



Photos: [www.dandimemorial.org](http://www.dandimemorial.org)

Statues of 80 participants of the Dandi March have been created by sculptors from India, the US, the US, Tibet, Japan and Sri Lanka; Sadashiv Sathe (below) made the statue of Mahatma Gandhi (right)

# Call to March

## It's time to embark on Dandi March once again

**DIVYA A**

ON MARCH 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi led a group of 80 from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat on a 24-day and 240-mile walk to Dandi, where they broke colonial India's salt laws. Almost 85 years after the Salt Satyagraha or Dandi March, an opportunity is on its way for us to relive that era.

The Rs 200 crore Dandi Memorial Project in Gujarat's Navsari district, which is funded by the Ministry of Culture, and coordinated and implemented by IIT-Bombay, is nearing completion and will be open to the public. "The Dandi Salt Satyagraha Memorial has been conceived as an experiential journey of the satyagraha, allowing visitors to understand its backstory. The idea is to make it participatory, inviting artists

from India and abroad to come together and recreate the event that changed the political destiny of the nation," says Shreya Guha, a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, who is in-charge of the project.

The main memorial is erected at a 15-acre plot at the site in Dandi where Gandhi and his fellow marchers picked up salt from the sea beach to break the salt law. Here, a 16.5 ft statue of Gandhi is placed inside a crystal pyramid of light, followed by a cluster of life-sized stone sculptures of the 80 freedom fighters.

"The project also entails developing a road around the Dandi path, complete with 24 night shelters and 24 narrative stoneware murals, so that visi-



tors can not only relive the experience but also understand it. Meanwhile, a satellite library in association with the Gujarat Vidyapeeth and a museum dedicated to Dandi memorabilia are

also coming up," says Bandana Sharma, Director of the Dandi Memorial Project. A solar power-based salt-making set-up is also being installed to allow visitors to manufacture salt personally.

The main Gandhi statue has been developed by sculptor 90-year-old Sadashiv Sathe and was installed at Dandi recently. Sathe is already credited with creating the nine ft bronze statue of Gandhi opposite Town Hall in Delhi and the 18 ft equestrian statue of Shivaji at Mumbai's Gateway of India.

The creation of the statues of 80 other participants in the march brought together 40 sculptors from India, the UK, the US, Tibet, Japan and Sri Lanka to IIT-Bombay. They crafted two statues each.

The statues have also reached Navsari and are being installed. "Following deliberations of various ideas on the building of the subject, we have tried to recreate the history behind the Satyagraha that inspired the likes of Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela," said Prof KK Trivedi of IIT-Bombay, who heads the team.

Little is known about the others who marched alongside Gandhi during this historic event. A supplementary research is underway at IIT-Bombay to identify and commemorate other participants. "The government is also considering the upgradation of Gandhi Ashram Trust in Bangladesh, and setting up of a permanent Gandhi-related exhibit in South Africa," adds Sharma.

[divya.a@expressindia.com](mailto:divya.a@expressindia.com)