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NOW, A WEBSITE DEDICATED TO GANDHIJI

Rajesh has been working for the last six years on this website which will also serve as an online museum

For ML Rajesh, an accountant based in Gummidipoondi, this Gandhi Jayanthi will be an unforgettable one. For, six years of his hard work and sacrifice are to bear fruit.

The man, who has been working to create a website dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, is bound to succeed this October 2. The site, which he has developed and which will display stamps, coins, tokens, currencies and statues, all based on Bapu, is to go live on the Mahatma's 142nd birth anniversary. The website will be inaugurated today by V Kalyanam, a personal secretary of Gandhiji, here in Teynampet.

"I've collected more than 400 stamps, including 300 foreign ones, currencies of all denominations with serial numbers that denote Gandhiji's date of birth and coins of 10 different countries displaying Gandhiji's photos over the last six years. I took loans and spent 75 per cent of my monthly salary on these collections," says Rajesh. He admits to having spent more than Rs five lakh during the last six years on these valuable collections on Gandhiji.

Explaining the reasons for creating such a website, Rajesh says, "By having a website apart from my collection, I will be able to reach out to those youngsters and students who might have forgotten the principles which Gandhiji followed in his life. Through this website, I want to spread the messages and values, which Gandhiji preached throughout his life."



Rajesh with his rare collection

During the course of this collection, Rajesh explains that he has imbibed a lot of principles and values advocated by Gandhi. "I've quit eating non-vegetarian food and practise ahimsa. I also make sure that I don't get provoked by those confronting me or intimidated by them," he says.

His passion for Gandhiji has reached such heights that the contact number he has on the website has Gandhiji's date of birth - 02/10/69 - as the last six digits and are displayed in saffron, white and green, the tricolour of the Indian flag.

The most unique and probably treasured item on the website is a self-autographed photograph of Gandhiji, which was gifted to Rajesh by V Kalyanam. "Kalyanamji came to know about my collections through a newspaper article. He gifted me the self-autographed photo of Gandhiji as a token of appreciation. It is the most precious item in my collection," says Rajesh.

> *Kalyanamji, Gandhiji's secretary, gifted me a self-autographed photo of Gandhiji as a token of his appreciation*

The website will also have a Powerpoint presentation that details the life and times of Gandhiji, and his pursuit in getting India's independence, a page that mentions some of the lesser-known facts on Gandhiji, a list of books and CDs available on Gandhi and a short biography on him, among others. In other words, the website is a complete online museum of the Father of the Nation.

—Ashok Kumar Shaw