

CITY

THE NEW
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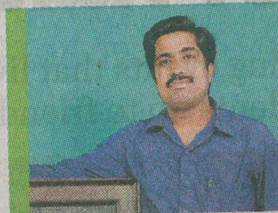
EXPRESS

IT WOMEN FACE
HARASSMENT

Leading firms have a committee as per the Vishakha guidelines, but they exist on paper only **PG 3**

GOD AND I:
RJ MIRTHULA

She thinks of god as a gentleman, who takes his time to answer prayers. She hopes to visit Jerusalem **PG 4**

THE 'SERIAL' CODE
COLLECTOR

ML Rajesh has collected currency that reflect the date of birth of 70 odd world famous cricketers **PG 5**

The 'serial' collector

ML Rajesh has collected 10-rupee notes that reflect the date of birth of 70 odd international cricketers

Have you ever bothered to glance at the serial number of say a 100 rupee note? A standard guess would be that it hasn't crossed your mind. But for ML Rajesh of Gummidipoondi in Thiruvallur district, a serial number seems to be of utmost value, perhaps more valuable than the numbers on the currency themselves. He has spent lakhs, taken bank loans, travelled until late into the night, to and from Chennai and other metropolitan cities only to get Indian currency of a desired serial number. The catch? Each such number should reflect the birth date of a cricketer!

For instance, Rajesh collected two ₹10, in addition to other denominations, with a serial number 240473 that shows Sachin Tendulkar's date of birth of April 24, 1973 or 24/04/73. Rajesh points out, "My modus operandi is to always collect two of the same, so that I can gift one of the notes to the specific cricketer, and impress him." He adds, "On the second note, I take their autographs and include them in my collection." This collection is so valuable to 31-year-old Rajesh, that he preserves them in special pouches or covers, imported from Thailand just for this purpose.

pose.

He also collects these 'birth' currencies for actors, singers, politicians and other celebrities. However, he restricts their autographs to their photos at best and reserves collecting them in doubles for cricketers only. These include close to 70-odd cricketers, such as Sachin, MS Dhoni, Sunil Gavaskar, and international cricketers names as well like Mike Hussey, Wasim Akram and Andrew Flintoff.

But Rajesh has put in special efforts for the 'god' of cricket as his Sachin collection amply proves. He has collected 100 ₹10 notes that reflects a 100 Sachin birthdays from April 24, 1973 (24/04/73) to April 24, 2072 (24/04/72). Another collection that is a must mention are serial numbers that denote the date when Sachin scored each of his 100 international centuries. Even the 'god of cricket' couldn't help but be amazed at this unlikely feat.

When Rajesh first met Sachin with the ₹10 note that displayed the serial number denoting his date of birth, the batsman initially refused to sign the note. Rajesh stresses, "But when I told him the real worth of this currency, he eagerly asked me for a copy, just like a little child. I readily gave him one



copy, and was bowled over by his simplicity."

Rajesh, an accountant with a public sector undertaking, initially started collecting stamps and coins, and used to spend two-third of his monthly salary on his collections. Later, he took bank loans to fund his hobby. For the Sachin's collections alone, he has spent close to ₹40,000, he reveals. Of course, a great deal of digging is required to find the exact serial number on each denomination of note. Rajesh networks

with his friends in other metropolitan cities like Bombay and Bangalore. He says, "Some of my friends co-ordinate with the Reserve Bank of India to get them. I've travelled late hours to and from Chennai to collect them." He adds, "For the second copy, I need to wait and have lot of patience because it's only after every 10 lakh notes are issued, that a serial gets repeated."

Rajesh has also a vast collection concerning Mahatma Gandhi. He has collected Gandhiji's stamps, coins, Indian currency of all denominations denoting his date of birth, FDCs, newspaper cuttings, statues, books, cds and telephone card. He claims to have spent ₹5 lakh on this particular collection based on Gandhiji.

(To contact
Rajesh, call
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—Ashok Kumar Shaw

