



Vishav(World) Sikh News



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Monthly Newsletter of World Sikh Council, America Region

A Representative Body of Sikh Institutions of America under the Patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib
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Member Institutions

Sikh Missionary Center, Phoenix, AZ
Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
Center of Sikh Studies, Santa Anna, CA
Colorado Singh Sabha, Englewood, CO
Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
New England Sikh Study Circle, Boston, MA
Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
Sikh Research and Educational Center, Chesterfield, MO
Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
Garden State Sikh Association, Warren, NJ
Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
Sikh Cultural & Educational Society of Western New York, Williamsville, NY
Sikh Forum of Long Island, Long Island, NY
Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
Guru Gobind Singh Society, Bedford, OH
Guru Nanak Foundation of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX
Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
Gurdwara Singh Sabha of North Texas, Balch Springs, TX

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

For the sake of uniformity and to satisfy the requirements of our revised constitution, we shall be calling ourselves “World Sikh Council, America Region”. All members of Vishav Sikh Council – USA will automatically become members of the World Sikh Council, America region with the exception of those who joined VSC-USA after November 21, 1997. These organizations will be required to pay an additional amount of \$250 to become a member, as they joined the Vishav Sikh Council – USA after the new constitution went into effect.

Siri Akal Takhat Sahib recently finalized the following executive committee for the America region of the World Sikh Council, which includes all the five members approved by our member Gurdwaras:

Sardar Ujagar Singh, White Plains, NY	Member
Sardar Jasbir Singh, Chino Hills, CA	Member
Dr. Amarjit Singh, Buffalo, NY	Member
Sardarni Parminder Kaur, Raleigh, NC	Member
Sardar Jasbir Singh, Fullerton, CA	Member
Sardar Mewa Singh, Plainsboro, NJ	Member
Sardar Karnail Singh Khalsa, Union City, CA	Member
Sardar Tarlochan Singh, San Jose, CA	Member
Sardar Gurtej Singh, Fremont, CA	Member
Sardar Yadavindera Singh, New Jersey, NJ	Member
Sardar Balvinder Singh, New York, NY	Treasurer
Dr. Ranbir Singh, Dublin, OH	Secretary General
Sardar Kuldeep Singh, Toledo, OH	Chairman

As per our objective number (vii), our purpose is to remove any names which indicate our caste, creed or family affiliations, therefore the last names are removed from the names of our executive members. At this time I would also like to impress upon all the Sikh Institutions of USA to join the World Sikh Council, America Region and come under the umbrella of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib. A membership form for joining World Sikh Council – America Region is enclosed. Please complete it and mail to WSC-AR, 6863 Cloister Road, Toledo, Ohio 43617.



In the service of Guru Panth – Kuldeep Singh

WSC-AR Appeals for Supporting People's Commission

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) appealed to Sikh institutions of USA to support the work of the People's Commission in Punjab through a letter dated August 18. The American Region has also set up a Human Rights Fund to collect donations for the commission. Sikhs living in the US are urged to contribute generously for this noble cause. The entire amount of this fund will be sent to the World Sikh Council and will be solely spent for this worthwhile cause. Checks for the Human Rights Fund should be made payable to World Sikh Council – America Region and mailed to 6863 Cloister Road, Toledo, Ohio 43617. Questions regarding the fund can be e-mailed to vsc-usa@unforgettable.com or by calling Sardar Kuldeep Singh (Chairman, America Region) at (419) 841-7178.

WSC-AR Requests Input from Member Institutions on WSC Think-Tank

The Chairman of the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR), Sardar Kuldeep Singh, wrote a letter to all member institutions of WSC-AR and executive committee members on August 25 asking for their input on the proposed think-tank to be constituted by World Sikh Council.

Technicolor Company Allows Sikh to Wear Kripaan

Sardar Mukhtiar Singh of Canton, Michigan was allowed to wear Kripaan on August 24, 1998 after a detailed discussion with Sardar Kuldeep Singh, Chairman of the American region of World Sikh Council. Sardar Kuldeep Singh explained the significance and importance of Kripaan in Sikhism and showed the court decision in favor of the Kripaan in Cincinnati, Ohio. Mr. Patrick Goss, Director of Human Resources immediately called a meeting of all the prominent officials of Technicolor and issued instructions to them to reimburse

Sardar Mukhtiar Singh his lost pay and allow all Amritdhari Sikhs in the company to wear Kripaan.

US Congressmen Ask President Clinton to Help Four Sikhs Arrested by Indian Police

According to The Washington Times (8/4/98), a bipartisan group of at least 32 US legislators wrote a joint letter to President Clinton on July 31 urging him to get involved in protecting four Sikh human rights activists arrested in India last month under false charges. Congresswoman Constance Morella also protested against the arrest of the human rights activists and wrote a separate letter to President Clinton dated July 30 saying, "I hope your administration will urge the Indian authorities to undertake an independent investigation of these cases."

According to Bulletin's Frontrunner (8/4/98), the US Embassy in India has made contact with the Indian authorities and is monitoring the developments.

Amnesty International Issues Urgent Actions on Arrest of Four Sikh Human Rights Activists

On July 24 and August 12, Amnesty International issued urgent action appeals on the recent arrests of four Sikh human right workers by Punjab police. One of those arrested included Sardar Jaspal Singh Dhillon who worked with Jaswant Singh Khalra, a well-known human rights activist who disappeared in September of 1995 after his arrest after exposing the mass cremation of unidentified Sikh bodies by Punjab police. Others arrested include Rajinder Singh Neeta, Daljit Singh Rajput, and Kulbir Kaur Dhami, all human rights activists.

President Clinton Acknowledges Sikh Audience

President Bill Clinton while addressing the National Forum on Social Security in Albuquerque, New Mexico on July 28 acknowledged the Sikhs present in the audience in his

talk delivered at the meeting and published by M2Presswire dated 7/28/98.

