

Bi-centenary of Baba Banda Bahadur

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* Excerpted from the Rajya Sabha debate.

SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH* (Haryana): Mr. Deputy Chairman:

India has a great tradition of honouring the national heroes and is always proud of paying homage to their memory, especially on historic days. It is a known fact that during the long foreign rule over India, it was great hero Shivaji Maharaj who established a sovereign rule over a territory in Maharashtra in 1660 AD. We have so much respect for his deeds and have statues all over the country.

After him, the second hero who had the courage of overthrowing the Mughal rule in Punjab is Baba Banda Singh who started his journey of victory from Nanded in Maharashtra and entered Punjab in 1709 AD. He was blessed by his master Guru Gobind Singhji in Nanded and was bestowed with armour by the Guru.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur defeated the Mughal Governor of Sirhind on 12th May, 1710 and was declared the sovereign ruler of Punjab. He established his capital near Nahan, now in Himachal Pradesh, and built a fort named Lohgarh. At that time, the entire agricultural land was owned by the Mughal Emperor and the tillers were treated as *Muzares*. It was to the credit of Baba Banda Bahadur that, in a proclamation on 27th May, 1710 AD he made all the tillers of the land as owners. This historic order changed the whole economy of Punjab and brought jubilation to the entire farming community.

He died later on as a martyr, the details of which are recorded by the British travellers who were witness to that gruesome torture.

I request that the Government of India should decide to commemorate the historic victory of Banda Bahadur, 200 years ago, by forming a national committee to honour the memory of this great warrior and set up suitable memorials at historical places in India, and also produce literature on his life and deeds.

