



# Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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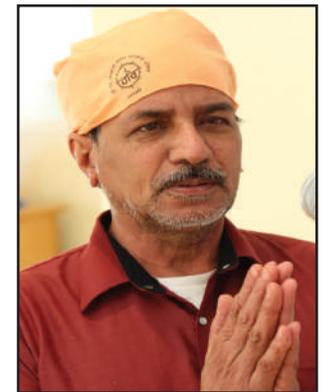
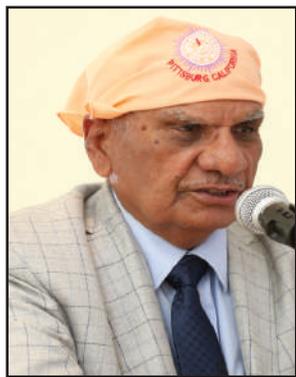
March 3, 2021

California (USA)

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## SRI GURU RAVIDASS JYANTI CELEBRATED IN PITTSBURG (CA)



All pictures by Prem K. Chumber Ambedkar Times

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha (CA) Pittsburg, with the cooperation of entire Sangat, celebrated 644th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj at its Pittsburg Temple on Sunday, February 28th, 2021. The celebrations continued with three days Akhand Path sewa from February 26th, ending with Bhog ceremony on February 28th, 2021.

Since Sangat is the dynamic force behind the success of a function of this magnitude, the joint and dedicated efforts of the Managing Committee and the sangat with their generous donations made it a magnificent success.

In spite of widespread COVID-19 pandemic more than one thousand devotees attended the function but strict guidelines of CDC about wearing masks and social distancing were meticulously followed for the safety of all. Not more than one hundred people were allowed at the same time to stay inside the main hall.

Prominent Jathas and speakers as specified below adorned the celebrations with their earnest and talented outputs for the occasion.

Guru Ghar Jatha comprising Bhai Ompal Singh and Bhai Gurnam Singh followed by Bhai Avtar Singh Jatha from Sacramento who shared their Gurmat Vichars and Shabad Kirtan were the highlights of the function.

Bibi Kamaljit Kaur Bhatia accompanied by Bhai Joginder Singh Ji Delhi-wale also shared their shabad

Kirtan and sacred teachings of Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj.

**NISHAN SAHIB** ceremony hosted by Bhai Darbara Singh and family was performed on Saturday with the help and co-operation of the devoted sangat.

**SHOBHA YATRA**:-On Saturday morning before the Nishan Sahib ceremony the sanctity of this holy GURPURB was also glorified by Parbhat Sewa (Shobha Yatra) of Guru Granth Sahib Ji from Sachkhand to the outskirts of the Parking lot and back.

**LANGAR SEWA** for all the three days was hosted by Guru Ghar in the open compound for which the entire committee and the sangat is grateful to all those sewadars who performed their voluntary services in the kitchen as well as at the food stalls arranged outside.

Mr. Prem Chumber, Chief Editor Desh Doaba/Ambedkar Times ran live video program and provided professional coverage, taking pictures of the Main Function. Paul Video-Photo services also provided pictorial coverage to the entire function. The Managing Committee is very grateful for their voluntary services.

A Booklet bearing the title " LOAG GATHAVE PANHEE" published by Shri Guru Ravidass Mission Prachar Sanstha Punjab (Regd) was also released by our Guru Ghar. The Booklet which has also been released through our other Guru Ghars in California was made

available to us through Mr. Prem Chumber.

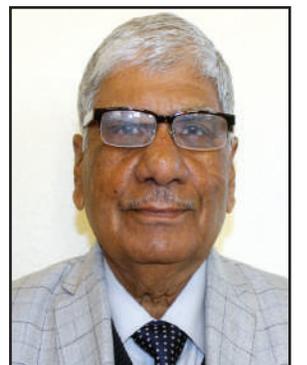
**BABU MANGU RAM MUGGOWALIA's** picture installed in the Dining Hall :- A new and a larger version of Gadri Baba, Babu Mangoo Ram Muggowalia's picture was reinstalled in the Dining Hall of our Guru Ghar in the presence of all the members of the Managing Committee.

