

## **London-based World Sikh University celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Sr. Gurbachan Singh Gill was felicitated with the honorary degree of Ph.D. for his contribution to community in social and religious work,** as the Sikhism's sole University abroad celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in London last November. Six students were awarded M.A. degrees in 'Comparative Studies in World Religions: Specialising in Sikh Religion'. Six others were awarded Certificates for in specially run short courses in the Sikh Philosophy. Mrs. Jaswinder Kaur Bhachu topped the list of the M.A. students.

For inaugural, the trustee Sr. H.S. Sethi lighted the ceremonial *Diva* along with Professors Dr. KK Naul and Dr. SS Bhalla while the British Sikh Association Chairman, Dr. Rami Ranger read the opening address and President T.S. Sahni spoke about the teachings and universality of Guru Nanak's philosophy.

The highlight of the programme was a play titled 'Shadeed Bhagat Singh' produced and directed by the University staff and students. The drama was dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the great martyr. The University gave out life time awards to Mrs. Lucky Dhillon for her work in spreading the Gurmat message of the Sikh Gurus, and Sr. Ranbir Singh Suri for his work in the Community affairs.

The awards were presented by our popular Member of Parliament Mr. Virender Sharma. He spoke highly of the work and mission of the University.

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## **Pakistan army's first Sikh officer**

At the Military Academy near Islamabad, last October, one person stood out among the latest batch of smartly turned out cadets that graduated from the Academy - the country's first Sikh army officer, Mr Harcharan Singh.

Mr Singh, who stood out conspicuous ly due to his green turban and beard, marched in step with his fellow cadets before the army's vice chief, Lt. Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kiyani, during the passing out parade last October. The official ceremony over, the 21-year old officer joined his relatives and friends from Nankana Sahib, the birthblace of Guru Nanak, for thanksgiving and celebration.

[*The Statesman*, 29.10.07]

## **Delhi doc takes Kabul express, lends helping hand in war-torn Afghanistan**

Till last month, people in war-torn Kabul had to go to Iran, Pakistan, or come to India to find a super-speciality diagnosis centre. Not any more; not after Kims-Wardak Diagnostic Centre opened in the Afghan capital on September 1, with a little help from Delhi. "Kims-Wardak", an initiative of Delhi-based Dr Pawandeep Singh Kohli, is touted as the first stand-alone diagnostic centre in Afghanistan, with MRI scan and medical detection facilities.

The centre is a joint venture between Hyderabad's Kims Hospital, Kabul-based orthopaedic surgeon Dr Moosa Wardak, and Dr Kohli, who was the honorary radiologist to former president K R Narayanan.

"This initiative by Dr Kohli will provide another option to people here," India's ambassador to Afghanistan Rakesh Sood told *Newsline* over phone from Kabul. "People here would not have to approach labs in Pakistan, Iran or India."

Dr Kohli said the idea of opening a diagnostic centre came during a recent visit to Kabul. "Equipment with state-of-the art- technology calls for a lot of investment," he said. "We imported machinery from Germany for over US \$1 million. "But the response, he said, is heartening: "We are receiving 30 to 35 patients every day within just seven days of opening

the centre”.

Dr Kohli runs Kohli Imaging and Diagnostic Centre in East of Kailash, New Delhi.

The Kabul-Delhi link is active even after the centre is up and running. Reports of tests conducted there are generated at the diagnostic centre here. “Pathology is a critical area, and a patient’s future depends on that split second when his/her disease is detected.” But did the bloody ground realities frighten him? “No, I wanted to be the first doctor to provide this facility to war-struck people there. This is what my community (Sikhs) has done, and I have simply carried forward our tradition - **service to society with a smile.**”

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### **First woman to be nominated to Royal Calcutta Golf Club’s Executive**

The ‘Pratibha Patil effect’ has travelled from Rashtrapati Bhavan to Royal Calcutta Golf Club (RCGC). Three weeks after India got its first woman President RCGC got its first woman committee member in 175 years.

“It was just a few day after Pratibha Patil was elected President that I was told about my nomination and it immediately struck a chord,” smiles 57-year-old Anu Bindra. “I was quite taken aback when I received the call to join the 12-member balloting committee, but I agreed immediately.

With a fair record on the fairways for 25 years, Bindra feels her new found status “will be a big boost to women golfers and will encourage more women to take up the sport”. From captaining the Indian teams to Australia (2006) and Thailand (2005) to being the non-playing captain for the Asian Games in Doha (2006), from being chairperson of Indian Golf Union Ladies Section to captaining the Calcutta Ladies Golf Club on the Maidan, she is a real golf veteran.

Bindra, now a die-hard fan of Tiger Woods, owed her first tee-off to her husband, (late) GS Bindra “When I used to attend golf parties, I used to hear people talk about ‘birdies’ and I asked my husband what it meant. That’s when he suggested that I play. He passed away in 2004 and now I feel like I’m living an extension of his life,” she says.

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### **Punjabi studies at Kashmir University**

Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said last September that opening of Punjabi department in Kashmir University was under active consideration and that final decision on the proposal would be taken soon.

Addressing the Golden Jubilee function of JK Punjabi Sahit Sabha the Chief Minister said that a proposal to this effect had been sent by Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University and they were working on it. He said final decision would be taken soon.

The Chief Minister said that Punjabi Section would also be set up in J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages in Kashmir while there was already on at Jammu office of the Academy.

He said on need basis Punjabi language could be introduced in few more degree colleges in the Valley to serve as feeder for the proposed PG department of Punjabi at Kashmir University. At presnt, the language is taught in two valley colleges at Varmul and Tral.

Describing Punjabi language as sweet and rich, the Chief Minister said those who speak it equally robust. He said there was need to promote this language in the State. He said Punjabi language was very rich in literature and Punjabi speaking people from various religious backgrounds had taken the language to all parts of the world givine it an international colour.

The Chief Minister said the bond of language was stronger than any other attachment

between two people. He said a Muslim Punjabi from Pakistan would find himself more at ease with a Punjabi Sikh than his coreligionist in other part of his own country. He said similar was the case on this side of the border.

Azad praised JK Punjabi Sahit Sabha for its contribution to literature and said despite turmoil the organisation carried on its literary activities in the Valley. He said the organisation had published more than 300 books. He said that today's Golden Jubilee function was the third major event organised by the organisation at Srinagar. He said in 1975 the World Punjabi Conference was held in Srinagar attended among others by Giani Zail singh and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. He said in 1982 the Silver Jubilee function of the organisation was held here.

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### **Bidar Balm**

Here's some warm news for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who is battling the nuclear chill blowing from his Left allies and the Opposition. Two Congress MPs from Karnataka - Narsingrao Suryavansh and Basavaraj Bulla - have invited Manmohan Singh to spend half-da-day in prayer and silence at the Nanak Jhira Gurudwara in Bidar, known as the Amritsar of the south. They feel the PM badly needs a break to recoup his energy. Guru Gobind Singh had stopped here in Bidar while traversing the country. The gurudwara was built in his honour. The MPs are certain that meditating at this historic shrine will calm the PM's mind. Says Bulla: "Flying in and out would not be difficult because there is an IAF base at Bidar and we promise the PM would not be hounded by party workers and petitioners. A quiet communion with the guru is guaranteed." Not a bad idea, to get away from the cacophony of Delhi's power corridors. Manmohan is yet to say yes.

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