

Sr. Tarlochan Singh, MP in Nankana Sahib

I was in Pakistan recently and availed of the opportunity to have Darshan of Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib. There is a beautiful double road from Lahore to Sheikhpura and same leads to Faislabad (Old Lyalpur). At 50 km from Sheikhpura a road diverts to Nankana Sahib. This 20 km stretch is not so good and if it is done like GT road the entire distance from Lahore to Nankana Sahib could be covered in 2 hours. Chief Minister Punjab (Pakistan) has made Nankana Sahib as the District headquarter' and has promised to upgrade the road.

But will these facilities make the most sacred place humming with activities? I pose this question before the Sikhs now settled all over the world. While praying everyday, we seek God blessing to see Nankana Sahib, a place where every Sikh could go freely and have the privilege of doing sewa of the shrine. What does this mean? We cannot dream of Nankana Sahib as a free territory. It shall remain part of Pakistan. We can have only yatras, with permission of Pakistan Govt. With this ground reality, we should think of some innovative plans. At present only a few migrants from Afghanistan and Peshawar are residing in the city. Gurdwara is almost empty except when Jathas go there on pilgrimage.

I suggest we should prepare a list of retired couples or senior citizens who are willing to stay for longer period, may be three months, in Nankana Sahib. Pakistan Govt. may grant normal tourist visa for 6 months to them and we should prepare a roster so that year round we have at least 380 to 500 couples or persons in Gurdwara premises. We will have a proper Sangat every day to perform all ceremonies and make it a proper working Gurdwara. There are good living rooms in newly built *serais* where these persons could be accommodated. SGPC may fund the *langar* and other necessities in Nankana Sahib. Worldwide call may be given for enrolment of persons and Pakistans Govt. may be requested for grant of visas.

One organization SGPC - Delhi Committee - Nankana Sahib Foundation may be entrusted with this programme and Sikh from all parts of the world may register their names, along with other suggestions, for making this plan properly workable.

* * * * *

The Sikh Way to Celebrate End of Chilly Winter

Gurdwara Sacvi, Richmond, Virginia, USA, celebrated Lohri last January, with Rahras, and Kirtan for one hour, and Langar. Sangat was about 150 strong. I felt very happy that at least these people did not pass time consuming liquor. It was wonderful celebration - Paath, Kirtan and Langar.

After religious celebration, Sangat got out to enjoy fire. It was beautiful fire with it flames leaping to eight feet. Occasionally, someone threw Reori and Chirvae into fire. This was fun. Ladies and gentlemen danced to the tune. It was an enjoyment. I went home very happy.

Now, Lohri is not any religious, but is a seasonal and social celebration. Even though Hindus attach religious significance to it, but the majority do not know as to what it is all about. But Lohri Day generally coincides with day when Guru Angad Dev bestowed Gur-Gaddi on Guru Amar Das Ji.

* * * * *

Dr. Manmohan Singh is Man of the Year

The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh is the CNN-IBN Indian of the year for his all-round performance. The awards were instituted in partnership with Hindustan Times.