A Story of Courage: Sikh Youth Rescues Three, Dies Himself

Mandeep Singh, a 21-year old Sikh, who rescued three fellow truckers from a two-rig accident on a Texas highway, was killed when a third truck crashed into the accident site engulfing him in flames on July 17. Religious services were held in Brampton, Canada in memory of the Sikh hero. He was eulogized as a young man who made the whole Sikh community proud because he did things for others before himself. One of the persons whom Mandeep rescued from the accident was Teri Hafenbrack. She said that she could not recall whose hands pulled her out of the wreck seconds before it exploded, but wants to cry every time she thinks of how Singh lost his life. Teri remarked, "I thank him with all of my heart. He died a hero." The Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien wrote a letter of condolence to the bereaved family. (Edmonton Sun, 7/26/98, Toronto Star, 7/26/98)

Sikh Youth Camp Profiled by NYT

The New York Times (7/18/98) provided front-page coverage to the Sikh youth camp at Lohgarh retreat. The article profiled the activities of the camp, several of the participants and highlighted the need for Sikh youth camps in the US.

Sikh Working to Save Rare Falcons

Alan Parrot Singh, a Sikh living in the US, is on a crusade to save the rare Mongolian falcon from extinction. He has been slapped with two libel suits by the Mongolian government for alleging that the government had officially sanctioned the smuggling of the falcon. The efforts of Alan Singh to save these rare birds were highlighted by Wall Street Journal (7/27/98), Greenwire (7/27/98), and New York Times (7/27/98).

Punjabi Sammelan Organized by Dhaliwal in Milwaukee

According to a published report in the Tribune (8/3/98), a three-day International Punjabi Sammelan was being organized from August 28 to August 30 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. According to the newspaper, the Sammelan was being organized by Darshan Singh Dhaliwal and a number of organizations with active participation of Sikhs living abroad in connection with the 300th anniversary celebrations of the birth of the Khalsa. The Sammelan was planned for three days and thereafter four days had been planned for sightseeing. According to the newspaper, one week's boarding, lodging and transportation would be provided by the chief host Darshan Singh Dhaliwal's family. Earlier, Mr. Dhaliwal had organized the 5th World Punjabi Conference July 19-21 at Milwaukee, which had been criticized by several Sikh organizations in US.

Akal Takhat Chief Favors Sikh Tribunal

Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh, Jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib, is reported to be in favor of setting up a five-member tribunal consisting of retired Sikh judges and intellectuals to resolve disputes at Gurdwaras and Sikh institutions. According to Tribune (8/21/98), in a communication to Sardar Surinder Singh Hansra of Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Virginia, Singh Sahib said that Sikhs should not take any dispute to any court of law but refer it to the proposed tribunal. If a party had any reservation about a judgement of the tribunal, an appeal could be made to Akal Takhat. While the process would help bring Sikhs on one platform, it would also help resolve their problems expeditiously. Singh Sahib also stated that he would write to all Sikh organizations and sects to give a serious thought to his suggestion. Singh Sahib appreciated the formation of the managing committee of the Gurdwara Singh Sabha in Virginia and its efforts to resolve all issues by itself.

Council of Khalistan

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of Council of Khalistan testified

before the 54th session of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances in New York on July 16. Dr. Aulakh updated the working group on human rights violations in Punjab by the Indian government.

The Council of Khalistan held a protest rally on August 15 outside the residence of India's Ambassador in Washington, DC. Many demonstrators wore black to symbolize the fact that Indian Independence day is a black day for the Sikhs. Demonstrators from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC, and Virginia attended the protest rally.

The Council issued a press release on August 25 in which it alleged that groups of unidentified people going into villages in Faridkot district of Punjab and murdering villagers were agents of India's Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

On August 26, the Council issued a press release in which it condemned Badal's trading of Udham Singh Nagar for an extension of Punjab police chief, and torture of Sardar Jai Inder Singh (nephew of Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann).

The Council also issued a press release on August 22 denouncing the World Sikh Council for allegedly naming several pro-Indian government Sikhs to its think-tank.

On September 2, the Council of Khalistan appealed to the Khalsa Panth to support Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh, Jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib since the Council felt that the institution of the Akal Takhat was under siege.

An appeal to the Khalsa Panth was issued by the Council on September 4 to support the People's Commission. The appeal pointed out that the attacks on the commission by BJP, Congress and CPI parties showed who was behind the Sikh genocide and had deepened the wounds of the Sikh nation.

The Council of Khalistan is leading the peaceful democratic and non-violent struggle to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation. More information on the activities of the Council is available at <http://www.khalistan.com>

Congressional Update

Representative Edolphus Towns of New York expressed concerns in the House of Representatives on September 9 about the attempts by the Punjab Government to try to shut down the People's Commission for exposing genocide in Punjab. (Congressional Record, 9/9/98)

On September 15, Representative Dan Burton of Indiana advised the House of Representatives that the People's commission in Punjab must be preserved and that the efforts of the political leaders in Punjab to shut down the commission were very disturbing. (Congressional Record, 9/15/98)

Live Divaan Broadcast over Internet Held

The Chardikala Sikh Community Center organized a live broadcast of its monthly Divaan on its web site on the morning of September 20. The site can be accessed at <http://www.gurunanak.com>

SMART Issues Call for Action

The Sikh Media Action & Resource Task Force (SMART), a member of the broad religious based coalition in California that is the sponsor of California's Religious Freedom Protection Act (Bill AB1617) has issued a call for action to Sikhs in California to write to Governor Pete Wilson to sign the bill into law. The bill has already cleared the legislature with bipartisan support but Governor Wilson may veto it. The complete text of the petition can be accessed at <http://www.sikhmedia.org/jakaras.html>

Judge Approves Gurdwara in San Jose

The San Francisco Chronicle (8/28/98) reported that a Santa Clara Superior Court judge has dismissed a legal challenge to the Gurdwara Sahib project in San Jose's eastern foothills

of the Evergreen district. The Evergreen Citizen's Coalition had opposed the construction of the 94,000 square foot Gurdwara Sahib. It is now hoped that the Coalition will work with the Sikh community instead of pursuing more legal action.

The Image of Osama Bin Laden

The Desert News published from Salt Lake City, Utah (8/27/98) published an article following the front-page news story and picture of Osama Bin Laden, which expressed the concerns of Sardar Karan Singh, a 25-year old audience analyst at Birmingham Young University. Karan stated that he wore a turban and unshorn hair like Osama Bin Laden and feared that he would be discriminated against. "I am not an Arab. I'm not even a Muslim. But the honor code of my faith, Sikhism, requires all disciples to wear unshorn hair and all men to wear a turban. Which means when you see me on campus or at the local grocery store, chances are I'll look remotely like that red-eyed, venom-spewing zealot about whom we've lately read so much," said Karan. "They could look at me and say - He is one of Bin Laden's cronies. That worries me to death." Karan also does not want Arabs or Muslims looked down upon because one fanatic follower apparently decided to finance the dissemination of terror. He said, "Every time a dastardly act against innocent humans is committed, let us not assume the guilty are Arabs or Muslims. As was proven in the Oklahoma City bombings, terror is not the monopoly of any religion or race. Fortunately, neither is love and tolerance."

