

Foreign Donations to SGPC Cleared

Kuldeep Singh Mann reports from Amritsar: Blacklisted during the days of militancy in 1984, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has got Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's nod for receiving foreign donations. Dr. Manmohan Singh assured a visiting delegation, led by Bibi Jagir Kaur, that the ban on overseas donations would no longer be applicable to the Sikh body.

Interestingly, the ban on the SGPC, as well as on several militant outfits, had remained in place when the SAD-BJP alliance had been in power at the Centre and state. During the meeting, Dr. Singh also assured the delegation that there was no move by the Centre to pass a bill for a separate gurdwara parbandhak committee for Haryana. He reportedly said the government wouldn't interfere in any religious affairs.

However, the delegation wanted a few more assurance from the PM, one of them on an all party delegation of Sikh MPs to resolve the turban issue in France and the *kirpan* issue with Denmark. Furthermore, it sought permission to execute Kar Sewa to repair Sikh shrines in Bangladesh. The SGPC had sent a special panel to Bangladesh and received information about the deteriorating condition of gurdwaras in that country.

USA's Tribute to Sri Darbar Sahib

Special Commemorative Stamps celebrate Fourth SGGS Centennial

Sr. Jasbir Singh Sethi of the Golden Temple Credit Corporation, 4210 Lemon Tree St., Houston, TX 77088 has sent us an exquisitely designed set of a 37 Cent US Postage Stamps, issued recently, in Celebration of 400th anniversary of Sri (Guru) Granth Sahib ji's installation. This doubtless symbolises the diaspora Sikhs' participative activism in the American public affairs.

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London Bombing:

Stop backlash, India tells UK

India on July 10, described the attacks on Sikh places of worship in the UK as an affront not only to that religion but entire humanity. Delhi asked the British government to take necessary steps to apprehend the perpetrators and protect the community from any further expression of racial tension.

"The Sikh community in the UK has carved out a highly respected place for itself in British society through its industriousness and commitment. They have enriched the political landscape and contributed significantly to economic society," the external affairs ministry spokesman said. Fire broke out in a gurdwara in Kent and a mosque in Leeds last July. These were the first indication of a possible backlash against British Muslims to the blasts in London.

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Dr. Manmohan Singh honoured by Oxford

Fifty-seven years after Independence, Dr. Manmohan Singh acknowledged the British Raj's "beneficial effects" and its record of "good governance" in colonial days. Dr. Singh was speaking at Oxford university receiving the honorary doctorate from the university's chancellor Lord Chris Patten.

But observers said Dr. Singh's extraordinary remarks, which saluted the British contribution to India's current, admirable system of "constitutional government, a free press, a professional service, modern universities and research laboratories," were also a clarion call for the former colonies to embrace self-confidence as the mantra of the 21st century.

Dr. Singh said: "Today, with all the balance and perspective offered by the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, it is possible for an Indian Prime Minister to assert that India's experience of Britain had its beneficial consequences."

