English Section



Editor : Manjit Singh Associate Editor : Harbhajan Singh 'Vakta'

DAYS COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL EVENTS (16th March to 15th April)

19 March	Bhai Sohan Chand (brother of Bhai Mani Singh) got marty			
		in Battle of Nadaun.	(19-3-1690)	
21 March		Akali Dal passed a resolution of 'Sikh State'.	(21-3-1946)	
22 March		Third Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib for Jaito.		
			(22-3-1924)	
23 March		S. Bhagat Singh hanged to death in Lahore Jail.	(23-3-1931)	
24 March		Indian Government's interference in Gurdwara Sahibs was		
		condemned in Akali Conference held at Sri Anar	dpur Sahib.	
			(24-3-1959)	
25 March	(a)	Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur became the acting president of		
		Shiromani Akali Dal.	(25-3-1972)	
	(b)	S.G.P.C. passed a resolution of "Sikhs are a natio	on".	
			(25-3-1981)	
27 March		Fourth Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib f	or Jaito.	
			(27-3-1924)	
29 March	(a)	Sri Guru Angad Dev ji immersed with divine ligh	mersed with divine light.	
			(29-3-1552)	
	(b)	Akali Dal renamed as Shiromani Akali Dal.	(29-3-1922)	
30 March	rch Foundation of Sikh fort Ram Rouni (Amritsar) laid by the Si		d by the Sikhs.	
			(30-3-1747)	
31 March	(a)	Parkash Purb of Sri Guru Angad Dev ji.	(31-3-1504)	
	(b)	Chief Khalsa Diwan submitted memorandum to the viceroy		
		demanding for representative positions for the Sik	hs in different	
		councils and services	(31-3-1911)	
2 April		Bhai Prithipal Singh, who was brutly beaten by the	police during	
		Guru-Ka-Bagh agitation, died in Guru Ramdas H	lospital.	
			(2-4-1924)	
4 April	(a)	Sikhs visited Sri Nankana Sahib with black turba	ns and	
		started enrollment for Akali Dal.	(4-4-1921)	
	(b)	24 Sikhs killed by police during peacful 'Rasta Ro	oko' agitation.	
			(4-4-1983)	

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5 April		Sikhs decided to commemorate 21st februa	ry as martyrdom day	
		of the martyrs of Sri Nankana Sahib.	(5-4-1921)	
6 April		Punjab Government banned 'Punjabi Suba	' slogan in Amritsar	
		district.	(6-4-1955)	
12 April	(a)	Fifth Shaheedi Jatha left Sri Akal Takht Sahib for Jaito.		
			(12-4-1924)	
	(b)	In a meeting of Nehru and Master Tara Singh, a pact was signed		
		that Indian Government would not interfer	-	
		affairs.	(12-4-1959)	
13 April	(a)	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji started digging of Sa	arover at Tarn Taran.	
			(13-4-1590)	
	(b)	English government killed hundrends of inr	nocents at Jallianwala	
		Bagh, Amritsar.	(13-4-1919)	
	(c)	Punjabi language became official language	e at the secretariat	
		level in Punjab.		
			(13-4-1968)	
	(d)	Sant Harchand Singh Longowal became the acting president		
		of Shiromani Akali Dal.	(13-4-1976)	
14 April (a)		Civil disobedience movement launched in	Punjab.	
			(14-4-1930)	
	(b) Government banned visitor meeting to the Sikh pr		Sikh prisoners of	
		Jodhpur (Rajasthan).	(14-4-1986)	

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

(র্থহা ৪৩३)

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In continuation with the last edition:

Asht Ratnas- Eight Eminent Sikhs

-S. Surjit Singh 'Gandhi'

We are taking pleasure while publishing these contents from the book *'History of the Sikh Gurus'* by *S. Surjit Singh Gandhi* former Head of Sikh History Research Board (SGPC).

BHAI MANI SINGH

Bhai Mani Singh, one of the galaxy of the eminent Sikhs of the Guru period and the later Mughal period, was born on March 10, 1644 A.D. at Alipur, District Muzaffar Garh to Mai Das and his wife Mudri Bai. Much is not known about his childhood but one thing is almost certain that his sensibilities were shaped by the environment which was essentially Sikh because of the deep faith of his parents and brothers in Sikhism. According to Bhat Vahis Talauda Bhai Mani Singh's grandfather Ballu ji had died at Amritsar in A.D. 1634 fighting against the Mughal forces on behalf of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib. In A.D. 1654, it was for the first time that he got chance to have the first contact with Sikh movement when he was taken by his father to Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib at Kiratpur. Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib's piety, his hallowed personality and his meaningful utterances moved him so much that his heart began to overflow with devotion for the Guru. Henceforth, he began to serve the Guru and his successor in various capacities. At the age of fifteen, he got married to Sato Bai, the daughter of celebrated Lakhi Shah who, later on cremated the headless body of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji at big personal risk.

