SGPC to begin kar sewa at Kartarpur Sahib from Sept 22

THRIUBNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, SEPTEMBER 10

The SGPC is all set to launch ‘kar sewa’ at historic Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan from September 22. A high-level delegation will leave for Pakistan via the Attari-Wagah border on September 20, announced SGPC chief Avtar Singh Makkar here today.

After the Akal Takht presented him the ‘Shrimani Sewak’ award, Makkar said their delegation would comprise of SGPC Chief Secretary, executive committee members and other SGPC officials. He also stated the suggestion given to them by Pakistan Sikh Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) chief Sham Singh would be implemented.

“From now on, the ‘bir‘ of Gurm granth Sahib and religious literature will be sent to Pakistan only on the recommendation of the PSGPC,” Makkar said. He also accepted the PSGPC’s suggestion that any jatha of Sikhs visiting India from Pakistan would be sent an invite by the SGPC on the basis of the recommendation made by the PSGPC.

He expressed his gratitude to the PSGPC and the Evacuee Trust Property Board, which looks after the gurdwaras affairs in Pakistan for awarding the SGPC the ‘kar sewa’ of Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib.

Earlier, Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh, along with other Sikh high priests felicitated Makkar with ‘Shrimani Sewak’ award for his significant contribution in spreading education, propagating Sikhism and carrying out humanitarian works during his tenure as the SGPC president.

SGPC team crosses over to Pakistan

THRIUEE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, OCT 8

An eight-member delegation of the SGPC led by its president Avtar Singh Makkar today crossed over to Pakistan through the Attari-Wagah joint check post.

The visit came on an invitation of Pakistan Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif to deliberate over religious issues with the Pakistan Sikh Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC).

Among the major issues to be discussed would include adopting the amended version of Nanakshahi Calendar to commemorate the Sikh religious occasions. At present, the PSGPC follows the original Nanakshahi calendar. This had led to the denial of Pakistani visas to Sikh pilgrims from India on various occasions in the past.

Makkar said they would try to persuade the PSGPC to follow the amended Nanakshahi calendar and hand over the responsibility of the upkeep of the gurudwaras to the SGPC.
1,000 Sikh pilgrims in Pak for Jor Mela

AIZAUL KHAZIM: ISLAMABAD

Around 1,000 Sikh pilgrims reached Pakistan from India in special buses on Sunday.

Earlier, a train, scheduled to bring Sikh pilgrims from India to Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hassanabdal to perform rituals in connection with the 480th death anniversary of Guru Ajan Dev, arrived empty.

Citing security concerns, the Indian authorities refused to send pilgrims in the special train. The pilgrims were made to walk down to Wagah as the authorities feared the train might be attacked by terrorists.

The pilgrims were told about the security concerns and asked to make their way to the border on foot, sources said.

Sikh pilgrims would attend Jor Mela celebrations in Pakistan.

Officials of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) and the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee greeted them at Wagah. The visit comes days after Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited New Delhi to attend Indian counterpart Narendra Modi’s swearing-in ceremony.

ETPB deputy director Fiaz Abba said the pilgrims faced inconvenience in reaching Wagah as the Indian authorities refused to send them in a Pakistani train. They had to walk up to Wagah, which caused a lot of inconvenience to them, he said.

“The Indian authorities have given no reason for not sending Sikh pilgrims in the Pakistani train, but it seems to have been done due to security concerns,” he said.

Group leader Gul Chanan Singh told reporters that pilgrims had to cross Wagah on foot in the scorching heat. However, the warm welcome given to them in Lahore made them forget all the inconvenience, he said.

“We are excited as during our 10-day stay here we will visit Sikh holy places, including Gurdwara Janamasthan in Nankana Sahib,” he said.

Another pilgrim Harbhaj Singh said both Modi and Sharif should work for peace in the region. The people of India and Pakistan want peace. There should be extensive trade between the two countries as it will benefit their people,” he said.

After arriving here the pilgrims left for Gurdwara Janamasthan, some 80 kilometres from Lahore.

The main function in connection with Jor Mela will be held at Gurdwara Dera Sahib Lahore on June 17. They will return to India on June 17.