Shri O. P. Balley, Founder Member of Pittsburg Guru Ghar and Shri Prem Chumber of Desh Doaba/Ambedkar Times expressed their thoughts on the life history and historic contributions of Gadri Baba, Babu Mangoo Ram Ji muggowalia.

Mr. Prem Chumber who was the main driving force behind installing the picture of this historic leader deserves all the appreciation for his community services.

"NANAK NAM  
CHARDI KALA  
TERE BHANE  
SARBAT DA BHALA"

**SEWADAR  
O.P. BALLEY  
FOUNDER MEMBER  
SRI GURU RAVIDASS  
TEMPLE, PITTSBURG (CA)**



# SRI GURU RAVIDASS JYANTI CELEBRATED IN PITTSBURG (CA)



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Please see more Gurburab pictures on pages 8 to 12

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# Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



**Sue Frost**

## Let Them Play

Great News! The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted last week to unanimously support the "Sacramento County Let Them Play Resolution", which calls on the California Department of Public Health to issue new guidance to permit all youth sporting activities and competitions in California with proper safety protocols in place.



This was a resolution that I brought to the Board because I have heard from countless parents and students who passionately argue that without youth sports, we are neglecting both the physical and mental health of our youth. This is an important step in our goal to LET THEM PLAY!

Below is an article I wrote just before the vote about why I believe this is important:

You may have seen on the news or outside your car window as you drive through town that a movement is growing in California. There is increasing support for the simple notion that children in California need to get outside and play. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, children have been denied access to youth sports, physical education classes, and even playgrounds. Like many drastic steps taken in the early days of the pandemic when much was unknown about the virus, such actions seemed like acceptable, short-term precautions. It is not March 2020 anymore. We have more information on which to make decisions about our citizenry's health and safety. The time has long passed for children to get back in the game.

All priorities being about protecting health right now; physical activity for our youth is becoming more important than ever. That simple notion is defensible with the common knowledge we know to be true that kids need exercise to protect their physical health. Cardiovascular health, body composition, strength, coordination are all things that are put at risk if children are not getting enough physical activity. Virtual learning is challenging enough, but I think

we can agree that physical education has its own unique difficulties. Does the child live in a home with a large yard? Near a safe park? Does the child have access to an outdoor gym or online fitness class? Children with access to some or all the above may be having an easier time getting the exercise they need than children who do not. That is why the decision to restrict physical activities for youth so stringently is not only an issue of health but also an issue of equity.

Then there is the importance of mental health. I have spoken before of the dangers of focusing too closely on one health crisis at the expense of creating others. Everyone receives mental benefits from exercise, none more so than children. Exercise is an excellent way to cope with

stress, socialize with friends, and build confidence. There are also the benefits of participating in team sports like learning how to work together, responsibility, communication. Stripping away these critical outlets and opportunities for children is depriving them of some of the most important aspects of being a kid while preparing for a stable future. For some children, sports could determine their entire future as a pathway to college or even professional sports opportunities. State officials may consider what type of future California children will have with so much critical development time spent looking at a computer screen in isolation.

California stands among only around a dozen or so states holding on to the practice of restricting youth sports to such an extreme level. It is unnecessary. Models for the safe continuation of youth sports exist across the country, and in every regard, they are successful. We know now that a lack of exercise has devastating effects on physical and mental health. We know that transmission among athletes is significantly lower than other forms of social contact. It is difficult to understand any reasoning at this point to keep kids from having adequate access to sports and exercise.

As I said, I do not want us to focus so narrowly on one threat to health that we become blind to others. The reality of children struggling more with mental health than ever before is beyond anecdotal. Studies and stories of increases in depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies are right there for all to see. Children need to get off of Zoom and on the field to be protected

from these avoidable conditions. The future of our children is not something to think about tomorrow but today. For the sake of comprehensive well-being, California officials need to get together, listen to the pleas of desperate children and parents, and the research piling up from entities interested only in the facts. When the reality that has been created is looked at through a pragmatic lens, it is clear the need exists for our children and our state to let them play.

For a complete list of all my past newsletters, which each contain a commentary like this one, click here.