Shooting Death at Florida Gurdwara Sahib

The Sun-Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale, Florida (8/26/98) reported a shooting incident at the Gurdwara Sahib of the Sikh Society of Florida on August 23. Paramjit Singh Pannu drove to the Gurdwara Sahib after the close of the Divaan and shot to death Gurtej Dhaliwal and injured Hakikat Singh and Davinder Arora, and then fatally shot himself. Gurdwara members said that many of the same people will be

at Dhaliwal's and Pannu's funeral. Following the incident, the Miami Herald published a chronology of Sikh traditions in US on 8/25/98.

Interfaith Activities

The following inter-religious activities and events with Sikh participation were reported recently:

- About 2,000 people gathered in Phoenix, Arizona on August 20 to celebrate "Voices of Faith: Enjoying your neighbor's religious sounds and feelings." The event was organized by The Interfaith Action Coalition of Arizona. (Arizona Republic, 8/21/98)
- A multi-faith Blessing Ceremony was held in Edmonton, Canada as a part of the North American Interfaith Network's Connect '98 Conference on August 1. The ceremony was attended by over 3,000 people from 10 countries who joined hands as a small step towards peace between the religions of the world. The annual conference of the interfaith organization was held in Edmonton from August 2 to 4. (Edmonton Sun, 8/1/98, 8/2/98)
- The Interfaith Association of Central Ohio held a public forum on "Teaching World Religions in Public Schools" on September 17 in Columbus, Ohio. The Columbus Dispatch (9/18/98) published an article on the event which included representatives from the Columbus Public Schools, and American Civil Liberties Union.
- California's Religious Freedom Protection Act (Bill AB1617) has passed the California legislature with broad bipartisan support but Governor Wilson may veto it. According to UPI, leaders of several religious and civil liberties groups have urged Governor Wilson to sign the bill. The bill is a response to the US Supreme Court's declaration last year that the federal government couldn't impose its own religious freedom law on states.
- The National Conference, a Chicago based interfaith national

organization was profiled in the Sun-Sentinel (8/3/98). The web site of the organization contains information on an interfaith calendar which includes 14 faith traditions. The web page for the National Conference can be accessed at <http://www.nccj.org>

- The work of the Interfaith Service Bureau in Sacramento, California was highlighted by the Sacramento Bee on 8/1/98. The organization is 80 years old and operates out of an old fire station building. The organization is composed of Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh representatives.
- The Torbay Council of Bay area in Britain is setting up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to offer authoritative advice on provision of religious education, including teaching methods, materials, teacher training, and collective worship. The group is made up of people from several faiths. (Herald Express, 7/23/98)
- Representatives of many religions joined together on August 30 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to observe a day of prayer and meditation for economic recovery and world peace.

Sikh Center of Orange County

The Internet web site of the Sikh Center of Orange County in Santa Anna, California was profiled in the Orange County Register of 8/9/98. The web site offers information of the Sikh faith, daily news and Sikh Radio using Real Audio. The web site can be accessed at <http://www.sikhcenter.org>

Sikhs Attend Democratic State Convention in Connecticut

Sardar Amarjit Singh Buttar, of Vernon, Connecticut, attended the state democratic convention July 18 and 19 in Hartford to nominate candidates for statewide offices in the upcoming statewide elections in November 1998. His sons, Gursimrit Singh and Angad Singh accompanied him to the state convention.

People's Commission

The People's Commission held its first sitting from August 8 to 10 in Chandigarh. Due to the denial of space at different premises (including UT Guest House, Kisan Bhawan and Guru Gobind Singh Foundation), the meeting was held in the convention hall of Sector 34 Gurdwara Sahib at Chandigarh. According to the Tribune (8/9/98), despite the heat and humidity, a large number of aggrieved people are reported to have come from all over Punjab to put before the commission tales of "torture and disappearances." Supreme Court advocate, Ms. Indira Jai Singh, made the opening statement before the commission. The commission took up 21 cases on its second day of the court and issued notices to 10 Punjab police officials. The summoned police officials were required to file their replies before the commission by the first week of October. More than 90 cases of human rights violations by Punjab police officials were reported to have been taken up by the commission during its three-day meeting and it issued notices to over 70 Punjab police officers.

Some of the prominent cases that came up for hearing at its first sitting included those of abductions and subsequent disappearances of a 19-year-old motor mechanic, Kuldip Singh, of Khamanon in Fatehgarh Sahib; of 20-year-old Kuldip Singh from Morinda in Ropar; of a 25-year-old boy Gurmukh Singh of Manupur in Samrala in Ludhiana district; of a 29-year-old Harvinder Singh of Dhanetha village in Samana; of 28-year-old handicapped boy Darshan Singh of Samrala; of 48-year-old Sewa Singh of Gharuan in Kharar; of 45-year-old Gurmit Singh of Kharar and of 50-year-old Subedar Charan Singh of Goshan village in Samrala. Besides, alleged custodial deaths of 35-year-old Kiranpal Singh of Mohali; of 50-year-old Ajit Singh of Bhajauli village in Kharar; of 35-year-old Gurmel Singh of Morinda; of 24-year-old Swaran Singh of Bhambhri village in

Khamanon and extra-judicial killings of 21-year-old Harminder Singh of Shapur village in Morinda; of 28-year-old Kuldeep Singh of Manakmajra in Ropar district; of 31-year-old Kharar Sugar mill worker Jaswant Singh and of 22-year-old Karora Singh of Morinda. (Indian Express, 8/10/98)

The commission also received at least 300 additional complaints of human rights violations during its first sitting in Chandigarh with a total of approximately 3,200 received till date and it will take up some of these cases at its next meeting. The next sitting of the commission will be held starting October 23 in Ludhiana for three days.

