

# California Sardar's Passion for Turbans

*Khushwant Singh Ahluwalia*

The next time you spot India's prime minister sporting a bright coloured turban, you know others that come straight from the closet of Sikh NRI Bicky Singh, a Commissioner in California Lt. Governor's council who has this wild passion for wearing and collecting bright coloured and patterned turbans.

Why would Dr Manmohan Singh have a turban from Bicky when enough are available at Khan Market? Believe it or not, Bicky has 500 plus turbans all designed differently by him or his people at the IT company he founded. And to stock them the Sardar has 10 feet by 6 feet wide extra shelf in his walk-in closet along with huge plastic bags used for keeping comforters.

Coming back to Dr Manmohan Singh, Bicky, while talking to TNN from California, said that last year he had met the PM at his residence and he had kept glaring at his turban. "I told the PM that I shall get him a bright coloured turban next time I visited India."

"I developed a fascination for turbans when I was studying in Southern California where I was the only turbaned guy," Bicky said, adding that wearing bright coloured turbans was the easiest way to break the ice as people would come and ask about the turban. "It gave me an opportunity to talk about my faith and spread the message of Sikhism."

Incidentally, Bicky is the founder of one of the largest non-profit Sikh portals sikhpoint.com and is CEO of Future Computing Solutions Inc and securemart.com.

"My people design turbans using graphics and I order the design via e-mail to India, though I buy my turbans from Malaysia and USA at times," he said. Post 9/11, Bicky designed a turban with an American flag. He also has a turban for the Halloween and St. Patrick's Day.

## New turbanators: Have a choice

*Yudhvir Rana*

Turbans not only give Sikhs just a distinct identity. The modern day turban is trendy, fashionable and adds to personality and attitude of the modern day 'turbanators'. Many have decided to revolutionise turban-wearing and have floated 35 different styles of tying the turban!

The Amitabh cut, Jitendra cut and Govinda cut have been replaced by the Daler turban, Bhoopie turban and Malkiat turban. Till not very long ago, many young Sikh boys wore the turban for religious and family compulsion but now it's becoming a fad.

'*Akal Purakh Ki Fauj*', a Sikh organisation, has taken the lead by introducing 'Kaumi Dastar Bandi Samagam', a collective gurmat samagam for *dastar bandi* of children to remind them of their rich Sikh tradition and instill a feeling of pride in tying the turban. "Turban clinics have been set up, turban significance contests and declamation contests held. Baisakhi, April 13, is now also observed as Sikh Turban Day. On the day, Sikhs youth and pre-adolescents are groomed to serve as role models and interact with select groups. The '**Mr. Singh International Contest**' is another such effort," Jaswinder Singh, Advocate, coordinator of the Fauj and an SGPC member told TNN.

Jaswinder Singh Jassi, a senior member of APKF, said that the turban clinic was held at the headquarters of the APKF and many such clinics were expected to come up soon in the city. "Turban Day is observed to spread the message among misdirected Sikh youth that the turban is an integral part of their personality," he said.

Deepinder Singh, a college student, said he likes the kind of turban Rabbi Gill wears. "Ever

Since Sikh youths have started walking the ramp I've collected 25 coloured and printed turbans," he gushed.

**Baljit Kaur, another college student, said she preferred turbaned youth. "A man's turban says a lot about him. Matching or contrasting turbans add life to an outfit.** Sikh boys have even learnt to follow beard trends without actually getting it trimmed," she said.

## Tele Talk without hurt

Former cricketer **Navjot Singh Sidhu** speaks to Sangeet Devi K about his new role as judge of a comedy show.

§ **It's the first time you are teaming up with Shekhar Suman. How is it working with him?**

There is always a first time to anything and I discovered that Shekhar and I share a lot in common. We think alike, understand each other and have the same wavelength. I am looking forward to judging the *Great Indian Laughter Challenge* with him for Star One.

§ **Your brand of humour is a lot different from Shekhar's. He is known to take pot shots at people. Would you resort to the same?**

No, I am happy to make people laugh without hurting someone. I don't think I will take pot shots at someone to make others laugh.

§ **Comedy is subjective. How do you plan to judge who is the best?**

I think it is a question of choosing the first among equals. We'll be looking at whether the comedy is forced, rehearsed or spontaneous. Wit has to be spontaneous, so we will be putting people in a spot and assessing them. The yardstick is to see if the humour is original and not a rip-off of some American show or the other. We are looking for caviar and not marmalade on the toast.

§ **You are trying a new role from being a cricket commentator.**

I am, because I don't believe in living in tight compartments. The responsibility given to me can make me better or bitter. I think it is a challenge and a learning process. I am enjoying it.

§ **Have you considered penning your humour sometime?**

I don't intend to, but many publishing houses have approached me for the same. I neither have the time nor the inclination. In fact, even the term *Sidhuism* was not coined by me, but by people who've liked my witty lines. I think it's a great honour.

