

Embassy of India
The Hague

Press Release

September 19, 2017

First ever 'Gandhi March' to be held in The Hague on October 1st, 2017
Mahatma Gandhi's bicycle from India for public viewing

Organisations, institutions and individuals advocating Non Violence are joining hands with the Indian community in the Netherlands and the Embassy of India to launch a unique campaign titled 'Follow the Mahatma' on October 1 and 2, 2017.

The campaign includes a 'Gandhi March' from the Peace Palace to the Grote Kerk in The Hague on the afternoon of October 1. Around 1,500 people, including people of all nationalities, are expected to join this march which will be the first such event to be held on such a large scale in The Netherlands.

A bicycle personally used by Mahatma Gandhi will be displayed at the Grote Kerk in The Hague as part of the activities. The bicycle has been sent to the Netherlands by the Gandhi Memorial Trust of India as a special gesture, in view of the popularity of cycling and the fact that cycles are part of the Dutch cultural heritage. It is currently part of an exhibition on Gandhi, King and Mandela at the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam.

An excerpt of an opera titled 'Satyagraha' (the instrument of Non Violence used by Mahatma Gandhi) composed by renowned musician Philip Glass will be performed at the Grote Kerk by the Korzo Theatre. Also, a new book in Dutch titled "Gandhi -An illustrated biography" published by Lannoo of Belgium and authored by Indian author Pramod Kapoor will be released on the occasion.

The 'Follow the Mahatma' campaign will continue on October 2nd with volunteers fanning out to schools of The Netherlands to spread the message of non violence , tolerance and peace. Eight schools including International School in Den Haag & Rotterdam, British School, Albeda ROC and Zadkine College have already agreed to be a part of this campaign. People across Netherlands are also being invited to mark that day with diverse activities focusing on the theme of non violence and Mahatma Gandhi, including a special social media campaign. An events page titled International Day of Non Violence 2017 has been created on the Facebook for the purpose.

The Netherlands is a country which cherishes and keeps alive the memory of Mahatma Gandhi as is evident from the fact that over 30 streets in this country are named after Mahatma Gandhi. There is probably no other country in the world other than India which has as many streets named after Mahatma Gandhi. There are also three statues of Mahatma Gandhi in the cities of The Hague, Amsterdam and Utrecht.

October 2 is the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and has been declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Day of Non Violence. An Organising Committee headed by Mr. Theo Henrar, Chairman of Board of Tata Steel Europe and including amongst its members Prof Vinod Subramaniam, Rector Magnificus, VU University Amsterdam, former MPs R. Ramlal and Tanja Jadnanansing is supervising the activities on the above days.

The Mission Statement of the 'Follow the Mahatma' campaign says:

"Today, when world peace is being challenged by violence and aggression, these evils affect our communities, our culture and ultimately our identities. Thus, it becomes our responsibility to reinforce peace and nonviolence. In order to do this, we should aspire to FOLLOW THE MAHATMA; and accept the path of truth and nonviolence. It is necessary that as citizens of the world, we all unite and stand up against violence to build a world free of oppression and inspire a culture of peace.

Let's all gather on October 1, on the eve of the 148th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi birthday, the International Day of Non Violence and jointly proclaim the importance of Non Violence and world

peace as a declaration to the global community in The Hague, the International city of Peace and Justice.”

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 to 1948) led the people of India to freedom from the British Empire through a unique Non Violence struggle and is considered the father of the Indian nation. He was a strong believer in the power of truth and has since inspired millions of people across the world. His life and message directly influenced the thought and actions of transformative leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela.

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