Various human rights and civil liberties organizations, Human Rights Wing of the Shromani Akali Dal, Shromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) led by Simranjit Singh Mann, Youth Akali Dal, Dal Khalsa International, Sikh Vichar Manch, and Marxist Communist Party of India have declared support for the People's Commission. The Akali Chief Minister of Punjab, Prakash Singh Badal declared his opposition to the People's Commission on September 7 while speaking to newsmen at Swamipur village near Ropar. Badal is reported to have said that there was no need to set up the People's Commission when the Punjab Human Rights Commission was there to look into complaints regarding human rights violations (Tribune 9/8/98). The World Sikh Council (WSC), Punjab Human Rights Organization (PHRO), Movement Against State Repression (MASR), and Human Rights Organization (HRO) have taken exception to Badal's opposition to functioning of the People's Commission. Justice Kuldip Singh, President of World Sikh Council, responded by saying, "Needless to say human rights violations on such a large scale cannot be pushed under the carpet and have to be investigated in public interest by an independent forum." He further added, "the Chief

Minister should own the People's Commission or constitute a commission under the Commission of Enquiry Act or under the executive powers of the state." (Tribune, 9/9/98)

The Advocate General of Punjab, Punjab Police, Congress Party, Communist Party of India (CPI), Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and Janata Dal have criticized the functioning of the People's Commission. Several leaders of these political parties have asked that the commission be banned. A public interest litigation (PIL) petition was filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court by Advocate Sudarshan Goel on September 4 seeking to restrain the People's Commission from conducting its proceedings (Tribune, 9/5/98). Earleir, the Punjab police chief, P.C. Dogra had said on August 16, "We are seriously contemplating to move the Punjab and Haryana High Court as an extra-judicial body is issuing notices to police officers. The commission has no legal sanctity and the police officers have no option but to ignore and not to respond to these notices. The police chief admitted that although there was no legal sanction, the People's Commission would have some social acceptability as it was headed by a former high court judge. The police chief added that its report would provide voluminous material for militants based abroad to whip up anti-India, anti-Punjab police propaganda. (Times of India, 8/17/98, Indian Express, 9/1/98)

In response to demands that the People's Commission be banned or disbanded, Justice (retired) Kuldip Singh, President of World Sikh Council, announced on September 20 (Tribune, 9/21/98) that "we are ready to wind up the people's commission if government enhances the jurisdiction of the state Human Rights Commission." He said that it was unfortunate that the Punjab Human Rights Commission had no jurisdiction on human rights violations that were more than a year

old. Hence the necessity of the People's Commission.

The People's Commission, set up by the World Sikh Council in cooperation with the Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab and several other human rights and civil liberties organizations, is examining complaints of human right violations, including illegal abductions, custodial deaths and illegal cremations from 1979 to 1997 and whether state agencies or individuals have prima facie committed any offense under the law of the land or international law. The three person commission comprises of Justice D.S. Tewatia (former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court) – Chairman, Justice Suresh Singh (retired Judge of Maharashtra High Court) – member, and Justice Jaspal Singh (former judge of Delhi High Court) – member.

Supreme Court Upholds Mass Cremations Probe by NHRC

India's Supreme Court on September 13 ruled that the probe by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) into the alleged mass cremation of over 2,000 bodies (of Sikh youths) by Punjab police in 1994-95 cannot be barred under the limitation Act prohibiting any human right violation inquiry after one year of the incident. The Division Bench of the Supreme Court which issued this ruling included Justice S. Saghit Ahmad and Justice S. Rajendra Babu. The Supreme Court held that the NHRC, in the present mass cremation case, would function pursuant to the directions issued by the Supreme Court and not under the Act by which it was constituted. The central government of India as well the state of Punjab had challenged the NHRC's investigations into the mass cremation case before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruling added, "we also do not approve of the conduct of the parties in approaching this court for clarification by way of a petition which has been pending for the last 10 months, during which the commission could have disposed of the whole matter." (Tribune, 9/14/98)

Following the Supreme Court's upholding of the NHRC's investigations into mass cremations of Sikh youths in Punjab by the police, the commission held a hearing on September 16 to work out the modalities for the investigations. Prominent among those who attended the hearing were Director General of Punjab Police, Mr. Puran Chand Dogra, Sarup Singh of behalf of the Punjab Government, and Joint Secretary in Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr. Sandeep Bagchi. (Tribune, 9/17/98)

Center Seeks to Protect Punjab Police Officials Accused of HR Violations

The Union Law Ministry of India is considering whether the Center's sanction of prosecution instead of Punjab government's can protect Punjab police officials against whom cases have been filed for alleged human rights violations in the past. According to The Statesman dated 7/26/98, the Punjab government has been asked to send all such cases to the Center for sanction of prosecution. The cases relate to the period during which the Punjab Disturbed Areas Act of 1983 was in force. The Punjab police chief, Mr. P.C. Dogra, had suggested that an amendment in Section 6 of the Act by which the Center's sanction would be needed in place of the Punjab government. Many police officials who engaged in anti-militant operations in Punjab are now facing trail in the High Court and Supreme Court for human rights violations against Sikhs particularly Sikh youths. Some of them are now in jail. A Parliamentary Committee attached to the Home Ministry expressed concern over the fate of these officers. The committee has told the Ministry that "failure to come to the policemen's rescue would not only demoralize the Punjab police but also send wrong signals to the police in other states." The Committee did mention that there might have been cases when the police had "exceeded their authority."

Charges Framed Against 8 Cops in Khalra Case, Eyewitness Kidnapped

Charges of abduction, disappearance, murder and conspiracy were framed against 8 Punjab police officers at the Patiala district court on July 25 with regard to the custodial murder of Sikh human rights activist, Sardar Jaswant Singh Khalra. Charges have been filed against DSP Ashok Kumar, DSP Jaspal Singh, SI Rachpal Singh, SI Surinder Pal Singh, SI Satnam Singh, ASI Amarjit Singh, ASI Jasbir Singh, and Head Constable Prithipal Singh. The Court fixed the next hearing for the case on November 12 and 13. (Tribune, 7/26/98)

Rajiv Randhawa, a human rights activist and an eyewitness in the Khalra disappearance case was reported to have been abducted by five unidentified persons from Amritsar on July 15. The Khalra action committee had alleged that Punjab police officials kidnapped Mr. Randhawa. Later the next day, the abduction of Rajiv Randhawa by plain-clothed policemen was virtually confirmed when he was produced before the Amritsar judicial magistrate by Punjab police officials on charges of sedition and waging a war against the country.

