

ADIDAS recognizes senior Sikh Athlete, Fauja Singh

Men in their 20s, 30s, 40s... attention please. Here's a man who says "*lambi race da ghoda wa, hali kaphi salan tak tuhanu nazar awanga.*" He's forever on the run. And never breathless. At 93, marathon man, age-defying Fauja Singh is the face of 'forever young' and has just replaced David Beckham and Laila Ali as the new poster-boy of Adidas.

This turbaned tornado from Delhi is all out to prove that "Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion." Big words by an 'old' man? Well, Fauja Singh - by his personal grit - has become the next pin-up sportstar in London for his "unbeatable energetic spirit."

Fauja gave up running between the age of 35 and 89, when his wife died. He wanted to fight his loneliness, so he ran. Then he wanted to run more. And he hasn't been able to stop running for the past five years. "The bone density in his left leg is that of a 20-year-old, and in the right one that of 50-year -old," says his trainer Harmander Singh.

Today, Fauja runs ten miles everyday. he's broken world records. He's the oldest man alive to run six marathons - London, New York, Toronto, included. Now, the man on the run tells us his Big Secret: what makes him run?" "I began running as therapy, now it's become a passion. It makes me fitter and tougher. I like the challenge of breaking records. I like going out of my house and just running onto the streets. I forget myself. I like being in control of myself and my destiny." **The secret of Fauja's health: simple food, meditation and conversation with God.**

After clinching the big deal with Adidas, Fauja's happy to be the face of sports along side Beckham, Jonny Wilkinson and Laila Ali. 'Right now, he misses India and dreams of running around India Gate and near the Golden Temple,' says Fauja's son Sukhi. For the moment, Fauja is practising for his next big marathon, when he'll turn 98. "It's the final frontier. My ultimate high."

[Courtesy: *Times of India*]

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Promotion of Mental & Physical Fitness: *Sangati Mal Akhara*

While celebrating the 500th year of *prakash* of Sri Guru Angad Dev ji, two prominent issues need to be highlighted: First, the propagation of Gurmukhi *lipi* and second, the revival of *Mal Akharas* (wrestling). As the history tells us that Sri Guru Angad Dev ji used to organize and watch *mal akharas* after the daily prayers. Even today there is a Gurudwara Mal Akhara at Khadoor Sahib, District Amritsar.

Taking a cue from this historical movement, Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, Ludhiana, has decided to revive this heritage. A *sangati mal akhara* has been organised during the 500th celebrations. An overwhelming response from *Puran Gursikh* youth and people of all ages participated in the *akhara*. The rules were simple:

- All those sporting unshorn *kesh* can participate without any consideration of age.

- The competitors were classified on the basis of weight.
- No restriction on dress, but *kurta-pyjama* with *kamarkassa* were preferred.
- Support a tight *patka* or *keski* on head that may not drop during the *akhara*. In case anybody's *patka* or *keski* drops, the whistle goes and the game is stopped.
- Maximum time limit was 120 seconds for one round. A total of three rounds for one pair were allowed.

Everybody was thrilled and uproarious after the *akhara*. Many expressed the view that it should be made at least a weekly affair in different gurudwaras. In addition, *akhara* does not mean only wrestling, rather other games and light exercises should also be included. Let all the *sangat* in the gurudwara, after Sunday morning *dewan*, should come in the open place and participate in the exercises and games. This will not only keep the body fit, rather stimulate team spirit, unity and enthusiasm among the *sangat*. Youth can be especially motivated to join this show.

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Sikh Family in USA brings “library on wheels” to Punjab*

Its called the *Pahiyanwali library sewa*, a mobile library. And it's a dream come true for Jaswant Singh, a true blue Sikh who has just retired as a librarian from a school in Michigan, USA. Jaswant certainly is full of pride when he talks to you about it. “I am happy that I will be able to utilise my experience as a librarian for the village people of my state,” he tells you.

The mobile library has been set up by ‘Anant Education and Rural Development Foundation Inc,’ Michigan. It has been set up with an investment of Rs 22 lakh. Jaswant highlights that Rs 12 lakh will be spent on it per annum to ensure that it is put to optimum use and works well too.

The library comprises about 4,000 books, and is totally secular in character, asserts Jaswant. “Libraries are secular and so is this,” he points out. The books cover a variety of subjects, viz literature, geography, history, science, religion, etc. The languages of the books has been determined on the ratio of languages spoken and read in Punjab, adds Jaswant. So 60 per cent of the books are in Punjabi, 20 per cent in Hindi and 20 per cent in English.

Sr. Jaswant Singh, who was earlier a lecturer in Malwa Training College, Ludhiana, went to Canada in mid 60s. He moved to USA in 70s and worked as a librarian there for more than 15 years.

Sr. Jaswant Singh says it was always his dream to do something for the rural, underprivileged people of his state. He regrets that the ‘Punjab Public Library Act’ is not being passed by the state government. “Under this, if any village wants to open a library, they can do so with the help of the state government, local residents and NRIs. Since October 1993, I have been urging officials of the state government to pass this Bill, but it has not been done till now.”

Dr Amarjit Singh, who is associated with the library, points out that the literacy rate in Punjab is falling, and is now lower than even in Himachal Pradesh. "Such an initiative is the need of the hour," he points out.

The name *Pahiyanwali library* has been given to it by Dr Surjit Patar, eminent poet and president of Punjabi Sahit Academy. He too feels that the service will improve the reading habits of the Punjabis.