Shortly after marriage, he, along with his elder brothers, Dayala ji and Jetha ji came to Kiratpur. The way he conducted himself at Kiratpur was at once impressive and expressive of his love for the cause. He, unhesitatingly and regularly cleansed the utensils in the kitchen, served meals to the people and listened to the instructions of the Guru. This being so, he rose in the estimation of the Guru. The Sikhs also began to adore him.

At the Joyoti-Jot of Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib, Bhai Mani Singh decided to stay

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on at Kiratpur to serve Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib ji, the succesor to Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib ji. According to the author of Shahid Bilas, he was one of the privileged few who accompnied Sri Guru Harkarishan Sahib to Delhi. He served the Guru to the best of his capacity and capability till the Guru passed away (March 30, 1664).

When Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji was executed at Delhi in A.D. 1675, Bhai ji was at Sri Anandpur Sahib with Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji. He saw for himself the deputation of sixteen Kashmiri Brahmans supplicating the Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib to save them from the onslaught of Aurangzebian communal imprialism. He also witnessed the preparation of the Guru to go to Aurangzeb probably to make him understand the futility of his stand vis-a-vis the non-Muslims. He also experienced the agony when, in response to the order of the Mughal authorities, the Guru was arrested at Malikpur Rangharan and taken to Sirhind where from, after four months of imprisonment, he was re-moved to Delhi. Bhai Mani Singh ji put up with all this full with equipoise.

Up to this time, Bhai Mani Singh had known fully the different facets of the Sikh movement, its rationale, its Mughal authorities. Besides this, he had equipped himself to be classed as first rate scholar. He had acquired knowledge of Sikh scriptures by attending regularly the congregations to be addressed by Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib ji and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib ji. He had the mastery of the language such as Braj Bhasha, Panjabi and Sanskrit. He also learnt military tactics, handling of weapons and management of men during battles. According to Sewa Singh,¹ he was also a great warrior.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji loved Bhai Mani Singh and assigned him those tasks which involved high degree of responsibility. In 1678 A.D. Bhai ji was asked to prepare copies of Adi Granth, the task which was obiviously important because firstly its fulfilment was sure to deal a heavy blow to the prestige of Dhir Mal who was in possession of the original coply and was the unwilling to loan out to Sri Guru Gobind Singh, and secondly if the word of the Guru was precious, the Guru must at offer them the oppurtunity to be in tune with it. Thus at the age of thirty-five, Bhai ji emerged as a great scholar, poised to undertake the important job of preparing copies of Adi Granth.

Bhai Mani Singh accompanied Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji to Nahan in A.D. 1687. According to Shahid Bilas the Bhai was one of the important poets of the Guru's court.

Bhai ji had the privilege of accompanying Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji when he

went to Dehra Dun on the seventeenth day after the death of Ram Rai to condole with Panjab Kaur, the wife of Baba Ram Rai. Next year, the Guru sent fifty elect Sikhs to attend the function in connection with the death anniversary of Ram Rai. One of the fifty Sikhs was Bhai Mani Singh.

In A.D. 1691, Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji appointed him as his Dewan, in which capacity he had to attend to variegated duties. Inspite of his pre-occupation with the work of Dewan, he was very regular in giving discourses to convey the meaning of hymns of the Guru sahib. It appears that his method of the transmission of the utterances of the Guru was proved to be so effective that, in course of time, a definite school of the Sikh thought, popularly known as Giani Sampardai (Giani School of thought) emerged. In 1699 A.D., On the occasion of the creation of the Khalsa, after the five beloved ones, Bhai Mani Singh received baptism from Sri Guru Gobind Singh and became Bhai Mani Singh. Bhai ji's five sons were also initiated into the order of the Khalsa by administering Amrit to them.

