

Trust Helps Bright Students

Sr. Parmindar Singh (Noida) reports: That the Delhi-based Gurmat Prachar Trust (Regd.) has decided to provide guidance & monetary assistance to brilliant students from economically hard-pressed families who are keen to make a career in the IAS and Defence Services of India.

Chairman of the Trust, (Retd.). Maj. Gen. I.S. Sethi, said the Trust has decided, in a modest way, to help such brilliant students for the competitive examinations conducted by UPSC.

Candidates, both boys and girls, will be selected on the basis of their academic results, percentage of marks obtained and the financial position of their families. The monthly income of candidates' family, it has been decided, should not exceed Rs. 20,000 for this purpose, Gen. Sethi said.

To start with selected candidates will shortly be sponsored in reputed coaching centres, for the next civil and defence services examinations, located in Delhi. In future, the Gurmat Trust plans to provide these facilities to students in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, etc. Interested students can refer to website: www.youngsikhleaders.org for details.

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Delhi youth becomes MasterCard's chief

Chidanand Rajghatta reports: An entirely India-educated financial pundit climbed a world corporate pinnacle, last April, with MasterCard Inc, the ubiquitous financial company, naming Pune-born, Delhi-educated IIM-Ahmedabad alum Ajay Singh Banga as its CEO.

MasterCard's announcement about, elevating Banga, who is a turbaned Sikh, came the same day Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the US for the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington DC.

Banga was born in Khadki, outside Pune, where his father, an army officer, was posted. He grew up and schooled across India, successively in Secunderabad, Jalandhar, Delhi, Hyderabad and in Shimla, where he finished his schooling. He rejected an army career his father was keen he pursue and instead later took a BA in Economics Honours from Delhi University and later an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

In that sense, he is an entirely India-minted executive who has reached the top of an international company. Banga started his career at Nestle and joined Citigroup in 1996 as head of marketing in India for the consumer business. Incidentally, his brother M S Banga is the former chairman of Hindustan Lever Ltd.

In 2000, Ajay Singh was promoted to head Citi Financial and the US consumer assets division. In 2002 he took over the retail bank in North America - his first stint in the US - and in 2005 he was named to head Citigroup's international consumer-banking and finance business.

He moved to Hong Kong in early 2008 after being named to oversee all of the bank's businesses in Asia, before returning to US last year to join MasterCard.

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Malay Sikh writes largest Guru Granth Sahib

A 73-year old Malaysian Sikh has completed his fourth handwritten copy of 1,430 page Guru Granth Sahib, which could be the largest and heaviest in the world.

Jaswant Singh Khosa's handwritten fourth copy of the Guru Granth Sahib weighs 84 kg and is 91.44 cm in length and 66.04 cm wide, breaking his previous 'Malaysia Book of Records' for his second copy which weighed 45 kg and was 76.2 cm long and 48.26 cm wide in 2004, a media report said. "It is a labour of love. The (latest) book is 182.9 cm long when it opens up. I wrote for 14 hours a day. It was worth it," he told the 'Star' newspaper.

It took Khosa 14 months to complete his fourth copy which he donated to a Sikh temple in the US. The daily said a gurdwara in Amritsar had replaced its 200-year-old holy book and was currently using Khosa's second hand-written copy.

When I start writing a page, I shut everything out and write continuously until I am done...." said Khosa who planned to make a submission to the Guinness Book of World Records.

[Courtesy: *Times of India*]

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Pride of the Nation

A portrait of Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh was unveiled by Air Chief Marshal PV Naik at the Akash Officers' Mess, New Delhi, last month.

The 92-year-old Marshal Arjan Singh was appointed to the five-star rank in 2002. He is the only armed forces officer in the honorary rank since the death of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw in June 2008.

Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1944 (for his services in the Second World War as a pilot for the Royal Indian Air Force), Singh was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1965.

The portrait was painted by Sanjay Bhattacharyya whose portraits of former Presidents are displayed at Rashtrapati Bhavan and in Parliament.