Secretariat of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

A three-storied secretariat of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar is reported to have started functioning (Tribune, 9/15/98). The secretariat has modern office facilities including fax machines and photocopiers. The basement of the building will be used for holding press conferences and small meetings, while the ground floor will be used for secretariat purposes. The top floor may be used for holding meetings with VIPs. Efforts to open a secretariat were initiated in September 1995 at the time of the World Sikh Conference in Amritsar.

Sarbat da Bhala Trust

The World Sikh Council will establish a "Sarbat da Bhala Trust" on September 19 for the benefit of economically disadvantaged and

needy persons, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. (Tribune, 9/17/98)

Jathedar Akal Takhat Asks for Accounts of World Sikh Council

Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh, Jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib, declared on September 14 that Bhai Manjit Singh (Jathedar Of Siri Kesgarh Sahib) and Bhai Kewal Singh (Jathedar of Siri Damdama Sahib) were neither invited nor would be allowed to attend future meetings till Bhai Manjit Singh submitted the accounts of World Sikh Council. (Tribune, 9/15/98)

Directive to Kirtanis

On August 27, a directive was issued to all Sikh Kirtanis (religious singers) by Siri Akal Takhat Sahib which banned the recitation of kachi Bani (distorted hymns) by Kirtanis. A ban was also imposed on reciting Bani on the tunes of popular film songs. This directive was announced during the hearing of the International Kirtan Council case. Chairman of the Council, Bhai Harbans Singh Jagadhriwale, and other members pledged before Siri Akal Takhat Sahib that in future they would sing Shabads as per the Sikh tradition. (Tribune, 8/28/98)

Follow Langar Hukamnaama:WSC

The interim committee of the World Sikh Council met on August 30 at Chandigarh in which the committee took cognizance of the developments in recent weeks relating to the Langar Hukamnaama and appealed to Sikhs that they implement in letter and spirit the Hukamnaama issued by Siri Akal Takhat Sahib in line with past traditions. The committee also condemned the Jalandhar daily Ajit for siding with those who were finding fault with the Langar Hukamnaama. A press note was issued by the committee in which it clarified that till date the past office-bearers had not submitted any statement of accounts to the council. (Tribune, 8/31/98)

Differences have arisen among Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh, Jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib, and Singh Sahib Bhai Manjit Singh, Jathedar of

Siri Keshgarh Sahib over the langar Hukamnaama. Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh told reporters on August 27 that he was ready to make any sacrifices to uphold the Sikh maryada. (Times of India, 8/28/98)

Uttranchal Approved by Indian Cabinet

The Cabinet of the BJP led central government of India is reported to have approved the creation of the state of Uttranchal on August 3. The Cabinet approved plan includes Udham Singh Nagar, a Sikh dominated area that local Sikhs have opposed being included in the proposed state. Although publicly the Akali Dal (Badal) is opposing the inclusion of Udham Singh Nagar in Uttranchal, yet Surjit Singh Barnala, a Union Cabinet Minister and a senior Akali Dal (Badal) leader, was a member of the Cabinet that decided to include Udham Singh Nagar in the proposed state.

SGPC Internet Site

The Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) inaugurated its internet web site on August 12. The website will be available in three languages, Panjabi, English and Hindi. The SGPC website can be accessed at <http://www.sgpc.org>

Jathas Start from Akal Takhat

A big jatha of Sikh intellectuals and raagis, led by Panj Payaaras, started from Siri Akal Takhat Sahib on September 2. The objective of the march is to promote Khandae da Pahul among Sikhs as a part of the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa. The jathas would cover various parts of Punjab, including Bathinda, Mansa, Sangrur and Patiala. (Tribune, 9/3/98)

Allowance Increased for Victims of 1984 Massacre

The Punjab Government is reported to have increased the monthly allowance of Sikh widows of the November 1984 massacres from Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2500. (Tribune, 8/26/98)

Design of Nishan-e-Khalsa

The executive committee of the Anandpur Sahib Foundation approved on July 5, the design of the proposed

“Nishan-e-Khalsa” to be constructed at Anandpur Sahib. It was decided to convene a meeting of the foundation to obtain approval for the design. Architect Satnam Singh prepared the design of the memorial, after consultations with some Sikh scholars, historians and religious leaders. The memorial consists of a *Khanda* made of steel alloys rising up to 300 feet. The memorial will not be completed in time for the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa. It is a Rs. 60 crore project and the construction for the project will begin in October of 1999 (Tribune, 7/6/98).

Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann of Akali Dal (Amritsar) has opposed the construction of the memorial saying that it would promote idol worship among the Sikh community. The Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh is also reported to have questioned the design of the memorial and disagreed with its basic concept.

Gurmat Training Camp

Sikh Students Federation (Mehta) organized a three-day Gurmat Training Camp at Talkwandi Sabo from July 4 to 6. About 25 Sikh youth received Khandae-da-Pahul. The Federation passed a resolution at the meeting in which it declared that the struggle for the spread of Sikh religion started by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale would continue till the goal was achieved. In another resolution, the Federation appealed to the Jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib to issue an edict to all members of SGPC, Singh Sabhas, and other Gurdwara committees to undergo formal initiation (Khandae-da-Pahul). (Tribune, 7/7/98)

SGPC Moves High Court on Helmet Issue

Following the judgement issued by Punjab and Haryana High Court on July 9, the SGPC President, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, has filed a review petition in the high court to stop operation of the judgement requiring Sikh women to wear helmets. The petition claimed that the directive of the high court had hurt the religious sentiments of the Sikh community since it infringed on

the code of conduct followed by Sikhs. The petition clarified that the code of conduct was laid down by Siri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib. (Tribune, 7/23/98)

Dal Khalsa for Peaceful Struggle

Once outlawed outfit, Dal Khalsa International is reported to have decided to achieve its targets through peaceful means. According to a published report in the Tribune (8/7/98), the DKI chief Sardar Gajinder Singh appealed to all Panthic forces to unit on a single platform for the accomplishment of the goals fixed by various organizations. The Dal Khalsa International held its first event at a hotel in Amritsar on August 6 at which a resolution was passed reiterating that the Sikhs were a separate nation. (Tribune, 8/7/99)

