadhi, and the subsequent opening of his private chambers in Yajur Mandiram. The Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, are issuing this statement in order to give a true and fair picture of the events.

2. Recently the first floor of the Yajur Mandir was accessed and cash, gold, silver and jewellery valued at approximately Rs. 30 crores were duly inventoried on June 16th and 17, 2011 and deposited into the Bank. Whatever is deposited with the bank is brought into the Books of Account of the Central Trust. The trust is not taking any technical plea and the entire leviable income tax thereon of Rs 9.5 Crores has been paid by the Trust as advance tax today.

3. The inventory was done in the presence of all the Trustees (among whom there was a former Chief Justice of India and a former Central Vigilance Commissioner), two members of the Council of Management and two retired judges – one of the Supreme Court and the other from the Karnataka/Bombay High Court. The valuation was done concurrently by a valuer approved by the Government of India.

4. On the night of 18<sup>th</sup> June it was reported in the electronic media that an amount of Rs. 35 lakhs was recovered by the Police from a vehicle going from Puttaparthi to Bangalore. The seizure was from an employee of a company which was entrusted the task of supervising the construction of the

Mahasamadhi for Bhagawan Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall in Prashanti Nilayam. The money had been contributed by a group of devotees for the construction of Mahasamadhi. Both the donors and the recipient have confirmed this fact in writing. Two employees of the company were arrested on mere "suspicion". On June 19, 2011 one more person, a driver of Mr. V. Srinivasan (a Trustee) was arrested by the police from a bus in which he was travelling. No seizure of cash or valuables was made by the Police from him. He was also arrested on mere "suspicion". These events were widely reported and commented upon in the media with many innuendos.

5. The seized money does not belong to the Trust but is the money given by devotees for being used for the Mahasamadhi work. This had been confirmed by Sri Rathnakar and Sri V. Srinivasan, Trustees. All receipts and all payments from and into the Trust are only through cheques, DDs or other financial instruments.

6. It was also reported by the press that on a subsequent date two sack loads of money between Rs 5 and 10 Crores was recovered from two passengers in a bus going to Bangalore. This is completely false. No such seizure took place. The Police have not denied the incorrect report. Subsequently the media never published a retraction that their earlier report was inaccurate -- leaving the incorrect report in the public realm.

7. The media has also been misreporting several other matters. When Justice Bhagwati demitted office as Trustee (due to a legal requirement) of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning Trust in order to take charge as the

Chancellor of the University, it was wrongly reported that he resigned from the Central Trust.

8. Another report described that Sri Indulal Shah was distancing himself from the Trust. This version is wholly untrue and Sri Shah has been actively involving himself in all Trust matters and has attended every meeting of the Trustees, including the meeting held last evening.

9. There was another totally mischievous and false report in the Press that government cars are being used for transporting cash across the state borders. There is no truth in this. But after publishing an incorrect statement the press never retracted even when it had no evidence to support its inaccurate report.

10. It was also widely reported that there was a 'will' of Swami. There was even a reference to an 'oral will', a concept which is unknown to law.

11. The print media and some electronic media put out reports of the 'arrest' of Sri V. Srinivasan. This is wholly false. He was never arrested. He was in his house in Chennai. It was then reported that a senior police officer had stated that Mr V Srinivasan was absconding. When contacted by Mr. V. Srinivasan, the said officer denied having made any such statement. He informed the Press; but his statement was never published.

12. It was reported in a leading national daily on the front page that Mr. Naganand, a Member of the Council of Management had stated that Bhagwan Baba had left a will directing that Sri Satyajit should be given a prominent position in The Trust. This statement was denied in writing by Mr Naganand; the denial was not published.

13. The Trustees recognize the need for public dissemination of information and the Right to Information is enshrined in the legislation of the country; but that is no license for inaccurate reporting. The role of the Fourth Estate is important in a democracy. The Trust has been alive to the legitimate desire to purvey information and yet strike a balance between transparency and privacy while emphasising truth.

14. The Trust would like to assure the public that all institutions set up by Bhagawan Baba will be administered well and transparently and that they will uphold all the ideals of Bhagavan Baba. The public are requested not to be misled by false propoganda.