

Prem Kumar Dhumal, Chief Minister received the palanquin of Shri Guru Granth Sahib

SHIMLA: Prem Kumar Dhumal, Chief Minister received the palanquin of Shri Guru Granth Sahib at the Ridge to celebrate 300 year of Shri Guru Guruta Gaddi celebration, being organized by the Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee of Shimla at the historic Ridge Maidan today. He also participated in the Gurubani and prayer ceremony organized to commemorate the celebration.

Prof. Dhumal also received Shankracharaya of Kanchi Swami Jayendra Saraswati on his arrival at the venue, who was in the town to participate in the celebration accompanied by his disciples.

An impressive procession was taken out by the organizers passing through the city to reach at the venue of celebration.

Speaking on the occasion Prof. Dhumal said that State was blessed with the organization of such a devotional celebrations at the State capital, for which the State Government had extended all possible help to uphold the devotional sentiments of the Sikh devotees. He said that Guru Granth Sahib's teachings needed to be inculcated in the practical life of all human being to make their life successful in all respect.

Chief Minister said that State Government was committed to teach Punjabi as an optional subject in 100 schools, out of which 48 schools had already started the classes, where the Punjabi teachers had been deployed and 22 more schools would also be getting Punjabi subject started in near future. He added that efforts were being made to complete the target of 100 schools, where the Punjabi would be taught by the end of current financial year.

He reiterated the resolve of his government to protect the interests of Sikh community in all respect.

Shri Suresh Bhardwaj, Shri Hari Narain Singh Saini, MLAs, Shri Narender Kataria, Mayor, M.C. Shimla, Shri Ganesh Dutt, President District Shimla BJP, Shri B.K. Aggrawal, Secretary, Language, Art and Culture, Shri J.S.

Rana, Deputy Commissioner, Shri R.M. Sharma, S.P., Shri Amitabh Awasthi, Commissioner, M.C. Shimla and Sikh Leader of the town were also present on this occasion.

300 Saal Guru De Naal Guruta Gaddi Divas celebrations begin

Shimla, October 11

The town bore a festive look as celebrations in connection with the 300th anniversary of the investiture of spiritual authority on Guru Granth Sahib, popularly known as Guruta Gaddi Divas, being organised by the local Guru Singh Sabha, took off to a colourful start here today.



A demonstration of Sikh martial spirit in Shimla

The presence of the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamkoti Peeth, Jayendra Saraswati, besides religious leaders from other sects attracted huge crowds. Devotees from all over the region thronged the town to take part in the two-day celebrations.

The day was marked with taking out of the nagar kirtan which commenced from the gurudwara at the local bus stand and passed through the Ram Bazar, Lower Bazar, Mall Road and finally reached the Ridge, the venue of the main function. The colourful congregation was followed by thousands of devotees from all over the region.

Chief Minister P.K. Dhumal received the religious congregation at the Ridge. Dhumal said that Guru Grant

Sahib's teachings needed to be inculcated by all individuals, irrespective of religion, as they were very practical. "The government is committed to teach Punjabi as an optional subject in 100 schools, with classes having already been started in 48 schools," he said. He added Punjabi teachers had been posted and efforts were on to start Punjabi classes in all 100 schools by the end of the financial year.

He reiterated the resolve of the government to protect the interest of the Sikh community.

He added that all possible help had been extended to the community for the holding of the tercentenary celebrations.

Shabad kirtan was held along with religious discourse and a religious exhibition of books and other things associated with the Sikh history was also organised on the occasion.

SPECIAL FEATURE: GURTA GADDI - 2008

'A way of love'

ANUPAMA KATAKAM

Interview with P.S. Pasricha, chairman of the Takhat Sachkhand Shri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib Gurdwara Board.



P.S. Pasricha is confident about the preparations for the festival.

NANDED is only days away from one of the most important festivals of the Sikh faith. The city is gearing up to play host to the huge influx of pilgrims at the end of October. In an interview to *Frontline*, P.S. Pasricha, former Director-General of Police, Maharashtra, and chairman of the Takhat Sachkhand Shri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib Gurdwara Board, explains what "Gurta Gaddi" means to the faithful.

Could you tell us about the history of the gurdwara and how Nanded became a holy place for the Sikhs?

