

In Punjab, the latest Sardars come from Bihar

Anju Agnihotri Chaba Reports from Talahn (Jalandhar): A straggly beard sprouting from the chin, yellow *saafa* on the head and a *kirpan* slung across, Vijay Singh looks every bit a devout Sikh as he greets you with a booming “Sat Sri Akal”.

He is from Kanganghat in Bihar and he is a new convert – one of the scores of Biharis who have converted to Sikhism in the cash-rich NRI belt of Doaba. It’s not just about faith but also about economics – and the respect, they say.

Thirteen years ago, when Vijay came to Jalandhar as a farm labourer, his only aim was to earn enough to feed his family back in Bihar. Today, sitting in his modest house built on 350 sq yards that he’s bought, he says how he started visiting the Talhan Gurdwara in his lonely evenings. “I can’t put it into words... *sab kuch apna apna lagne laga*,” says Vijay who speaks fluent Punjabi.

But the thought of conversion had never occurred to him until one day, in the summer of 2003, when during a dispute over Talhan Gurdwara, he found himself being turned out, of the *langar* hall by policeman who called him an outsider.

“I was shocked, for the village community and the priest used to treat me and my family as their own.”

Fifteen days later, Vijay went to Anandpur Sahib, the birthplace of the Khalsa, with his wife and three sons, and got baptised.

He admits the news did take his relatives back home by surprise, but his father was a big support.

[Courtesy: Indian Express, Mumbai]

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Commercializing “Bolé Sô Nihâl”?

Tanver Thakur report from Chandigarh: The latest film of Sunny Deol - *Jo Bole So Nihal* - could arise a major controversy if it is released with the same title. Slate for an all-India release last May, it has already drawn flak from several Sikh organisations as they felt that the producer had misused the holy slogan of the Sikh community, *Bole So Nihal*, for the film’s title. Many Sikh bodies, especially the SGPC, have taken up the issue with the producer, Rahul Rawail.

In a letter to Ms. Sharmila Tagore, chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification, the organisations have threatened to launch a series of protests if the board fails to impose a ban on the controversial film.

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