PHRO Flays SAD Policies

Punjab Human Rights Organization (PHRO) condemned the policies of the ruling Shromani Akali Dal (Badal) alleging that police excesses had not stopped during the SAD-BJP regime despite tall claims by the government. (Tribune, 7/15/98)

PHRC Seeks More Powers

Justice V.K. Khanna, the Chairman of the Punjab Human Rights Commission (PHRC) has asked that amendments be made to the relevant sections of the empowering act so that the commission may carry out surprise checks at jails within Punjab without prior intimation to the Punjab Government. Currently, the Commission has to intimate the Punjab Government before going out for jail inspections. (Tribune, 8/8/98)

Police Lawlessness Against Sikhs Continues in Punjab

- Karnail Singh, a 60-year old resident of village Jagatpur, is reported to have been beaten to death in the custody of Chabal police on August 23. (Tribune, 9/24/98)
- Sardar Kanwar Pal Singh, spokesperson for Dal Khalsa International, along with 2 other Sikhs are reported to have been

detained by Batala police officials on July 23 from village Dabnwala near Batala. According to Tribune (7/25/98), the police officials took the three Sikhs to the police station and after questioning locked them up in a room for a whole day without giving any reason. They were not allowed to contact their lawyers or family members. When they inquired from the SHO why they had been arrested, the SHO is alleged to have become abusive. Late at night, the three were interrogated by SP Vivek Mishra who released them after conducting his investigation. The Deputy Chairman of Punjab Human Rights Commission, Kirpal Singh Randhawa, issued a press release in which he condemned the role of the police in the arrest of the three Sikhs.

- The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) alleged that Baljit Singh, a Sikh youth of Burj Dhillawan, was killed in police custody due to torture on the night intervening July 21 and 22. Releasing a report into the incident to the media on July 31, Mr. Vineet Gupta, member of the national Council of PUCL said that a two-member inquiry which investigated the matter found that Baljit Singh was brought dead to the Civil Hospital of Maur from the local police station. The report alleges that the victim was picked up from the Maur Mandi bus stand of Bathinda on July 21 at about 5 PM by Punjab police officials and tortured to death by Maur Mandi police officials. Copies of the report have been sent to NHRC in Delhi and PHRC in Chandigarh (Tribune, 8/1/98). The PHRC has ordered an inquiry into the incident (Tribune, 8/2/98).
- Mukhtiar Singh, a 50-year old Sikh Chowkidar (security guard) of the Amritsar TB and Chest Hospital, is reported to have been taken into custody on July 30 and tortured to death by Sultanwind police officials. (Tribune, 8/2/98)
- Satnam Singh, a 22-year old Sikh resident of village Khurdpur near Adampur, Jalandhar, is reported to have been picked up by Bhogpur police on August 14 and taken to Kothar police station. There the victim is alleged to have been tortured to death. The victim died on August 15. On learning of his death, hundreds of residents of his village stormed the police station to retrieve the dead body of Satnam Singh. The police claim that the victim was not tortured to death but was run over by a Matador when he was trying to escape from police custody. An Assistant Sub-Inspector of police was arrested and a magisterial inquiry has been ordered into the incident (Indian Express, 8/18/98, Tribune, 8/18/98)
- The Dal Khalsa has alleged that three Sikh youths, including Lakhwinder Singh, were abducted by plainclothes policemen from Ramanand Bagh on the night of August 19 in Amritsar. The District police chief has pleaded ignorance about the incident. (Tribune, 8/21/98)
- Nirmal Singh, a Sikh resident of Mohalla Sheikhwan in Ropar was picked up by 20 police officials on the morning of August 24. His relatives have been unable to locate him and have contacted the Punjab Human Rights Commission. The SHO city police station confirmed the incident and said that a police party from outside the district had possibly come to pick up Nirmal Singh.
- Punjab police is reported to have arrested Sarabjit Singh Lovely on July 23. According to published reports in the Tribune (7/24/98), the police claims that Sarabjit Singh was a founder member of the Khalistan National Army and is currently a member of the newly formed Tigers of Sikhland.
- Hardev Singh, an alleged member of Babbar Khalsa, is reported to have been arrested by Punjab police on July 18 at Bodde ki village near Batala.

- Punjab police is reported to have arrested two Sikhs, Kesar Singh of village Kalweal and Sarabjit Singh of village Sidhupar Kalan, on July 29 near village Mehdoodan on the Bhakra Canal. The police claims that the two were activists of Babbar Khalsa and have implicated them in the aborted Burail jail escape case. (Tribune, 7/31/98)
- The Punjab police is reported to have arrested three Sikhs, Avtar Singh Seoli, Rishipal Singh and Sukhbir Singh, on August 5 from village Fatehpurbara near Dera Bassi, Patiala. The police alleged that Avtar Singh was a former member of Babbar Khalsa. (Tribune, 8/7/98)
- Jagir Singh, a Sikh youth who had been deported from Germany on July 30, is reported to have been arrested by Punjab police. (Tribune, 8/12/98)

Badal: Government Keeping Watch on Cops

Speaking at a press conference in Bathinda on July 24, the Punjab Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal ruled out a general screening of the state police but added that the state government was monitoring the functioning of the police for checking police excesses. When asked whether the state government was taking any action towards controlling custodial deaths in Punjab which were on the rise, Badal claimed that whenever a custodial death had been reported, a case had been registered against the guilty police official. (Tribune, 7/25/98)

Field Inquiry Completed on Murder of Jathedar Kaunke

Punjab police ADGP Mr. B.P. Tiwari is reported to have concluded a field inquiry into the torturous murder by Punjab police officials of Singh Sahib Bhai Gurdev Singh Kaunke, ex-jathedar of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib. According to the Tribune (8/23/98), the inquiry team recorded the statements of over 20 persons, and also visited village Kaunke from where Singh Sahib was allegedly kidnapped, the police stations where

he was illegally detained and village Kanian from where his dead body was recovered.

Earlier, the Punjab government had turned down the demand of several human rights organizations for a CBI investigation into the matter but instead ordered a police inquiry by Mr. Tewari, an official of the agency accused of murdering Jathedar Kaunke. It is alleged that Jathedar Kaunke was illegally picked up by Jagraon police officials from his village in Jagraon subdivision of Ludhiana on December 25, 1992. The police authorities are reported to have tortured him up to January 1, 1993. Later the police authorities claimed that Singh Sahib had escaped from police custody on January 2, 1993. This false claim of the police was widely condemned. Singh Sahib is reported to have been tortured to death while in custody of the police and the escape story fabricated by Punjab police to cover up his extra-judicial murder.

