

## **University of Hawai'i honours Jalnidh Kaur, age 14**

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, US in association with the East West Center has awarded Certificate of Excellence to an Indian student, Jalnidh Kaur. The class X student of Guru Nanak Public School, Sarabha Nagar, Ludhiana, participated in "VALUES FOR LIFE" International Essay Contest, held under the auspices of Polynesian Voyaging Society. She has been granted the title of "Junior Fellow Asia Pacific Leadership Programme". The awards were presented by Dr Nainoa Thompson, Executive Director, Polynesian Voyaging Society and a member of the Board of Regents for the University of Hawai'i.

Out of nine participants from different countries across the globe in the age group of 14 – 18 years, only four participants were selected. Jalnidh Kaur was the only winner from India, while the others were from Bhutan and United States of America. Also, at age 14, she was the youngest winner.

Jalnidh Kaur was invited to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific Educational Conference at Honolulu, Hawai'i from July 9 – 12, 2007. The winners presented their essays on world peace to the distinguished delegates of the conference and also answered their questions. The topic of her essay was "Nurturing the Plant of Peace".

The Hawai'i Department of Education hosted a dinner in honour of the winners. The airfare, local hospitality and registration of the winners and their guardians for the prestigious conference of Asia Pacific region was sponsored by the East West Center in collaboration with Nisei Veterans Endowed Forum Series, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Hawai'i.

In her essay, Jalnidh Kaur emphasised that for ushering peace in the world, man will have to be at peace with himself at first. Quoting the famous saying of UNESCO, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds that defences of peace must be constructed", she underlined that it's the people who make violence and we need the people to make peace. Only a bond of spirituality can link the entire mankind.

Jalnidh Kaur attributes her singular achievement to the Grace of Almighty and continuous guidance, support and inspiration of her teachers at Guru Nanak Public School and parents. A throughout topper in the school and deeply devoted to spirituality, Jalnidh can recite by heart 18 *banis* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Indian community at Honolulu also hosted a dinner in honour of Jalnidh Kaur who they admitted has brought laurels to India . The local TV channels KHON2 and KGMB covered the interviews of the winning students prominently at prime times.

## **1984 riots: Life term for 3**

Last March, terming the killing of innocent people for communal reasons "an indelible blot on civilisation", a court in Delhi sentenced three people to life imprisonment on Thursday for lynching three members of a family during the anti-Sikh riots in 1984.

"The killing of innocent people because of communal reasons is an indelible blot in the history of human civilisation," said additional sessions judge Rajender Kumar Shastri terming the carnage "a virtual holocaust in independent India".

Shastri, however, rejected the prosecution's contention that the case falls in the "rarest of rare" category and warranted the death sentence for the convicts, Harprasad Bharadwaj, R.P. Tiwari and Jagdish Giri. The three were held guilty on Monday for killing three members of a family, including a head constable of Delhi Police, in the riots that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Immediately after the sentence was pronounced, Tiwari shouted slogans glorifying the former Prime Minister, prompting security personnel to take him out of the courtroom. Tiwari

and Giri also said they were not given a fair trial and even asked that they be given the death penalty.

“More excruciating were the post-hoc incidents (after the assassination of Indira Gandhi) in which thousands of innocent citizens were butchered merely because they took birth in the community to which the said bodyguards belonged,” the judge said in his 22-page judgement, referring to the former PM’s killing by her Sikh bodyguards.

[Courtesy: *Hindustan Times*]

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## **International Sikh Youth Camp, Dehradun**

**Commendation from  
Sr. Tarlochan Singh, M.P.**

It was very encouraging for me to visit Dehradun and personally watch hundreds of Sikh Youth from India and abroad attending the 66<sup>th</sup> Sikh International Youth Camp. These camps are regularly being organized by International Institute of Gurmat Studies (IIGS), based in California. The camp was held in the campus of Guru Ram Das Academy, located in the foot-hills of Mussoorie. The ten-day camp is packed with activities, and excellent arrangements for boarding and lodging. The organizers are fully aware of the need of providing scientific knowledge to the youth on teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. They bring awareness among them about the universal Sikh teachings.

The IIGS is doing a great service in building a strong and dedicated Sikh Community internationally. They invite good number of speakers, this time I found Kiranjot Kaur from Amritsar, Giani Esher Singh from Hyderabad, Sardarni Gurpreet Kaur from Los Angeles, Avleen Singh from Delhi and Jatinder Singh from Amritsar. I was highly impressed with the in-depth knowledge of the campers during the ‘question-answer’ session, and have come satisfied that such camps need to be popularized. I was told that the next camp by the IIGS is being organized in California from 12-18<sup>th</sup> August, this year. The camp is free from any political bias, devoting full time on socio-religious issues.

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## **Dera chief charged with rape & murder**

Tushar Srivastava reported from New Delhi, on July 31, 07: The Central Bureau of Investigation has charged Baba Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, the head of the Dera Saccha Sauda sect, under sections relating to rape, criminal intimidation and conspiracy to murder in three separate chargesheets. The CBI filed the chargesheets before the special CBI judge, Ambala, on July 30. A senior agency official said the judge had summoned the accused on August 31, 2007.

One chargesheet relates to the rape of a former *sadhvi* (woman disciple) at the Dera. Two other supplementary chargesheets relate to the murder of Dera manager Ranjit Singh and the murder of a Sirsa-based journalist, Ramchandra Chatrapati. The CBI had taken up the cases at Punjab and Haryana High Court’s behest. The high court had pulled up the CBI in April for investigation into the cases. The matter will come up in high court on Wednesday. CBI officials said they had concrete evidence against the Dera chief. The CBI charged him with sexually exploiting *sadhvis* after tracking down two victims. Their statements have been recorded before a magistrate under Section 164 CrPC, which makes them admissible as evidence. The sexual exploitation came to light after an anonymous complaint reached the CBI, the NHRC, the home minister and other agencies. The high court asked the sessions judge, Sirsa, to enquire into the matter. After the enquiry, the court referred the matter to the CBI, which registered a case against the Baba and unknown persons.

A *sadhvi* had written the letter telling how the Dera chief sexually exploited her. The letter subsequently became the FIR. The *sadhvi* said she was asked to go into his room late one night. The Baba, she wrote, was sitting on the bed. A pornographic film was playing on the TV and a revolver was lying near the bed. The Dera chief then raped her and the rapes continued for the next three years. The *sadhvi* also said 35 to 40 other women were exploited like her. CBI officials traveled to various states and tracked down the *sadhvis* who left the Dera. "We interviewed over 150 *sadhvis*," the official said.

[Courtesy: *Hindustan Times*]