(Specific PTI inputs)

Sikh pilgrims leave for Pak to celebrate Baisakhi

Tribune News Service

AMRITSAR, APRIL 10

Around 2,400 Sikh pilgrims, including an 84-member SGPC jatha, today left for Pakistan in special trains to celebrate the festival of Vaisakhi in the historic gurdwaras of the country.

Talking to the mediapersons, SGPC member Hardev Singh, who is leading the jatha, said the pilgrims would reach Panja Sahib tomorrow.

He said an ahband path would be organised there on April 13 whose bhog ceremony would take place on April 14.

It will be followed by religious programmes to mark the celebration of Vaisakhi.

Subsequently, the pilgrims will proceed to Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Sri Sacha Sauda. The jatha will reach Lahore on April 17 and would pay obeisance at the historic shrines like Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Gurdwara Rori Sahib and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib before returning home on April 18.

SGPC Secretary Dalmeigh Singh flayed the denial of visas to 1,209 pilgrims while stating that steps like these hurt the sentiments of the community. “We had sent a list of 1,209 pilgrims, but only 484 were issued visas for Pakistan,” he lamented.

MEMBERS OF THE SGPC JATHA LEAVE FOR PAKISTAN IN AMRITSAR ON THURSDAY
Even CM has to wait his turn for ritual here

AMRITSAR, JANUARY 20
At a time when the VIP culture in India is under threat from the ideology of the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi, Harmandar Sahib, Sikhism’s premier shrine here, has been showing the way of treating everyone, including VIPs and celebrities, alike. Even being the Chief Minister of Punjab does not help here.

Five-time Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal (86) will have to wait for a few years to get his turn to get an ‘akhand path’, a Sikh prayer service of the Guru Granth Sahib, conducted at the Dukhballanj Sahib inside the Golden Temple complex. Badal’s name is among over 1.3 lakh people who figure in the list of those wanting the 48-hour long ceremony conducted.

All VIPs and celebrities have to queue up along with thousands of commoners to get a religious ceremony conducted at Harmandar Sahib — popularly known as the Golden Temple and considered the holiest of Sikh shrines.

Such is the rush of people for the religious ceremony that the shrine management has bookings full till 2019. The ceremony is conducted by Sikh priests (granthis) at two places — Dukhballanj Sahib and Har-ki-Pauri.

All applicants have to specify where they want the ceremony to be conducted.

The Dukhballanj Beri (tree) is believed to be even older than the shrine. “The ‘akhand path’ ceremony is held at various places inside the Golden Temple. At some places, we have bookings till 2019. Scores of people keep coming for more bookings,” Partap Singh, manager of

No to VIP culture
- There are 1.3 lakh people in a list of those wanting an ‘akhand path’ conducted at Dukhballanj Sahib (in Golden Temple complex)
- Such is the rush for the ceremony that the management has bookings full till 2019
- The 48-hour ceremony is conducted by Sikh priests at two places: Dukhballanj Sahib and Har-ki-Pauri

On waiting list
- Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal
- Bollywood actors Amitabh Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Akshay Kumar and Rishi Kapoor
- NRI businessmen Sant Singh Chatwal, telecom tycoon Sunil Bharti Mittal

the Golden Temple complex, said. “No one is a VIP here. Everyone has to wait for his turn for the ceremony,” he said.

“It is a good thing that the shrine does not entertain VIPs and celebrities separately. Before God, everyone should be equal. Some shrines in other parts of India allow VIP darshan. That is not good,” Jagmohan Singh, a volunteer at the shrine said. — IANS
SGPC clears ₹806-cr budget

Up 21% over last year; Gurdwara upkeep, spread of education thrust areas

Kharar (Tribune Correspondent)

The SGPC in its annual meeting today cleared its annual budget of Rs 806 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal. The meeting was presided over by the SGPC president Avtar Singh Makkar and was attended by SGPC members from all over the Punjab.

Key allocations

- **Headline**
  - SGPC president Avtar Singh Makkar (R) addresses the SGPC members after the SGPC’s annual budget in Amritsar. (Navdeep Singh/TNS)

- **Budget Highlights**
  - The budget for the upcoming fiscal year is pegged at Rs 806 crore, a 21% increase over the last year's budget.
  - The SGPC allocates funds for various areas, including the upkeep of Gurdwaras, education, and dissemination of Sikhism.