Amritsar had long been in the hands of the rival Sodhis. Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib had not been allowed to enter the Harmandir Sahib. When in A.D. 1699. Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji sent out several batches of the Sikhs to preach the Khalsa way (Sainapat, Sri Gur Sobha 48) Bhai Mani Singh was commissioned to take over the Harmandir sahib. He soon made Amritsar the centre for the Khalsa. According to Sewa Singh, he discarded much that was made vogue in Harmandir Sahib by the rival Sodhis to strengthen their own cause, According to Sodhi Darbari,² except regarding Prithi Chand, Meharban and Harji as the sixth, seventh and eighth Guru ji, no other change in the routine programme of Harmandi Sahib was made by the Sodhis.

Bhai Mani Singh ji used to come to Sri Anandpur Sahib off and on along with Sangat to be enlightened by the tenth Guru Sahib himself. On the eve of the first battle of Sri Anandpur Sahib (1st September, 1700) Bhai Mani Singh who was with the Guru was asked to take part in the ensuing battle. His son Bachittar Singh and Udey Singh also participated in the battle. Vir singh Bal in his book "Singh Sagar Chapter 11" says that the Guru called Bhai ji, gave him sword, shield and arrows and sent him to the battle-field. In this battle, Bhai ji as also his three sons showed remarkable valour.

When hill chiefs were despaired of capturing Sri Anandpur Sahib, they appealed to the Guru's sense of chivarly by requesting him to leave Sri Anandpur Sahib to them as gao-bhet, that is, the food for the cow. The Guru ji left Sri Anandpur Sahib

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and established himself at Nirmoh. But Raja Bhim Chand threw to winds all the promises and assisted by Wazir Chand attacked the Guru. A fierce battle took place. All his sons³ played their part well. The Guru felt pleased at their performance and honoured them by awarding them a special letter of appreciation (Hukamnama).⁴

At the time of evacuation of Sri Anandpur Sahib by Sri Guru Gobind Singh in December 1704, Bhai Mani Singh followed the Guru. When on the bank of river Sarsa, the Guru Was suddenly attacked at night by Mughal forces, all were scattered in different sides. The Guru's mother and his two youngest sons went in one direction. The Guru's wives, Mata Sundari ji and Mata Sahib Kaur followed another route. Bhai Mani Singh immediately joined the ladies. He led them along the bank to a distance where they changed their clothes to give a look of peasant-women. Thus disguised, he led them across the river the following day when the flood water had subsided. He guided them to Ambala. His aim in was to take them to Nahan, the capital of the friendly Raja in whose territory the Guru had spent three years at Paonta Sahib. But since the streams enroute were flooded on account of heavy rains, he made straight to Delhi, and posing himself as a Muslim stayed in Matya Mahal, a purely Muslim locality even upto now out of sheer necessity for security.

When he got wind of the Guru's station at Talwandi Saboke, now called Damdama Sahib, he along with Guru's wives reached there and contributed his best to the process of the reorganisation of the Khalsa as also to the literary activities conducted at the instance of the Guru himself.

Having spent one year and a half at Damdama Sahib the Guru decided to leave for the Decan to see Aurangzeb. Bhai Mani Singh was one of the few Sikhs who accompanied the Guru.

At Baghaur⁵, the Guru learnt that the emperor was no more. He changed his programme and turned towards Delhi. He joined the new Emperor, Bahadur Shah, at Agra in July 1707. Mata Sundari ji was left in Delhi, while Mata Sahib Kaur acompanied him. Bhai Mani Singh remained in attendance upon the Guru.

Sri Guru Gobind singh ji passed away at Nander on october 17, 1708. Bhai Mani Singh ji was present there. He escorted Mata Sahib Kaur to Delhi where she lived with mata Sundari ji for the rest of her life.

Shortly afterwards, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar with secific purpose of relieving the Sikhs of the sadness which had gripped them because of the death of their Guru Sahib. Bhai ji assuaged them, encouraged them and revitalised them. The method employed to his purpose was to make them realise their own greatness and the

greatness of the Guru ji by relating to them the stories of the heroic efforts of the Gurus to fight the evil. On the Baisakhi day in 1709, Bhai ji not only ensured a huge gathering by issuing letter far and wide but also he made incumbent on himself that they should be apprised of the latest development.

In April 1709, Bhai Mani Singh had to fight against Chaudhri Deva who was commanding Mulkias and his own force. The cause of the battle was that one Ramu Mal follower of Sodhi Niranjan picked up a quarrel with the Sikhs over a trifle and to prove his superiority he appraoched Aslam Khan the Nazim of Lahore who ordered Har Sahai, the faujdar of Patti to punish the Sikhs. Har Sahai at once proceeded to implement the order but was killed by Tara Singh Van in an encounted. Ramu Mal's father Chuhar Mal again approached the Nazim. He sent Chaudhri Deva to punish Sikhs. Bhai Mani Singh and the Sikhs fought to bravely that the enemy had to flee from the field. The victory of Bhai Mani Singh exploded the myth of the invincibility of the Mughal rule. This thing created new confidence among the Sikhs.

When Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, piqued up at the murderous assault on Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji and goaded by the desire to consummate the ideals of Sikhism declared open defiance of the Mughal authority, the Government reacted to it and took stringent measures against the Sikhs. Many Sikhs who were putting up with Bhai ji⁶ at Harmandir sahib left him out of fear of the wrath of the government. Bhai ji, however, remained unshaken and continued to do his duty at Harmandir sahib as assiduously as he used to do earlier.

In 1714-15, Bhai ji undertook proselytizing tour of the District Jhang of Panjab. He sojourned for sometimes at village Baga-Wala at the place where now Gurdwara Sahib 'Nananksar' stands and related the story of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib. Shortly after, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar.⁷

The defeat and execution of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur adverse effect on the body-social of the Sikhs. The Khalsa were divided between the 'Bandai' who wished to deify Banda Singh and 'Tat Khalsa' who while revering the memory of their leader, disapproved of the attempt to apotheosize him. The diffrences between the two groups found expression in the matters of trivial detail, but, as is usual with frustrated people, the trivialities assumed unwarranted importance. This led to squabbling and then an open fight to gain control over the Harmandir Sahib Amritsar. The position became serious. Bhai Mani Singh ji was then incharge of Harmandir Sahib. He decided the case in a simple way. On two pieces of paper he wrote the words 'Tat Khalsa' and 'Bandai Khalsa'. The papers were rolled up into a ball and

thrown into the holy tank of Har ki Pauri. The paper bearing the name Tat Khalsa came up the water first and the holy places were immediately handed over to 'Tat Khalsa'. The fact that Bhai ji prevailed upon the aforesaid warring groups to agree to the solution as stated above bears eloquent testimony to the deft handling of the delicate issues and speak volumes of his understanding of men and matters.

During there years and after, the unflinching faith which Bhai Mani Singh showed in the Guru's mission served as a source of inspiration and encoureagement to others. He reassured the Sikhs that there was no cause for anxiety, because the message of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji had a divine sanction behind it and was therefore imperishable. He looked to the future for a new dawn of Sikh power, thus dispelling the despondency into which the followers of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji had fallen after A.D. 1716.

As has it been in the foregoing passages, Bhai ji was a brave soldier and had taken part in the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Sri Anandpur Sahib. From this experience arose his altitude and philosophy of resistance. The attainment of sovereignty and the establishment of just rule was the mission of the Khalsa Panth. Bhai ji vouchsafed that this was laid down by the Guru himself and willed by God⁸ In order to hasten the liquidation of the Mughal rule, the Khalsa must seriously take to 'Danga', a short of a Guerrilla warfare as the most effective method of resistance suited to a numerically inferior people. The objective of the Khalsa was the acquisition of sovereign status. Possessed of this belief, the Khalsa Panth refused to indentify itself with the existing state and cheerfully made sacrifices with the hope of establishing their own independent pwoer.

Obiviously, Bhai Mani Singh ji's activities could not be tolerated for long by the exsiting political establishment whose head was Zakariya Khan. In 1733, the leaders of the Sikhs met at Akal Takht Sahib to decide whether or not they should accept the offer of Jagir from the Government. In the course of discussion one significant argument was put forth which was that the Khalsa being sovereign by the grace of their Guru ji and God could not accept such an offer from a power which they did not recognise. This argument clearly reflected the philosophy of Bhai Mani Singh. In all probability, the matter was reported to Zakriya Khan who must have been angered at this.

The writing on the wall in the case of Bhai ji was clear, but Zakriya took his own time.

The Mughal Government of Lahore had strictly forbidden Sikhs to visit Amritsar

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and bath in the holy tank. On all sides of the city, strong contigents were posted to arrest Sikhs approaching their sacred shrines.

In october 1734, just before Diwali, Bhai Mani Singh applied to the Government that the Sikhs might be allowed to attend the Diwali fair for a tribute of Rs. 5000. Permission was granted, but the real object of the Government was to destroy the Sikhs en-bloc. Bhai Mani Singh ji, ignorant of this, sent messages all over the Panjab inviting the Sikhs to celebrate the Diwali fair. Soon after, Bhai ji sensed the nefarious designs of the Government and informed the Sikhs not to visit Amritsar on the Diwali Day.

