

## India - Rousing welcome to Guru Granth Sahib

NANDED (MAHARASHTRA): The Guru Granth Sahib was given a rousing welcome at the Takhat Sachkhand Shri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib Gurdwara here on Thursday as it arrived for consecration in connection with 300 years of its elevation as the eternal Guru of Sikhs.

This Gurdwara is central to the 'Gurta Gaddi' celebrations, for which pilgrims from across the world have been registering since October 27 when the festivities actually began. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was among the devotees who paid their obeisance at the Gurdwara on Thursday.

Music and colours that are typical of Sikhs characterised the Gurta Gaddi 'nagar keertan' procession, which started in the morning from the Nagina Ghat Sahib Gurdwara on the banks of Godavari. The Guru Granth Sahib was carried in a 'palki' (palanquin) placed in a specially designed vehicle.

The Gurta Gaddi diwas was one of the two most important days, the other being the observance of Guru Gobind Singh's 'parlok gaman' (departure for the heavenly abode) on November 3.

The straight road between the two Gurdwaras was choked with an estimated 3 lakh pilgrims. The bright saffron and blue of the Nihangs and Akalis and the white clothes worn by other devotees lent colour to the procession. Devotees danced 'bhangda' to the robust beats of the dhol and the band and sang devotional songs. Some marched to Sikh martial tunes. The bhangda dance provided for the folk component, while the keertans gave a touch of devotion. The martial slogan Bole so nihal ... Sat Sri Akal and the tune Deh Shiva bar mohe ehe shubh karman te kabhon na taraun ... " complemented the other kinds of music.

The sacred Guru Granth Sahib was received at the main gate amid the 'shastra salami' of swords. The process of enthroning it included its 'prakash' and application of sandalwood tilak and aarti. The Guru Granth Sahib was opened at random for the 'hukamnama' or the edict for the day.

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## They remember Guru Granth Sahib by heart



Jalandhar: When others are busy in the hustle-bustle of the celebrations of Guruta Gaddi Diwas, there are two octogenarians, with rare glow on their faces, who are quietly engaged in the recitation of Gurbani. The astonishing part is that they remember by heart almost the entire holy book spread over 1,430 pages. Just consider the vastness of the scripture. According to SGPC website, Guru Granth Sahib contains 5,894 hymns and the number of stanzas are 15,575.

The first one is Bhai Jiwan Singh, who lives near the Golden Temple and gets the opportunity to listen to the continuous kirtan and the second one is Bhai Surat Singh, known as "Pooran ji", who starts his daily routine of "path" just around midnight.

"It is not yet known about any other surviving member of the community who has been able to memorize the vast holy book. There were some more such persons but they were not alive," says Balwinder Pal Singh, editor of a journal.

Remaining reticent and epitomizing humility the two prefer not to make any such claim or even discuss it but those who know them reveal their accomplishment. "Just read out one line from any hymn and both will complete it," says Ranjodh Singh, co-editor of another journal, who knows the two quite well.



A revered spiritualist in the Sikh community, Bhai Jiwan Singh has travelled extensively around the world. However, for the last couple of years, as age took over him, he remains confined to his house.

"In which ever house he went kirtan started emanating," says Jaswinder Singh Khalsa, an NRI living in UK, who is also chairman of the Sukrit Trust and owes change in his life to the spiritualist.

"He not just transformed lives but also played a role in starting several welfare projects," reveals Harkirat Singh, former GM of Coal India and now trustee of Satnam Sarb Kalyan Trust, which was got started by Bhai Jiwan Singh.

About Pooran ji, who retired as district manager of the FCI, his son-in-law Kuljit Singh revealed that after retiring to his bed at around 7.30 pm he gets up at 10.45 pm. Then after a bath he goes to Darbar Sahib around 11.45 pm and just after midnight he along with some other devotees starts recitation of Gurbani at the "parikarma". "Then he goes to the sanctum sanctorum when its doors open after 2 am and after listening to kirtan he returns. He remains engrossed in reciting "path" in the day also," he disclosed, adding that "he can listen to kirtan for continuous 12 hours." (Courtesy TOI)

## Badal inaugurates Rs. 8 crore multi storied Punjab

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HAZUR SAHIB: Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal inaugurated the newly built multi storied complex of Punjab Bhawan here on Thursday amidst the prayers offered by Jathedar Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib Giani Kulwant Singh.

It may be recalled the entire cost of construction to the tune of Rs. 8 crore had been borne by the Punjab government and the entire land had been provided by the Sri Hazur Sahib Gurdwara Board. The Punjab Bhawan with occupancy of 142 rooms would provide boarding and lodging facility to the devotees visiting the holy shrine of Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib.

Prominent amongst the others who were present on the occasion included Deputy Speaker Lok Sabha Charanjit Singh Attwal, President Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Jathedar Avtar Singh, Member Parliament & Secretary General SAD Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, MP & Chairman Minorities Commission Tarlochan Singh, Information & Public Relations Minister Bikram Singh Majithia, General Secretary SAD Balwinder Singh Bhundar, former Minister Tota Singh, Chairman Sri Hazur Sahib Gurdwara Board Dr.P.S.Pasricha and Delhi State Akali Dal President Manjit Singh GK.

