

World toilet queue seeks water for all



D SAMPATH KUMAR

A group of volunteers from the world's longest toilet queue at Marina Beach in the city on Saturday

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IT was an innovative campaign to spread the message of good sanitation and water. Over 70 Chennaiites came together on Marina Beach on Saturday and formed a queue that they called the World's Longest Toilet Queue: an international campaign wherein people from across the world form queues demanding good sanitation amenities and clean water for all.

"The campaign is an attempt to create a Guinness Record for holding such queues simultaneously in all parts of the world ahead of World Water Day, which is observed on March 22," says Cyril Alexander, executive director of Mary Anne Charity Trust, which has organised the event in Chennai. The international campaign is organised by End Water Poverty, the Freshwater Action Network and Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

"An international report which studied sanitation facilities across the world has concluded that there are 4,000 daily deaths among children due to lack of clean water and sanitation. Though surveys exclusive to India have not been conducted, by extrapolating existing details, more than 50 percent of the country's population is suffering from lack of sanitation facilities," explained Cyril. He also pointed out that a survey in the country by civil groups observed that the first expectation of adolescent girls was the basic facility of a toilet in their home. "We hope the campaign fulfils that basic need," he added. The campaign also seeks to make sanitation and water issues a priority seeking more aid for it during the High-Level Meeting on Water and Sanitation to be held in Washington DC in April this year.