No fair was held and no offerings came. Bhai Mani Singh who had planned to pay five thousand rupees out of the offerings could not do so, nor had he any other source of income to make payment. The Government demanded the promised fee. Bhai Mani Singh blamed the Government for not allowing the Sikhs to assemble on the Diwali day. The Government arrested him in 1734 and took him to Lahore. The Qazi pronounced the judgement and he was cut to pieces limb by limb.

Bhai Mani Singh ji's martyrdom furthered the cause for which he had been patiently labouring throughout his life. His idea that the Khalsa must possess sovereign power received baptism of martyr's blood and became part of the psyche of the nation.

References:

- 1. Refer to Shahid Bilas by Sewa Singh edited by Giani Garja Singh.
- 2. Guru Prithi Chand Gur Bansawali, p.7.
- 3. Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Rut 4, Ansu 45.
- 4. The Hukamnama is in the custody of Giani Garja Singh.
- ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿੰਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਬਿਚਤ੍ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ। ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ। ਭਾਈ ਅਨਿਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ। ਭਾਈ ਅਜਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ। ਭਾਈ ਅਜਾਇਬ ਸਿੰਘ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਮਾਈ ਦਾਸ-ਵੋਇ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਰਮ ਰਖੇਗਾ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਫਰਜੰਦਹ ਖਾਨ ਜਾਦ ਹੋ। ਤੁਸਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੈ। ਸਭ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਕੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮਹਿਰਮ ਹੋ। ਹੋਰ ਕੌਡੀ ਦਮੜੀ ਪੈਸਾ ਧੇਲਾ ਰੁਪੈਆ ਰਛਿਆ ਦਾ। ਜੋ ਅਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੇਹਿਗਾ। ਇਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਫਰਜੰਦ ਹੈਸਿ। ਹਿ ਖਾਂ ਪੁਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਾਦਾ ਵਲਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਲੋਚ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੋਗੇ ਤੁਸਾਡੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਦਰਗਾਹਿ ਥਾਇ ਪਵੈਗੀ। ਤੁਸਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਛਿਆ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

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- 5. According to Shahid Bilas by Sewa Singh, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar from Baghaur.
- 6. This information has been culled from the letter which Mata Sundari ji received on April 1710 (22 Baisakh)
- 7. The exact date of the return of Bhai ji to Amritsar is not known.
- 8. Gur Bilas Patshahi 6, pp. 76, 128, 280, 288, by Sohan.

Conti....

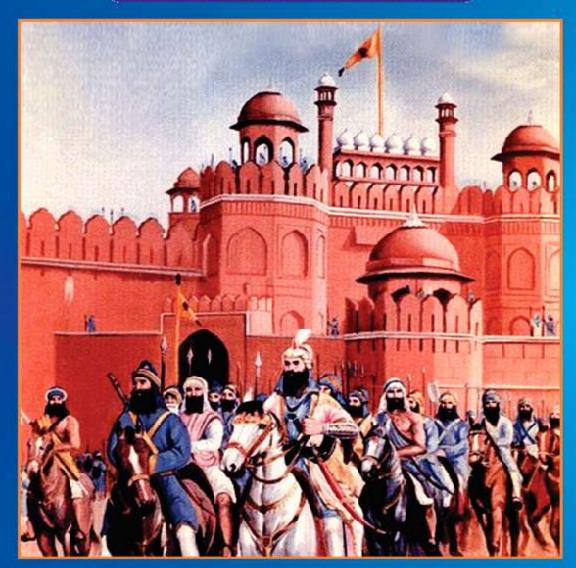


ਮੱਧ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਹਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੈਂਗੋਵਾਲ, ਸ. ਜਗਸੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਂਗੇਆਣਾ, ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਰੇਵਾਲ, ਸ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੂਰਾਕੋਹਨਾ, ਸ. ਤਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੱਡਾ, ਬਾਬਾ ਘੋਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਬਾਬਾ ਤੇਗਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ। (27 ਫਰਵਰੀ)



ਗਵਾਲੀਅਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ 'ਚ ਸਥਿਤ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਨਤਮਸਤਕ ਹੋਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਹਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੈਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਅੰਤ੍ਰਿੰਗ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸ. ਜਗਸੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਂਗੇਆਣਾ। (28 ਫਰਵਰੀ)

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