

Heads You Win! The Sikh Turban

The Sikh turban is the topic of an intense, high-profile awareness drive. Worried over reports of insults to the headgear abroad, dignitaries, including Prime Minister Man- Mohan Singh, have come together to promote the Punjabi turban across the world.

Punjabi folk singer Pammi Bai's music album, *Putt Punjabi* (sons of Punjab), has used prominent personalities, such as former Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh, former chairman of the National Commission for Minorities Tarlochan Singh and noted dramatist Gursharan Singh to explain the many nuances and styles of turban-tying. Since protocol does not allow the Prime Minister to model, his photographs were used in album shots for the song. Pammi Bai said they also approached Indian Army Chief, General J.J. Singh, but were not allowed to use even his photos.

Pammi Bai said he hit upon the idea after a "friend in Afghanistan, who faced the heat of anti-Sikh protests asked me to contribute in making the world aware about the turban." Since music has a global reach, the song had proved to be a huge international hit, he said. But the rest, like Padamshree Pargat Singh, Punjabi poet Surjit Pattar and Punjabi University Vice Chancellor Swaran Singh Boparai, are shown either dancing or lip-synching. Renowned hockey player and his Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, counterpart, K.S. Aulakh, comedian Jaspal Bhatti and a galaxy of singers, like Malkiat Singh, Mohammed Saddiqe, Idhu Shariff and Sukhjinder Shinda, faced cameras for the first time as they modeled for the song titled 'Pagri', shot in different phases in Patiala, Ludhiana, Chandigarh and New Delhi.

Being produced by Frankfinn Music Company, the album hit the market early this week.

The song opens with a Canadian girl, Alleeca, seeking guidance from Pammi for completing her research work on the Punjabi turban. As she writes her research thesis, Pammi Bai helps her.

[Courtesy: Hindustan Times]

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Bollywood high for Sikh artist

His debut album had earned him a fan following that includes names such as Amitabh Bachchan, Mira Nair and VS Naipaul. That is a feather in the cap of singer-composer Rabbi Singh Shergill, who till a few years ago was a Delhiite struggling to make a career in singing. Rabbi, who is all set to debut as composer in Bollywood with *Delhi Heights*, thinks life has given him a lot and Bollywood is just another experience for him.

"*Delhi Heights* is one film that I am looking forward to but I am not nervous before its release. I am satisfied with the music I have composed," says Rabbi. Being a Delhite has helped him compose the songs better, he feels, "It's my interpretation of music and it's like a journey through the historic alleys of the city," says the singer who has always tried to interpret music in his own way.

Rabbi, who has also sung the title track, *Dilli*, considers it to be one of his best compositions and says the director had given him absolute freedom for composing. "That's why I chose to work in this film. I was promised that I would be given absolute liberty in work," says the singer whose debut album *Rabbi* had become an instant rage after its release in 2005.

Rabbi, whose songs have shades of Sufi music, rock and Punjabi music, has experimented a lot in this film.

Delhi Heights has a variety of songs and for this Rabbi has relied a lot on other singers. "I had thought of doing the songs myself but there are certain songs which others would do

better. I did not want to make it a one-man show and try to prove that I am the best and can do everything,” he says.

He has used singer Sonu Nigam for the soft romantic number *Kitne der*, while for the song *Ey gori* he has used Kailash Kher. “they are two of the best singers in the country and I composed the songs keeping them in mind. This film has a rock song also that has been used in a disco sequence. Sonu has done a lot of such songs, so he was my first choice,” says Rabbi, who feels that the different kind of music in *Delhi Heights* will break the monotony the Indian audience faces.

Rabbi is also working on his new album and will release it soon. This album, he says, will be completely different from his earlier one. “I never repeat myself, but I am confident that new things are always appreciated,” says Rabbi Singh.

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Achievement: Sukhinder Singh Cassidy

Sukhinder Singh Cassidy is responsible for all of Google’s sales operation in the Asia Pacific and Latin American regions and she also oversees the company’s local search and channel initiatives globally. Prior to joining Google, from 1999 to 2003, Sukhinder was Co-Founder and Senior Vice President business development for Yodlee.com Inc., a leading solutions provider to the global financial services industry, with a client base such as Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Bank of America, Wachovia, Yahoo!, Microsoft and AOL. Sukhinder is a graduate of the Ivey School of Business Administration at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

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The liberal Dutch get tough

An anti-immigrant politician in Netherlands is making a meteoric rise with his call on the Dutch – once one of the most tolerant nations in the world – to stop Islam taking over Europe. Geert Wilders, the 43-year-old leader of the Freedom Party, is convinced that governments are being forced to accommodate a “*tsunami of Islamisation*” that is fundamentally incompatible with European social values.

The Freedom Party has jumped from six to 10 per cent in opinion polls since November. His passionate campaign for a ban on the Islamic veil, or burqa, in public places is gaining such momentum that the country’s new coalition government could be forced to introduce the ban it does not support.

On the burqa, Wilders is adamant: “It is a medieval token of a barbaric time, of how not to treat women,” he argues. Allowing Muslims to wear the burqa in the Netherlands, or to have segregated swimming sessions so as not to offend religious sensitivities, amounts to “religious apartheid” he says.

The new government coalition of mainstream Centre Right and Left political parties had planned to ditch a decision by the previous government to ban the burqa in the *Netherlands which now has a population of one million Muslims, six per cent of the total population*. But, Wilders crows, weekend opinion polls show 66 per cent of Dutch citizens support a ban.

The minority opposition leader who has won two previous votes for a ban on the burqa is convinced that support will be there for new legislation he will table in the spring as the Dutch become increasingly concerned over Muslim separatism.

Wilders is convinced there is growing support for his views across Europe but its political leaders, particularly in Britain, are too obsessed with being politically correct.

“There is almost no country more politically correct than the UK. Look at the terrible thing that happened in London after Madrid, you have more reason than most to make this debate

transparent and public,” he said.

[Courtesy: *The Daily Telegraph*]