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M.L. Rajesh.

Special Arrangement

To create awareness about the Gandhian legacy, M.L. Rajesh will host an unusual feat on January 30

At M.L. Rajesh's house, glass racks nailed to a wall display figurines of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Memorabilia of the Mahatma spill out of cupboards — stamps issued by 120 countries and coins by 10 countries, special covers, postal stationeries, images of statues erected in 70 countries, tokens and currencies, various paintings, articles in the media and a corpus of information, all on Gandhi.

If you think this is remarkable, consider Rajesh's latest project to honour the Indian leader. On January 30, Gandhi World Foundation (GWF) with over 100 volunteers, founded by Rajesh, will bring over 1,000 school children from Gummidipoondi, tonsured and dressed to resemble the Mahatma, to the Marina for a walk from Vivekanandar Illam to Gandhi statue, carrying placards. Called 'Walk A Mile For Health And Harmony', the novel march on Gandhi's death anniversary is targeted at the Guinness World Records.

"Similar events, where huge groups of children bearing the distinctive Mahatma look, have been conducted in Coimbatore (2011) and Kolkata and Gujarat (2012). However, in these events, wigs resembling tonsured heads were employed. Each child-participant will wear a panchakacham and a pair of glasses and hold a stick. The children are drawn from around 12 schools. On January 29, they will be tonsured at a public function with hired barbers. Parents will accompany these children to Chennai, early next day," says an excited Rajesh.

The event will unfold at the Marina, opposite Vivekanandar Illam, at around 9 a.m., when the children will be counted through bar-coding system and gathered for aerial-view videography and photography, as required by Guinness. Asia Book of Records, Limca Book of Records and India & Tamil Nadu Book of Records are the other chronicles of achievements that come within the scope of this feat.

Ever since he instituted GWF (log on to gandhiworld.in) in February 2012, Rajesh has produced a string of events, in Chennai and Gummidipoondi, to get school and college students hooked on to Gandhi's message. In June 2012, he organised a five-day Gandhi Memorabilia exhibition at Anna University, which was inaugurated by former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam. Earlier, on March 12, the anniversary of the 1930 Dandi March, Rajesh organised 'New Dandi March on Plastic Awareness' for school children in Gummidipoondi.

Rajesh can impress anyone with the depth and range of his knowledge about Gandhi. Rajesh's interest in the

Gandhian legacy began ten years ago. While in Mumbai for a cricket match, as part of the south zone team of Hindustan Petroleum Limited, whose Gummidipoondi facility he works in, Rajesh visited a philately exhibition where stamps on Gandhi issued by around 40 countries were on display. For Rajesh, collecting stamps from an early age, the discovery kindled an interest in stamps on Gandhi, which later developed into a desire to emulate the leader in the totality of his life and philosophy.

There is another Indian idolised by Rajesh with almost equal ardour: Sachin Tendulkar, whom he honoured by creating a vertical plank that was decorated with 100 ten-rupee notes with serial numbers that denote the batsman's birthday from 24-04-1973 to 24-04-2072.

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