- **Education**
  - The SGPC has allocated Rs 150 crore for educational institutions, including Gurdwara-run schools.

- **Gurdwara Upkeep**
  - Funds have been allocated for the maintenance and renovation of Gurdwaras across the state.

- **Dissemination of Sikhism**
  - The budget includes funds for initiatives that promote the dissemination of Sikhism, including the publication of religious and historical literature.

- **Trust Fund**
  - The SGPC Trust Fund has been allocated Rs 100 crore to support various charitable activities.

- **General Board Fund**
  - The General Board Fund has been allocated Rs 50 crore for administrative expenses.

- **Propaganda Fund**
  - The Propaganda Fund has been allocated Rs 20 crore for media and public relations activities.

- **Trustee Fund**
  - The Trustee Fund has been allocated Rs 10 crore for specific projects.

- **Other**
  - The budget also includes funds for various other initiatives, such as health and welfare schemes.

The SGPC has been allocated Rs 250 crore for health and education initiatives in the upcoming fiscal year. The SGPC president, Avtar Singh Makkar, said that the increased funds would be used to improve the infrastructure of Gurdwaras and educational institutions.

The SGPC has also allocated Rs 100 crore for the Trust Fund, which will be used for charitable purposes.

The SGPC Trust Fund has been increased to Rs 250 crore, which will be used for various charitable activities.

- **TV Channel**
  - The SGPC has also approved the allocation of Rs 50 crore for the construction of a TV channel.

- **Sikhi Sainkhi**
  - The SGPC has allocated Rs 20 crore for the construction of a new Gurdwara in the city.

- **Sikh Education Trust**
  - The SGPC has also allocated Rs 10 crore for the construction of a new Gurdwara in the city.

The SGPC president, Avtar Singh Makkar, said that the increased funds would be used to improve the infrastructure of Gurdwaras and educational institutions.

The SGPC has also allocated Rs 100 crore for the Trust Fund, which will be used for charitable purposes.

The SGPC Trust Fund has been increased to Rs 250 crore, which will be used for various charitable activities.
SGPC passes ₹905-crore budget for 2014-15

Tribune News Service

Amritsar, March 27

With focus on propagation of religion and promoting education, the SGPC today passed its annual budget of ₹905 crore for the 2014-15 fiscal year, which is ₹99 crore more than the last year's budget of the premiere Sikh organisation.

This is the third successive year when the budget could not be presented and approved in the SGPC general house as the fate of the new House continues to hang in balance over the Schajdhari row.

Therefore, like the last couple of years, the budget was passed by the SGPC executive committee. The budget was presented by general secretary Sukhdev Singh Bhaur and it was approved by the committee members led by SGPC chief Avtar Singh Makkar. In the budget, an amount of ₹560.51 crore was allocated for managing the gurdwara affairs of the shrines falling under Section 85, which is up by ₹48 lakh as compared with last year.

The SGPC-run educational institutions have got ₹154 crore in the budget, which is up by ₹20 crore. An amount of ₹54 crore has been allocated to the General Board Fund, which is ₹5.6 crore more than last year; ₹37.8 crore to the Trust Fund, which is ₹6.56 crore more than last year.

The Education Fund has been raised to ₹29.25 crore as compared with ₹23.9 crore last year. The Dharam Par-char Committee has got ₹63 crore, up by ₹11 crore from last year, for the propagation of Sikhism. For printing presses, the SGPC has allocated ₹6.4 crore, which is up by ₹31 lakh as compared with the last year.

Later, Makkar said this year's annual budget has gone up by 12.2 per cent as compared with the previous year. He said the budget has been passed by the executive committee as per the SC orders. "The SGPC is setting up 13 more schools and colleges. The construction work is already on," he said.

Makkar said more than 1 lakh students are acquiring education in the SGPC-run institutions. He said they had also made the provision for free education to baptised Sikh students, adding that they had waived fee of 2,000 students under the norm.

The SGPC chief said they had set up a cancer relief fund, besides another to extend aid to bright students from the poor economic background.
The Apache Software Foundation