## Juvenile Justice Realignment Community Workshop

The Sacramento County Probation Department in conjunction with the newly established Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) Subcommittee, will host a Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Realignment



Community Workshop to educate the public about Senate Bill (SB) 823 - DJJ Realignment and facilitate community participation in filling membership positions on the JJCC Subcommittee. The Community Workshop will be conducted virtually to adhere to local and state public health mandates and guidelines. Interpreters or reasonable accommodations available upon request.

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 1995 (b) establishes the JJCC Subcommittee and outlines membership requirements. Chaired by Sacramento County Chief Probation Officer Lee Seale, the subcommittee includes representatives from the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, Child Protective Services, Behavioral Health Services, Sacramento County Office of Education, and a representative from Superior Court. The subcommittee shall also include no fewer than three community members who shall be defined as individuals who have experience providing community-based youth services, youth justice advocates with expertise and knowledge of the juvenile justice system, or have been directly involved in the juvenile justice system.

The JJCC Subcommittee is responsible for the development of Sacramento County's SB 823 DJJ Realignment Plan (DJJ Realignment Plan) describing the facilities, programs, placements, services, supervision and reentry strategies needed to provide appropriate rehabilitation and supervision services for youth who are realigned from the state DJJ. The plan will be submitted to the new state Office of Youth and Community Restoration.

"Our Youth Detention Facility (YDF) has an established history with assisting youth by innovative programming including education, vocation and treatment curriculum," said Seale. "The well-trained staff of the YDF work collaboratively with system partners to assist youth reentering the community. We look forward to working with the community to establish new collaborative partnerships and provide the same level of care and consideration to the new population resulting from the Division of Juvenile Justice Realignment."

Applications for the JJCC Subcommittee are currently being accepted. The JJCC Subcommittee's goal is to finalize the DJJ Realignment Plan for submission to the Board of Supervisors during Fiscal Year 2021-22

budget proceedings.

For further information, including how to apply for the JJCC Subcommittee, please visit the JJCC website.

When: March 8, 2021, from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sign on begins at 5:15 pm)

Register for Zoom DJJ Realignment Community Workshop

View the DJJ Realignment Community Workshop Flyer

The DJJ Realignment Community Workshop agenda will include:

Opening remarks and introduction of JJCC Subcommittee members.

Purpose of the DJJ Realignment Community Workshop.

Overview of SB 823 - DJJ Realignment: the announcement of open positions on the new JJCC Subcommittee.

Overview of the JJCC website and instructions for applying to the open positions.

Public question and answer session.

## The Importance of Spaying/Neutering Your Pets

Did you know a single unaltered cat and her offspring can pro  
(Contd. on next page)

**(Continue from page 5)**  
duce more than 400,000 cats in their lifetime? Over time, this creates a massive burden and impact on local shelters, which stretches resources and available space. Spaying and neutering pets is one way to lessen this avoidable strain.

During an average year, the Bradshaw Animal Shelter cares for more than 13,000 animals. Of those, more than 7,000 are spayed or neutered at the shelter or through available programs, grants and donated funds from organizations like Teaching Everyone Animals Matter (TEAM). Last year, the shelter also provided approximately \$66,840 in low-cost spay and neuter vouchers to



roaming, aggression and barking may improve

Increased life expectancy and overall quality of life

Reduced licensing fees (licensing an altered pet is cheaper than licensing an unaltered pet)

February is Spay and Neuter Awareness Month. Here are some ways to help:

Spay or neuter your pet!

Donate a spay/neuter operation through Bradshaw Animal Shelter.

Help educate others by sharing this story on social media or via email.

License your pet – Licensing fees are used to operate the shelter and help fund the programs/services offered, including spay and neuter surgeries.

For more information about TEAM, visit their website. Information on licensing your pet can be found on the Bradshaw Shelter's licensing page. To schedule a surgery, call Community Spay and Neuter at 916-367-7314 or visit their website. To view

low-income Sacramento County residents through the Sacramento Area Animals Coalition's (SAAC) Voucher Program. For feral cats in the community, the shelter offers a Return-to-Field (RTF) Program, which is a humane and effective method of managing feral and community cat populations.

In addition to providing a solution to overpopulation, there are numerous health and other benefits to spay/neutering, including:

Prevention of pet-related diseases, including cancers

In some cases, behaviors like

the various ways you can donate to shelter pets in need, visit the shelter's donation website.

