

## **Guru Nanak in Saurashtra**

The conservation work of Lakhpat Sahib shrine was completed and now Kar Sewa is in progress for building Langar Hall and Yatri Niwas. A lot many people Sikhs/non-Sikhs visit Lakhpat Sahib (Guru Nanak stayed for about 2 months at Lakhpat Sahib while going to Mecca). The present works are estimated to cost about Rs. 15 lacs. There is a lot of enthusiasm amongst Sangat for contributing in cash and kind. Soon it will become historic place worth visiting.

It is our duty to preserve historic places sanctified by the visit of our Guru and originally must they be maintained.

**- Mohinder Singh**

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Offensive English Play in UK**

Sikh outrage over the play, "Behzti" (Dishonour), has caused an upheaval in Birmingham and the authorities are under tremendous pressure, while the theatre has refused to change the script.

Meanwhile, religious leaders of all faiths have joined in to orchestrate their disapproval and demand that the Birmingham Repertory Theatre cancel its staging. Khalid Mahmood, local MP, said the play had been written to cause maximum offence.

Sewa Singh Mandha, chairman of the Council of Gurdwaras said, "The Rep has ignored the community's concerns. They say the playwright has the right to her imaginations. But, these imaginations could harm a community."

The Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham Vincent Nicholas added to the controversy by saying he thought the play would offend people of all faiths. "even if fictional, violation of the sacred place of the Sikh religion demeans the sacred place of every religion."

He added, "In recent weeks the Sikh community has acted in a reasonable and measured way in representing their concerns. I regret that the Repertory Theatre has not been more responsive."

Birmingham City Council which subsidises the Rep, said it was powerless to force script changes.

The irony is that the play has been written by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, herself a Sikh, who tells the story of a mother and daughter who visit a gurdwara where rape and murder takes place. She said she received threats to her life and been condemned undeservedly.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Sri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Yogiji's Mortal Remains immersed**

Bibi Inderjit Kaur Ji and family, with many representatives of the Sikh Dharma International, performed the solemn duty of immersion of the mortal remains of the

late Sri Singh Sahib Yogiji at Kiratpur (Punjab) on January 11, 2005. Memorial *kirtan* sessions were held subsequently first at Gurudwara Manji Sahib, Amritsar on Jan 15 and then at Bangla Sahib, New Delhi on Jan 16, 2005. **Prayers for the repose of his soul at the lotus feet of Sri Satguru Waheguruji were followed by warm tributes to the legendary Yogiji who personified the spirit of the Khalsa and won the hearts of the masses in Western Hemisphere where the Sikh Dharma flourishes as testimony to his devotion and inspired activism.**

- S.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **NYPD to allow cops with turbans**

For the first time Sikhs would serve as officers in the New York City Police Department with their turbans and beards, Washington-based Sikh Coalition said at year-end.

In June, New York City Commission on Human Rights issued a final order calling on NYPD to allow traffic enforcement agent Mr Jasjit Singh to serve with his turban and beard. The NYPD has not yet appealed against the decision, the NYPD has effectively decided to allow Sikhs to serve with turbans and beards," it said in a release. "It's for the first time that Sikhs would serve in the NYPD with turbans and beards."

\* \* \* \* \*

## **20 years on, Supreme Court admits plea on Sikh riot relief**

Over 20 years after the unprecedented violence against Sikhs in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination, a plea for enhancement of compensation has been admitted for a hearing by the Supreme Court. The petition demands an increase from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 80,000 for destruction of the victims' property in Uttar Pradesh. Though an official committee had quantified Rs. 80,000 for loss of property by each victim, the state government had reduced it to Rs. 3,000 per head.

Allahabad HC had dismissed the writ petition filed by one Trilochan Singh Chhabra asking him to approach the competent civil court. He had filed an appeal against this order before the Supreme Court. A bench of Justice N. Santosh Hegde and S.B. Singh admitted Chhabra's petition, along with similar appeals filed by other riot victims after hearing their counsel H.S. Phoolka. The petitioners claimed that the Lalitpur district administration had assessed the loss suffered by them during the riots and quantified the compensation payable at Rs. 80,000.

□