Probe Sought into 1992 Disappearance of Sikh Laborer

The Association for Democratic Rights (ADR) has indicted the Punjab police for the alleged disappearance of a Sikh farm laborer from the alleged illegal custody of the police during 1992. Balwinder Singh, a farm laborer of Pakhopur village near Chola Sahib, is alleged to have been taken into illegal police custody by the local police and he disappeared from police custody under mysterious circumstances. The association demand a high level inquiry into the incident. It is feared that the victim was killed in police custody and the disappearance story concocted to cover up the extra-judicial murder by police officials. (Tribune, 8/17/98)

Canadian Reporter Recalls Attack of Hindu Mob on Elderly Sikh Man

The Ottawa Sun (7/19/98) published an article written by Matthew Fisher of the Toronto Sun titled "Hatred's Face Knows No Color." In the article, Mr. Fishers writes, "The first time I saw a mob at work was in New Delhi in the dangerous hours after Indira Gandhi was murdered by one of her

bodyguards in 1984. A gang of Hindu boys chased an elderly Sikh man in front of my taxi before stoning their utterly defenseless victim to death in a nearby culvert."

Human Rights Activist Sues Punjab Police Chief

D.S. Rajput, a well known human rights activist, has filed a civil suit in the Chandigarh Judicial Court seeking Rs 10 crore as damages from Punjab Director General of Police, P.C. Dogra for damaging his reputation. The DGP had claimed earlier that Rajput had provided assistance to the alleged assassin of Beant Singh, ex-Chief Minister of Punjab. Now, the police has implicated the human rights activist in the aborted Burail jail escape case. Rajput has alleged that the police has implicated him in the Burail jail conspiracy because he was contesting a criminal case against senior Punjab police officials. (Indian Express, 8/21/98)

Extension for Punjab Police Chief

The Director-General of Punjab Police, Mr. Puran Chand Dogra, who has been responsible for killing of several Sikh youths in the past several years, has been granted another extension of six months by the Central Government. According to the Tribune dated 8/23/98, the extension was granted in order to keep continuity in anti-terrorist measures in the state. Mr. Dogra was superannuated in March of 1998 and was granted an extension of 6 months by the Badal government. The second extension was approved by the Central government on the recommendation of the Punjab government.

About 400 farmers Committed Suicide in Punjab

The Agence France Presse (7/998) published a news report in which it reported that Punjab Parliamentary Affairs Minister Madan Mittal had announced that about 400 farmers (mostly Sikhs) had committed suicide in state of Punjab since 1996. Punjab is popularly known as the granary of India.

Farmers Pray at Akal Takhat

Hundreds of farmers belonging to the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) gathered at Siri Akal Takhat Sahib on August 16 and performed Ardaas for fighting the cause of the farming community as a number of farmers had already committed suicide due to the callous attitude of the central and state government. The farmers sought strength and support from Siri Akal Takhat Sahib (Tribune, 8/17/98). BKU is also reported to have decided to launch an awareness campaign among farmers in the state about debt-related suicides by farmers in Punjab.

Ropar is Top Literacy District

The Ropar district of Punjab has been identified as among the most literate district in India. The selection was made by the Indian Management

Institute in Calcutta. While Punjab lags far behind Kerala, the state with near total literacy, Ropar beat over 540 districts in India. (Tribune, 8/22/98)

Teaching English to be Made Compulsory in Punjab

The Punjab Government has decided to introduce English language as a compulsory additional subject from class one in all of its 12,000 state-run primary schools. However, the medium of instruction would still remain Panjabi. (Times of India, 8/2/98)

Attacks on Christians by Hindu Activists

Reuters (8/30/98) published an elaborate news article on the increasing number of attacks on

Christian priests by Hindu activists. The article highlighted several cases including the attack on a Methodist Minister M.M. Roy's house in western India. The activists ransacked the priest's house looking for his bible to burn and warned him to stop preaching Christianity and start worshipping Hindu Gods or else be burned alive. The article reports that in the last two months, over 30 such incidents have been reported in the state of Gujrat. The United Christian Association (UCA), a recently formed church unity organization feels helpless saying that they don't know what to do when the government is with them (Hindu activists).

NEWS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Save Iqbal Singh Campaign

Several Canadian Sikh youths and organizations have come together to help Sardar Iqbal Singh, a Sikh refugee from India. Iqbal had applied for immigration to Canada but instead was arrested by an RCMP Immigration Task Force on April 2 in Toronto under national security legislation that prevents him from knowing the evidence against him. Iqbal Singh's case is being reviewed in a closed hearing at the Federal Court of Canada where the judge may examine the government's evidence and any other evidence without the accused or his lawyer being present. Iqbal Singh had left India to avoid persecution by police and made his way to Canada in 1991 via Nepal, Thailand and Korea.

A rally in support of Iqbal Singh was held in front of Canada's Minister of Immigration on September 15 in Montreal. More information on the Save Iqbal Singh Campaign can be accessed at

http://members.tripod.com/~Iqbal_Singh/

Toronto Star Highlights Sikh Protests

The Toronto Star dated August 16, 1998 published its front page story titled "India celebration a year long-affair," and included a photograph next to it of Sikhs protesting the Indian independence day by burning the Indian flag and calling for the creation of Khalistan. Several persons of Indian origin are said to have been quite disturbed at the prominence given to the Sikh protests by the Toronto Star. The Co-chair of the Indo-Canadian Advisory Council wrote a letter of protest to the Toronto Star, which was published in its 8/23/98 issue.

Sikh Education Seminar in Ottawa

The Ottawa Sikh Society and the Sikh Social and Educational Society of Toronto organized the 8th Education Seminar in Ottawa, Canada on August 22. Guest speakers included Sardar Jarnail Singh, Sardar Davinder Singh Chahal, Sardar Surinder Singh Sodhi, Sardar Jai Dev Singh Kohli and Sardar Gurdev Singh Sangha.

