

Welfare of Sikligar Sahajdharis in Karnataka

Sr. Kulvinder Singh of Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council,* reports:

* Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council (Regd.). Email: nswc@bol.net.in. Donations are welcome.

Upto May, 2002, 12 houses have been completed and handed over to Sikligar Sahajdharis, including a Tamilian family. Till date an expenditure of Rs. 6 Lakhs have been incurred with support from Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council. The Sikligar families have repaid Rs. 50,000/- by contributing Rs.125 per week. The Karnataka Sikh Welfare Society, Bangalore has so far received contributions of Rs. 2 Lakhs from *Sangat* of Bangalore for the housing project, which is being used as 'revolving fund' for construction. A Co-operative society of Siklgar families is functioning smoothly.

All the 23 Sikligar children have passed the exams and have been promoted to higher classes. They are reciting *Japji Sahib*, *Rehras Sahib* and *Sohila*, collectively in the mornings and evenings every day. Weekly Punjabi and *Gurmat* music classes are continuing. All these activities are being conducted in a temporary hall. This hall has been provided with a colour TV, games, Musical-instruments, etc. A permanent center has to be provided.

The data of Sikligar Sikh families living at many places in Karnataka State has been collected and, based on the data so collected, a memorandum was presented to the Chief Minister of Karnataka State highlighting the difficulties being faced by the Sikligars in Karnataka and a request has been made for providing them with land houses and also to rehabilitate them financially.

The corporator of the ward in Mysore has provided streetlight and water connection in the locality. S. Sital Singh President of Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Mysore is coordinating all the activities and has arranged the teaching of Gurumukhi to the families twice in a week. Keeping in view the difficulty being faced by the families the Society has constructed a sanitary unit at Mysore at cost of Rs 16,500. In addition, Rs.1500 were spent for erecting thatched hut to conduct *Gurmat* and Punjabi classes. The families are conducting morning and evening classes by themselves.

* * * * *

Nimrat Kaur honoured by UK Sikhs

Birmingham: Noted Punjabi social scientist Miss Nimrat Kaur, M.A. (Psy) was honoured by the Sikh Community & Youth Services (UK) for her services to the Projects run by FATEH (Fellowship of Activists To Embrace Humanity - an NGO transcending national boundaries and in its early stages of development, now established in North America, Europe and Asia). Nimrat described her mission "to combat social ills, including illiteracy, poverty, hunger, poor health, inequality and oppression." FATEH has been structured to help realize ideals that are congruent with the Sikh philosophy.

Project *Karta Kare*, under her own care, was described as "a response to our community's outrage over the physical, social, emotional and spiritual consequences of trauma created by individuals or official excesses, specially by the State of Punjab". Psychological treatment, clinical counselling and rehabilitation are three main areas in which assistance is provided. A special emphasis is given to encourage and rekindle the creativity of the children who have undergone such experiences. It is our duty to care for those whose families have been destroyed by injustice. She stressed the need for coming together and to support the victims's families, for they too are part of our family. FATEH had also set up an "Orissa Fund" to raise money to supplement flood relief efforts carried out by FATEH in conjunction with other agencies working in Orissa.

The other organisations that FATEH is teaming up with for these projects include Child Education Volunteer Association, Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council, Joti Saroop Trust and Horizons. FATEH is also working closely with the United Nations on promoting Manifesto 2000 aiming to create a culture of peace and non-violence.

* * * * *

Gurbani Braille Expert Sr. Kunwar Singh Negi Honoured

H.E. the Governor of Uttaranchal state, Sr. Surjeet Singh Barnala honoured Dr. Kunwar Singh Negi (Padmashri and Padmabushan) symbolized by a shawl and a purse of Rs. 11,000, for services rendered to the cause of Indian Braille literature and Braille journalism for the visually challenged.

Sardar Barnala spoke about the work Dr. Negi has done for the blind and described him as a foremost Braille expert. Dr. Negi urged the governor to provide a permanent computerised Braille Centre, preferably in the Nehru Colony of Dehradun, to locate the "Maharaja Ranjit Singh National Braille Press Society". Mr Barnala promised to talk to Chief Minister of Uttaranchal.

Sardar Barnala commended Sr Negi's work of inscribing *Gurbani* in Punjabi Braille, which is an achievement in itself.

* * * * *

The World Sikh University, London, celebrates its 4th Graduation Ceremony

The World Sikh University celebrated its 4th Graduation Ceremony last April. Eleven students were awarded M.A. degrees in 'Comparative Studies in World Religions: Specialising in Sikh Religion'. Mrs. Kuldip Singh Sidhu topped the list of the awardees. The second place went to

Mrs. Perminder Kaur Jolly and Mr. Gurdeep Singh Devgon. the procession of the new graduates was led by the University Registrar, Mrs M. Amdekar.

The degrees were awarded by His Worship the Mayor of Hounslow.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor read the report on the successful functioning of the University which is completing its 5th anniversary in November 2002. The members of the University Directorate Sr Gurdeep Singh Gujral CBE, Sr. H.S. Sethi and Sr. G.S. Chhatwal praised the role played by the University amongst the Sikh youth.

The University courses are available on a full time, part time and distance learning basis. Enquiries for admission to:

Email: registrar@sikh-uni.ac.uk

Fax: (44) 208 427 4880

Telephone: (44) 208 427 5132. 208 428 4052.