

Swiss Sikhs want SGPC to appoint its ‘ambassadors’

Even as there has not been any incident of hate crime against tiny Sikh population in Switzerland post 9/11, yet the community doesn't rule out an attack if timely preventive measure are not taken to apprise the world about their distinct identity. However, the community does not expect much from Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) for its role played, but opines that it should have a broader sphere, and appoint its representatives or ambassadors around the world.

Karan Singh, founder president, Sikh Foundation, Switzerland, who claims to have constructed first gurdwara in Switzerland using traditional methods and adhering to Sikh code of conduct at Langenthal, Switzerland, while talking to TOI recently alleged that SGPC had failed in delivering its duties. "The Committee is largest elected body of Sikhs and should have raised up to occasion to infuse a sense of security among Sikh in the time of crisis," he said. He suggested that committee should appoint its ambassadors and send its representatives around the world to inform governments of different countries about Sikh identity, their role in economic development of various nations, their hardworking and peaceful nature. He also suggested that all the programmes should be chalked out under the aegis of Jathedar of Akal Takht, who was revered among all the Sikhs of world.

Talking about Gurdwara Sahib, Switzerland, Karan Singh said Sikhs around the world have contributed nearly Rs 7 crore for the construction of gurdwara which took nearly ten years to complete. "This is the only gurdwara in Europe after UK which has been constructed in a traditional manner," he claimed while adding that majority of gurdwaras have been constructed after renovating an old factory, church, a house, etc. He said Swiss government permitted construction of gurdwara dome to a height of 15 meters, which shows the Swiss government's faith in the community.

[Courtesy: *Times of India*]

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‘Bharat Jyoti’ award for Dr. Shamsher Singh

Reputed scholar of the Sikh lore, Dr. Shamsher Singh, who retired from the department of Guru Granth Sahib Studies of the Punjabi University, Patiala, has been awarded the 'Bharat Jyoti' Award for 2006, by the New Delhi based India International Friendship Society. The award recognizes his contributions in the field of religious studies and philosophy and guiding younger scholars of the post-graduate level to explore basic ideals common to various faiths as postulated in the scriptural texts.

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Vancouver Mayor learns Punjabi

Sam Sullivan the Mayor of Vancouver gave a brief and meaningful speech in an admirably perfect Punjabi accent on September 4, 2006 at Gurdwara Khalsa Darbar Society, Vancouver. He was speaking on the auspicious occasion of the first Prakash Diwas (illumination day) celebration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in 1604 by Guru Arjun Dev Ji at Amritsar.

Extending his greetings to all on the auspicious occasion, Vancouver Mayor said, in impressive Punjabi, "Guru Granth Sahib contains holy hymns of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh saints that give the message of love and peace to the whole mankind. I pray to God to bless all with happiness, peace, high spiritedness and love."

Explaining his interest in learning Punjabi and Sikh religion, Sam Sullivan said, "I hope to explain to all our Punjabi citizens that we greatly respect them. I love that what I am learning

about Sikh religion. I think they add so much to our city. Gian Singh Kotli is my respected teacher.” He explained that the best way to improve the quality of life in Vancouver is to unite people and encourage them to work together for the good of the community. Sam liked to be dressed in blue Kameez-Pajama and and adored an orange colored turban on his head for this religious event. Sam Sullivan also expressed his desire to obtain a copy of the English translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Recipient of the highest award “Order of Canada” for his services to the people and a Councilor for several terms in Vancouver, Sam Sullivan was specially invited by Gurdwara Khalsa Darbar Society for this special occasion. President, Sarjit Singh Gill honored him for rendering valuable services to the City of Vancouver and the community on behalf of the whole congregation by presenting him with a Plaque of Honor.

[Courtesy: *Gian Singh Kotli, Canada*]