Police Close Vancouver Gurdwara

According to Los Angeles Times (8/8/98), police in Vancouver, Canada

closed one of Canada's largest Gurdwara Sahib (Ross Street Gurdwara Sahib) on August 2 fearing a clash between moderate and conservative factions. Six Canadians – including the Granthi, President, and Secretary of the Gurdwara Sahib - had been excommunicated from the Panth through a Hukamnaama issued earlier by Siri Akal Takhat for opposing the Langar Hukamnaama.

Multi-faith Millennium Dome

A Millennium Dome, with a multi-faith exhibit in the "Spirit Zone", is being planned in UK to commemorate the year 2,000. The Lamberth group, which is made of 20 Christians, two Jews, one Sikh, one Hindu and one Muslim, has already backed the architect's interfaith design of the spirit zone to be staged in a glass tent inside the Dome. The glass tent will symbolize a staging point on life's journey. An exhibition of sacred art will include images of masterpieces including Michelangelo's Pieta, the Sikh Golden Temple of Amritsar, and geometrical design from Islamic art. According to the Daily Mail (6/15/98) and Times Newspaper (6/14/98), Prince Charles has praised the multi-faith nature of the Millennium Dome in a letter to the leading Sikh

representative Sardar Indarjit Singh. Prince Charles wrote, "I was much heartened, and moved, to read your affirmation of the essential unity of religion and commonality of core values essential for sane, balanced and responsible living in any age."

Sikh Referee at Wimbledon

Sardar Raghbir Singh Mahajan, the only Sikh referee in Wimbledon, has completed 25 years of service and is about to receive a special long-service award. Raghbir remarked, "I get my turbans specially dyed to match the green of the Wimbledon color I have hundreds of colors now." (Evening Standard, 6/24/98)

Turban Gives UK Cab Driver Sikh's View of Racism

Mr. John Proudluck, a taxi driver at Brentford, London got the opportunity to experience racism towards Sikh taxi drivers when he grew a beard and then wore a turban for a day and went around London impersonating as a Sikh driver. The Daily Telegraph (7/3/98) reported that Mr. Proudluck wearing a turban got tips from only 25 percent of his rides instead of the usual 90%. The article further elaborated on several unfortunate racist incidents that the driver experienced in just one day. Mr. Proudluck remarked, "My father was an English Army Officer but was born in India and served in the Indian Army during the war. He always had great admiration for Sikhs. That has passed on to me and I work with a great bunch of people." The head controller of a London taxi union, Sardar Gurmeet Singh responded to racism being faced by Sikh drivers as, "We just let it wash over us. The key is not to let it get to you when this happens. Otherwise you'd end up fighting the world."

Fun Walk for Vaisaakhi 1999 in UK

The Council of Sikh Gurdwaras organized a fun walk on August 30 in London to raise funds for Vaisaakhi 1999 – to mark 300 years of birth of the Khalsa. The aim of the tri-centenary celebrations in UK is to create links across Midlands, Britain, Europe and the world to raise the profile of the Sikh community.

British Parliamentary Group on HR in Punjab

The British Parliamentary Group on Human Rights in Punjab organized a reception at the Labour Party Conference on September 28 at Blackpool, UK. The reception provided an opportunity for people to meet with Members of Parliament and Labour Party activists to share concerns about human rights violation in India particularly in Punjab. Twenty-three members of the British Parliament have already signed an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons on human rights in Punjab.

Sikh Conference Held

The Akal Purakh Ki Fauj (UK) and Center for Research and Enlightenment held an academic conference focussing on Sikhi related issues on September 19 at University of Birmingham in UK.

Sikh Lady Alleges Discrimination

Sardarni Inderjit Kaur, a Sikh food factory worker of London, UK has alleged that she had been discriminated against for wearing a Kara and threatened with the sack for refusing to take it off. The Sikh lady alleged that the Christian staff was not asked to remove their wedding rings and they still continue to wear them while performing the same tasks that she did. She is an employee of Supermarket food producer R.F. Brookes and has approached an industrial tribunal with her discrimination complaint. The British Sikh Foundation and the Baker's Food and Allied Worker's Union have backed her case. (Daily Mail, 8/8/98)

KHR Highlights Arrest of HR Activists

The Leicester Mercury (8/1/98) reported that the Khalsa Human Rights (KHR) organization is working on highlighting the plight of four human rights activists arrested by Indian police under false charges. KHR had released a report on Punjab's Cremation Grounds to British MPs three days prior to the arrest of activist Jaspal Singh Dhillon. Dhillon had been a co-author of that report. Several Labour MPs have

backed a call to the Foreign Office to investigate Dhillon's case and the newly appointed Treasury Minister Patricia Hewitt has contacted the High Commission.

Interfaith Alliance for Human Rights for India's Dalits

Khalsa Human Rights of Leicester, UK has become a participating organization in a new network of UK-based organizations working for justice and human rights for India's dalits (untouchables) of all faiths. The network is an initiative of Rev. David Haslam of the Churches Commission on Racial Justice (an agency of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland) and brings together human rights groups, religious organizations and development agencies.

British Sikh Federation Welcomes International Criminal Court

The British Sikh Federation has welcomed the establishment of an International Criminal Court by world leaders who voted to create the court on July 20 in Rome. The court is expected to try future crimes of genocide and aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. (Leicester Mercury, 7/21/98)

Gurpurabs for September/October 1998

Actual Dates

September 1	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Amar Das Sahib (1574)
September 1	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Ram Das Sahib (1574)
September 1	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Ram Das Sahib (1581)
September 1	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib (1581)
September 22	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Nanak Sahib (1539)
September 24	Prakash Divas of Siri Guru Ram Das Sahib (1534)
October 6	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Har Rai Sahib (1661)
October 6	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Har Krishan Sahib (1661)
October 6	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (1708)

Observed Dates

September 4	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Ram Das Sahib (1574)
September 6	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Amar Das Sahib (1574)
September 10	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Angad Sahib (1539)
September 15	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Nanak Sahib (1539)
October 7	Prakash Divas of Siri Guru Ram Das Sahib (1534)
October 13	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Har Rai Sahib (1661)
October 13	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Har Krishan Sahib (1661)
October 22	Gur Gaddi Divas of Siri Guru Granth Sahib (1708)
October 25	Joti Jot Divas of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (1708)

(Information provided by Sardar Baldev Singh of Austin, Texas)

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