## **Guru Gobind Singh Sports festival begins in Nanded**

The Guru Gobind Singh Sports Festival began here today with a lot of enthusiasm and Khalsai fervor & traditions. The Punjab Chief Minister Mr. Parkash Singh Badal declared the Sports Festival open by unfurling the flag and the entire stadium named after Tenth Guru Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji was replete with the slogans of 'Bole So Nihal'. Addressing the massive gathering, Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal said that the sports played an important role in the development of one's personality. Sports, on the one hand, make a person physically strong and mentally alert, on the other; it imbibed the spirit of sportsmanship, cooperation, discipline and tolerance. He averred that our great Gurus stressed upon the prime importance of games along with other aspects of life. Mr. Badal underscored the need for the promotion of sports in a big way so that our youth's unbounded energy could be channelized in a constructive manner. He lamented the growing trend of drug addiction amongst the youth which could put their life in peril, adding he said sports was the only solution to get rid of this menace. He asked the SGPC to regularly hold sports tournaments in its educational institutions to inculcate the fervour for sports and a sense of competition amongst the youth.

On the occasion, a colourful March Past by the players and traditionally dressed 'Nihang Singhs' regaled the spectators and further added to the bounties of the joyous festival by depicting the rich Sikh cultural heritage. The students of Mata Gujri College, Fatehgarh Sahib presented a very impressive show of Folk Orchestra based on Punjabi Folk Instruments and tunes.

Speaking on the occasion, President Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Jathedar Avtar Singh informed that SGPC along with the management of Gurdwaras and its educational institutions had now planned by initiating efforts for developing sports culture and infrastructure in order to motivate the youth towards the sports and extra curricular activities. He further said that every possible effort would be made to popularize the traditional martial art games like Gatka, Nejabazi and Horse Riding among the Sikh youth.

Shiromani Akali Dal President Mr. Sukhbir Singh Badal declared that Kabbadi League would be started in Punjab and the First World Kabbaddi Tournament would be held in

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the near future. The team standing first, second and third would be awarded with a cash prize of Rs.1 crore, Rs.50 lakh and Rs.25 lakh respectively. He also released a souvenir brought out on this historic occasion.

Sikh Players of international eminence-Bishan Singh Bedi (Cricket), Onkar Singh (Hockey) and G.S.Sandhu (Boxing Coach)- were honoured with a cash award of Rs.51,000/-, a citation and memento for bringing laurels to Sikh Community at the international level. Kanwarjit Singh Sandhu, a leading industrialist and Owner, Sandhu Group of Companies was presented a token of appreciation for his magnanimous contribution for this event.

Prominent amongst others who were present on the occasion included , Dr. P.S.Pasricha, Chairman Tercentenary Celebrations of Gurta-Gaddi Diwas of Guru Granth Sahib, Former Union Minister Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, Punjab PWD Minister Parminder Singh Dhindsa, Ex. Minister Balwinder Singh Bhundar, Punjab Kabbaddi Federation President Sikander Singh Maluka, SGPC Secretary Dalmegh Singh and Director Education SGPC Dr. Gurmohan Singh Walia. Dr. Dharminder Singh Ubha, Principal and S. Balwinder Singh conducted the stage.

Indian Punjab Kabbaddi Team Defeated Pakistan Team in the open style match by a thin margin of 5 points. The main attraction of the day was the heart rending presentation of 'Malkhamb', a traditional game of Maharashtra. The game resembles the acrobatic exercises played by 'Bazigars' in Punjab at one point of time and it also resembles the present day Gymnastic.

## Some stage antics at Hazur Sahib

Hazur Sahib, October 31

The head priests, including Giani Gurbachan Singh, and SGPC president Avtar Singh left the religious stage when it was captured by an agitated former chairman of the Takht Hazur Sahib Management Committee, the deputy mayor, Nanded, and a number of local Sikhs here today.



**Acrimonious scenes were witnessed on stage at Hazur Sahib which was captured by deputy mayor, Nanded, Sarvjit Singh Gill (second from left) on Friday. Photo: Vishal Kumar**

The clash took place in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib at "raag darbar", organised by the Takht Hazur Sahib Management Committee in collaboration with the SGPC. They also assaulted Jasbir Singh, adviser to P.S. Pasricha, chairman of the Takht Hazur Sahib Management Committee, for handing over the stage to the SGPC. Later, a supporter of the deputy mayor also attacked him.

Talking to The Tribune, Avtar Singh blamed the Congress for the trouble. He also blamed H.S. Josh, a member of the National Minorities Commission, for instigating deputy mayor Sarvjit Singh Gill and the former chairman of the Takht committee against the SGPC.

Gill and the former chairman told The Tribune that the religious body which had failed to give due honour to southern Sikhs had no business to conduct the stage.

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The SGPC chief was honouring more than 100 sants from Punjab and other states who had arranged a community kitchen to commemorate the tercentenary celebrations of Gurta Gaddi of Guru Granth Sahib. It was on the request of Jasbir Singh that the additional secretary, SGPC, Roop Singh, started conducting the stage and later called Avtar Singh to give away siropas. It was then that the clash took place.

Interestingly, the SGPC president asked the employees of the committee to immediately leave for Amritsar though the tercentenary is yet to be held on November 3. The President of India is likely to participate.

The adviser to Pasricha was seen requesting him not to leave Nanded and resolve the matter amicably by holding meeting with the southern Sikhs.

The deputy mayor claimed that the panj piaras of Takht Hazur Sahib had passed a "Gurmata" that the religious stage would be run by the local Sikhs only. He accused the SGPC of not honouring Capt Amarinder Singh, former Chief Minister, at the centenaries.

Among those present on the stage included Giani Tarlochan Singh, Jathedar Takht Kesgarh Sahib, Giani Jaswinder Singh, Head Granthi, Darbar Sahib, Pasricha, Baba Harnam Singh Khalsa, chief, Damdami Taksal, and president of the Sant Samaj and a large number of SGPC employees and sants.



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