

Turban Trouble again? Ottawa admits Discrimination

A Toronto based report says: Authorities in Canada will issue an apology and travel documents to three Sikh children whose passport applications were rejected because they were wearing religious headgear, an official said.

Passport Canada will also offer remedial training to passport staff to ensure a similar incident doesn't happen in the future, spokesman Fabien Lengelle was quoted as saying.

Lakhwinder Kaur Sidhu had mailed passport applications to Ottawa for herself and her husband along with their three children, Gurleen Kaur, 9, Ravneet Kaur, 7, and Gurmant Singh, 4, on May 15. All five had included photos in which they were wearing their religious headgear.

Although Sidhu and her husband, Hardip, got their passports, the children's applications were denied because their photos did not meet the specifications, the department said, as the wearing of a "head covering is unacceptable." The incident prompted The World Sikh Organization to write to foreign affairs ministry asking that the "misunderstanding on the part of the local official" be corrected.

"It is resolved," Lengelle was quoted as saying by *The Vancouver Sun*. "As soon as we became aware of the issue, we called the parents and offered corrective measures." Sidhu's son was wearing a *patka*, while the girls were wearing head scarves. Sidhu said her husband was wearing a turban, while she was wearing a *chunni*.

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British peer held for abusing Sikh cabbie Marquees called the Driver a 'Hindu'

London: A British has been arrested for 'racially' abusing a Sikh taxi driver by calling him a 'Hindu' in Oxfordshire, some 90 kms from the British capital, a senior police official said.

The Marquess of Blandford, James Spencer Churchill, was arrested following a complaint by Sikh cabbie Davinder Singh who had driven to pick him up from his farmhouse for an appearance at a court, the *Daily Mail* reported, quoting the officer as saying. The revelation comes just days after the wayward aristocrat faced Oxford Crown Court for an unprovoked road rage attack. However, the 51-year-old peer, the son of the 11th Duke of Marlborough, is out on bail pending further probe.

"When I saw the Marquess of Blandford on the order, I was thinking he would be a polite gentleman but he is just a racist and there is no excuse for that," the daily quoted the 46 year-old taxi driver as saying. "It was just unbelievable. I can put up with rudeness but not racism. I was having trouble finding his house, so I called him up. He not only abused me on the phone but also called me a Hindu when I arrived," he alleged.

However, Spencer-Churchill's solicitor refused to comment on the allegations. The peer, a father-of-two with a long history of drug abuse is currently being treated at The Priory. He has frequently flirted with controversy and was largely disinherited by his father who disapproved of his exuberant way of living.

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Anti-Sikh riots victim, whose father was burnt alive, is now MP minister

Milind Ghatwai report from Bhopal (MP):

It was a minor Cabinet expansion by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Shiraj Singh

Chauhan, last August, except for one detail: when Sr. Harendrajit Singh 'Babbu' walked up to take the oath of office, he probably became the only victim of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots to become a minister in the country.

The Jabalpur (South) MLA's father Sr. Sadhu Singh was burnt alive by a mob in Nainpur village near Mandla, a day after then prime minister Indira Gandhi was shot dead by her bodyguards on October 31, 1984.

The anti-Sikh violence that swept the country following the assassination saw a murderous mob gather outside their family house. "We could not even find the ashes," the 47-year old Minister said.

"They chased him and burnt him in the wooden deport owned by the family," Harendrajit Singh's uncle Manmohan Singh says. Four other Sikh families had their houses burnt down, while the only gurdwara in the area was razed.

"My father was a Jan Sangh member and the attackers included only Congress workers," says Singh. He alleges that his father became a target because he followed a different ideology.

In the wake of his father's death, H. Singh and his family moved to Jabalpur, where they felt safe because of the large population of Sikhs in and around the town. Since then, the community, whose number was runs into lakhs in the state, has again spread to several major town.

Its growing numbers was, infact, one of the main reasons why the Sikh community staked claim for a ministerial birth. "We had been trying for three years," admits a Sikh leader on the condition of anonymity. Recently the state government announced subsidy for Sikh pilgrims travelling to Nankana Saheb in Pakistan.