

BlaaZe's all set to blaze away

He is back and this time, with an album. The rapping sensation opens up to *City Express* on his music, rapping in Tamil and a whole lot of other things...

shakes hand like a gentleman, smiles a timid teen-speaks with the on of a wise sage. he enters the road, he puts on his face', grabs the town to business about revolution. Lakshmi Vijaya Rajagopal Sharma Rajesh BlaaZe, as we all is all geared up his debut album *Gandhi*. The rapping tributes to and his principles



BlaaZe, trying to convey a message through his album an album since 1994, and failing because producers always looked for sleaze, sex and rock 'n' roll. "That defeated the purpose of putting out an independent album," says the rapper. But when EMI heard *Time for Gandhi*, they believed that it will strike a chord with the country. "The entire universe comes together wanting to help you if you have something genuine to say," offers BlaaZe. *Time for the Gandhi*, the title track of the album was

one of the first few songs he came up with and when he emailed it to Ela Gandhi, the grand daughter of the Mahatma, she said that he was the person who could take forward her grandfather's message. "Just her response to me told me that I was on the right path and she is the closest I can get to Gandhi, and it has since then inspired me to do a lot of stuff," beams BlaaZe with pride. Elaborating more on the album, he says, "You can listen to the songs



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and pop to the music in the car and yet, think about the message at the same time." He also gets candid about his take on rapping in Tamil. "Tamil rap is great for Tamilians, but you are immediately cutting off the rest of the world," he says. "Having grown up in Zambia, I think and write in English, and since the rest of the world understands English, you are spreading Indian messages to them." For someone who has taken over 20 years to put out a debut album, he has advice to offer to young Hip Hop musicians. "It's not about putting a few lines together. What you put out there has to stay and it has to be a collector's item." And for those of you who have always wondered, in French, *blasé* means 'to do your own thing' and adding the *aaZe* to the word highlights Zambia for him. "BlaaZe was how I was living my life, I was rapping and wearing an earring and doing my own thing," he raps an answer!

—Prashanti Ganesh

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 Babu, 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,

Rajesh with his rare collection



which Gandhiji preached throughout his life."

During the course of this collection, Rajesh explains that he has imbibed a lot of principles and values advocated by Gandhiji. "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

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

self-autographed photo of Gandhiji as a token of appreciation. It is the most precious item in my collection," says Rajesh.

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 Gandhiji 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

Violin maestro honoured with award

st Saraswathi for music, in by the CP Ram Foundation, and upon violin Chandrasekara PV Krishnamer Director Doordarshan ed over the andrasekaran, led in the field

for more than six decades in spite of being visually challenged since childhood. Speaking at the event, PV Krishnamurthy recalled an incident that took place when he had accompanied Chandrasekaran to receive an award from the Sangeet Natak Academy back in 1986. He praised Chandraseka-



M Chandrasekarn with PV Krishnamurthy

ran's mother and guru, Charubala Mohan, for raising a devoted musician. Narayanaswamy Iyer, another musician, said the organisers must not have had any difficulty in choosing Chandrasekaran as he was not only a violin player, but also an excellent singer too. He said Chandrasekaran, apart from

being a phenomenal violin player, was supportive of singers in concerts and let them score over him. Nanditha Krishna, Honorary Director of CP Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation, said the award was instituted in memory of Saraswathi Pattabi Raman, who had donated the place where the foundation is housed now.