

Sikh Leader attends Clinton's Library Inaugural

Dr. Rajwant Singh, Chairman of the Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE) attended the opening ceremony of the Library of former U.S. President Bill Clinton in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Singh was invited by ex-President Clinton and Dr. Singh's wife accompanied him to this impressive gathering last month. The ceremony was attended by all living former Presidents (except Ford) and over 100 members of U.S. Congress and many Hollywood celebrities. 165 Million dollar facility was opened with pomp despite rain. The large political gathering saluted Clinton's achievements. President Bush praised Clinton for his vision for the American people and his political skills. Senator John Kerry and former Vice-president Gore were also in attendance.

Dr. Rajwant Singh, who is also the Exec. Director of Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, said that "I am honored to be invited to this august gathering and this just shows how Clintons have always demonstrated their connection with Sikhs. They have expressed their concerns for the Sikh community in the past. We are grateful to President Clinton and his family for their love and support and we look forward to a continued relationship with this special family." Dr. Rajwant Singh started the tradition of American President greeting the Sikh community on Guru Nanak's Birthday annually and that has continued till now. . He was invited many times by Clinton for breakfast meetings and for discussions with various religious leaders.

Sr. Sant Singh Chatwal from NewYork also attended the ceremony. Mr Chatwal has contributed to Hillary Clinton's election campaign and been a friend of the Clintons.

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Dada Chellaram's Kirtan Odyssey

On the 24th Nov. Sri Lachman Chellaram Ji and a group of 10 satsangees visited Nankana Sahib, Punja Sahib and Dera Sahib in Pakistan in connection with Guru Nanak's Birthday which fell on the 26th Nov. last year After that he visiting Sindh covering Ghotki, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Sukhar, Larkana, Radhan, Dadu, Nawabshah, Kotri, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Thatta, Karachi, etc. He was invited by Sai Sadhram Sahib of Rirki Sahib in Pakistan (0092-703-42671). He reached Delhi on the 13th Dec, 2004 and thereafter left for Bhopal on 22nd till 25th Dec (0755-25402095) and Calcutta from 27th Nov. where he is expected to stay till 10th Jan, 05 (033-22161757) and in Mumbai from 11th to 20th Jan, 05 (022-26048935).

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Minority Commission wants jathedars to combat foeticide

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has decided to take up the cause of the girl child and it would begin with the Sikhs and Punjabis, keeping in view the high incidence of female foeticide in the two communities. To this end, the NCM has invited jathedars from across the country for a briefing in the second week of October to drive home its point.

The move comes in the wake of an analysis of the recently released population census report by a four-member committee set up by the NCM. The committee, in its report, has identified the “skewed sex ratio” in some states and communities as the most serious demographic problem”. Headed by Prof. Ashish Bose, the committee has Prof. P.M. Kulkarni, Prof. Mari Bhat and Prof. T.K. Roy as its other members.

Bose told *The Indian Express*, “For us, the sharp decline in the child sex ratio among Sikhs and Hindus in Punjab, in Haryana and some other states is the most serious issue since it can cause a devastating social and economic fallout in the very near future.”

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Migrant Labour in Punjab A Warning

National Commission for Minorities Chairperson, Sr. Tarlochan Singh warned the Sikh youth that the migrant labour from Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh would soon outnumber them if they continued to be indifferent to semi-skilled jobs.

Delivering the Bir Memorial Lecture organised by the Atam Science Trust at India International Centre in 2003, he chose the theme Sikh youth at crossroads - to call upon the unemployed Sikh youth to explore opportunities in the farm sector instead of sitting idle. He said around 18 lakh Sikh youth in Punjab were unemployed.

What is noteworthy is that 15 lakh labourers from three states have chosen the prosperous state to earn their livelihood, Mr Tarlochan Singh said adding that Sikhs will be reduced to a minority in their own state if they don't assert their legitimate claim for employment in the farm sector and semi-skilled jobs in Punjab. “This will lead to political turmoil,” he warned.

He expressed concern over growing addiction to drugs among the adults in Punjab. He said the Sikh youth were to be blamed for unemployment as they were not adopting the culture of self-help.

Questioning the role of the Sikh gurdwara management committees, the Chairperson said they spent time on infighting and elections instead of educating the younger generation on the Sikh dharma.

Mr. Tarlochan Singh said the current trends were disturbing. The Sikh youth today were getting their hair cut. “This is forbidden in Sikh religion.” He stressed the need to revive the folklore and culture of Punjab.

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