The Sikh community had 10 Gurus. Our last Guru, Gobindsinghji, came to Nanded to ask the Marathas to help him strengthen his forces in order to fight the Mughal empire, which at that time was under the supremacy of Aurangzeb. Historians say Guru Gobind Singh was attacked by some of his own men and died owing to severe injuries in his back. He was only 42. However, before he left for his heavenly abode, he ordained that henceforth there would be no mortal Guru for the Sikhs. They would have to follow the teachings in the Guru Granth Sahib, which would be their leader. Nanded, therefore, is extremely significant for the Sikhs. This was where Guru Gobindsinghji died and left behind a legacy and philosophy so progressive that people of all faiths come here to pay respect to the great leader and his teachings.

The tercentenary celebrations mark two events in the Sikh calendar. Could you say something on the events?

It was in 1708 that Guru Gobindsinghji said the Guru Granth Sahib would be the Guru of the Sikhs. It is now 300 years since he left this legacy for us. For the first 100 years, we were fighting the Mughals. Then came the British. This is the first time that we are celebrating the consecration of the holy book and observing the death anniversary of Guru Gobind in free India. The elevation of the Guru Granth Sahib is called Gurta Gaddi. The second event is called "parlok gaman", or the heavenly journey of the Guru. These events took place in October 1708.

What have you planned for the tercentenary celebrations and what arrangements have you made for the pilgrims?

It will be a massive gathering of Sikhs and others who have faith in the Guru Granth Sahib. Ours is not a religion as much as it is a way of love. Anyone who believes in universal love will be attracted to our way of life. The Sikhs have always done everything on a grand scale. These tercentenary celebrations are no exception. Of the 20 million Sikhs all over the world, we expect at least 2.5 million to pay homage to the tenth Guru. We have been planning this since last year and I think we are now ready.

In view of the religious and national significance of the events, the gurdwara complex has been renovated. The entire Sachkhand Shri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib complex is being redesigned to accommodate a minimum of 40,000 devotees in its main hall. A Guru Granth Sahib Bhavan has been constructed to facilitate religious and cultural congregations. About 4,000 devotees can gather here for talks, films and *kirtans*. Through the days of the celebration we will conduct prayers, talks and cultural programmes. The main thing is – we need to have the facilities to accommodate anyone who visits, and I think we have accomplished that.

A world-class museum of Sikh history is being developed. Gobind Baug is an eight-acre garden complete with musical fountains where visitors can enjoy a bit of greenery and quiet. A number of Yatri Bhavans have been especially built to accommodate visitors.

Indeed, the entire city of Nanded has been upgraded. There are new roads, an airport, a renovated railway station, better water supply and sewerage systems. A 100-foot-platform, with adequate bathing points, has been built along the Godavari with Central government funds.

Andhra Pradesh - Vijayawada

Guru Granth Sahib Jagriti Yatra to enter State

The yatra is being taken out to celebrate 300th anniversary of Holy Coronation of the Adi Granth

VIJAYAWADA: The 'Shri Guru Granth Sahib Jagriti Yatra' being taken out to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Holy Coronation of the Adi Granth, the Holy Book of the Sikhs, as the 11th Guru (the Guru Granth Sahib), will reach the city on Friday.

The yatra comprises a special vehicle carrying one of the original handwritten copies of Guru Granth Sahib that was worshipped in the Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchalnagar

Sahib Gurdwara in Nanded, Maharashtra, and the weapons used by Sri Guru Govind Singh and other 'shaheed' (martyr) Sikhs who fought to protect the Hindu Dharma.

Sri Guru Singh Sabha spokesperson Harvindar Singh told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that the Jagriti Yatra entered Chennai on Tuesday and would enter Andhra Pradesh on Friday.

The Yatra would leave for Visakhapatnam on Saturday morning and return here on July 28 and then leave finally to Hyderabad on July 29 morning. The yatra had covered over 150 places in 12 states since it began at Nanded on November 15, 2007.

Procession

The Jagriti Yatra would be received at Kanakadurgamma Vaaradhi and brought in a procession to the Gurudwara at Gurunanak Colony via Benz circle, Ring Road and Ramavarapadu circle.

Hazur Sahib Gurdwara located on the banks of the Godavari is one of the five 'takhts' (seats of temporal authority) in Sikhism.

The structure is built at the spot where Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, passed away and the sanctum sanctorum of the temple is built over the place the Guru was cremated in 1708.

The temple is highly revered by the followers of the Sikh faith.

Mr. Singh said people of all faiths were welcome to see the Guru Granth Sahib being brought here.

There were two Gurudwaras in the city and Sikhs had been residents of Vijayawada from before Independence and through the Partition of India.

Devotional hymns

The Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of devotional hymns and poetry that proclaim the highest authority of God and stresses the importance of meditation on the True Guru (God).

It also lays down morals and ethics needed for the strengthening of the soul, spiritual salvation and unity with God.