

## **Guru Nanak Shrine in Sikkim: Chungthang Gurudwara opens for devotees**

According to (UNI) Chungthang Gurudwara in north Sikkim, where Guru Nanak is believed to have performed miracles during his trip to China and Tibet between 1497 and 1522, has been opened to devotee for the first time.

The Gurdwara, founded by Assam Rifles and Army personnel, with the help of local Lepcha tribe in early 1980's, was so far restricted to only Service personnel and local people due to its strategic location, bordering China.

However, with the transfer of Assam Rifles last September, the Gurudwara faced a difficult time to carry out its daily services. The local panchayat and the Sikkim government then approached the devotees and the management staff of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha of the Siliguri Gurudwara to take charge of the religious place. The Siliguri Gurudwara and the Chungthang Gram Panchayat are now looking after the management of the Gurudwara with help from the 8<sup>th</sup> battalion of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), who took charge of the Chungthang region from the Assam Rifles.

A group of about 150 devotees and a team of newsmen for the first time traveled to the religious site in summer and were greeted by the local people with traditional fanfare. Siliguri Gurudwara president Guru Sharan Hora and vice president Piara Singh led the groups to this remote part of Sikkim. Speaking to newsmen, Mr. Hora said there were several stories regarding the journey of Guru Nanak to China and Tibet during his last and fourth trip.

It is said that on his way to Tibet, Guru Nanak took rest at this place and described it a 'Changithan' or a "good place".

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### **“Jo Bole So Nihal” - Hurting sentiments**

The Statesman wrote the following Editorial last May:

The protests over the Hindi film *Jo Bole So Nihal* have raged loud and long – from before its release – but by now one person is dead and 50 others injured in two simultaneous bomb blasts at cinema halls in Delhi. They have achieved what the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee failed to do with vociferous protests – taken the film out of many cinema halls all over the country for security reasons. While the SGPC has been quick to condemn the blasts as a terrorist attack, they certainly did provoke protests by complaining that the film did not project Sikhs or Sikhism in a good light. Their main complaint was against the use of the phrase *Jo Bole So Nihal* – part of a Sikh prayer – as the name for a film that has little to do with Sikhism. To this limited extent, their argument is valid. The film-maker could easily steer clear of the phrase as his spy thriller has no relevance to the plot, but this is a limited argument.

**Freedom of expression is a vital pillar of a democratic society, but the question survives whether one should deliberately and systematically target religious issues so wantonly for doubtful gains. It is time to administer a warning. If there is no such thing as self-control in this matter, there will come**

**a time when the state will be forced to intervene and the general public will not protest. There are no absolute freedoms; many restrictions on liberty are imposed because people do not show that they have the sense and the desire to work within moderation and discipline.**

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## **Dr. Alag Honoured**

Noted scholar Dr. Sarup Singh Alag, was honoured with International Award of "NISHAN -E- SIKHI". The award was given away by Jathedar Akal Takht on the occasion of Quin birth centenary celebration of Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji. S. Manjit Singh Calcutta, mentioned that widely traveled, Dr. Alag is author of 55 acclaimed books and participated as delegate in various conferences and seminars held in different parts of the world. He has created awareness about Sikhism through his writings and discourses given on electronic and through print media. His Gurmat writings on de-addiction have awakened the conscience and the ethical sense of the readers and creating good impact on them. Dr. Alag was presented a memento and scroll of honour, with citation highlighting his over services to humanity.

[Courtesy: Raminder Deep Singh]