**Delivering Joy with Gifts from the Heart**

While many celebrate the holidays surrounded by loved ones and gifts, it is important to remember those who may be without, including local foster children, dependent adults and seniors.

For more than 30 years, the lives of thousands are touched each holiday season by Sacramento County's Gifts from the Heart Program, an annual holiday gift-giving

program that runs from mid-November until early December serving those within the Child Protective Services, and Senior and Adult Services of the Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services.

The generosity of more than 90 local community partners and individuals from businesses, government agencies, service groups and families donate gifts that allow the County to continue to provide gifts year after year.

"Gifts from the Heart was a little different in 2020 because of the pandemic but that did not take away our holiday spirit," said Tonja Edelman, Volunteer and Student Intern Services Coordinator. "Volunteers followed all face covering and social distancing mandates, and even took tables outside so that they could adequately maintain safe physical distancing during lunch! BIG thank you to the volunteers who sewed holiday masks for us or picked up bicycles to be assembled. We are so thankful for the generous gifts and contributions from local community partners and the volunteers have made the Gifts from the Heart program possible."

The success of the Gifts from the Heart program not only lies with the kind sponsors but also with the wonderful volunteers who dedicate hundreds of hours, helping to organize and distribute gifts. Each year, a team of more than 35 volunteers manage the pick-up, distribution and delivery of gifts from community and private sponsors. The volunteers, many of whom return year after year, spend weeks in the warehouse organ-

izing toys and gifts to be delivered or picked up by social workers.

Jackson Properties donated a 16,000 square foot warehouse so the team could have plenty of room to social distance. Pizza Guys, Subway and Roma's Pizza II provided lunches to the volunteers.

In 2020, program and community partner volunteers donated more than 9,292 hours at an estimated \$292,813 value.

Gifts from the Heart provided more than 2,400 gifts to children, teens and seniors in Sacramento County during the 2020 holiday season at an estimated value of \$144,540. The program welcomes all who are interested in participating by



sponsoring gifts, becoming a community partner and volunteering time during the season.

The holiday season is not the only time you can donate or volunteer to support seniors in the community. Senior and Adult Services welcomes year-round donations. All gifts and monetary donations are tax-deductible. To learn more about Gifts from the Heart, become a community partner, make a donation or volunteer, contact Volunteer and Student Intern Services Coordinator, Tonja Edelman by email or by phone at 916-875-2027.



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# Guru Ravidass Gurpurab at Bootan Mandi Jalandhar – My Musings

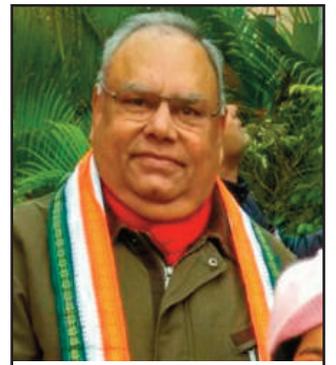
Bootan Mandi, native place of well to do followers of Guru Ravidass in Jalandhar, has traditionally been the nerve centre of activities pertaining to dalits not only in Punjab but also throughout India and beyond. For the past hundred years or so, as per oral history, Guru Ravidass's Janam Dihadha (Jayanti/Gurpurab) is celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety here with traditional Jaloos (Shoba Yatra or Nagar Kirtan) starting from Bootan Mandi which terminates back at Bootan Mandi after covering a long route of about 10 km. through the important thoroughfares of the town. The traditional Tamak – Big Drum/Nagada leads the Yatra to announce the arrival of the Shoba Yatra which is generally played by men. This year, it was gratifying to note that young ladies were doing the honour, a hand-

a sense of belonging and satisfaction that I as a young student fully associated with these activities and held the position of General Secretary of Guru Ravidass Welfare Society of Bootan Mandi for many successive years in the latter half of 1960s and my younger brother Paramjit held the fort for almost 10 years later. The increasing economic and social clout of young and successful businessmen of Bootan Mandi like Sat Paul Mal, Surinder Mahey who also rose to be the Mayor of Jalandhar, Manohar Mahey, Prem Shant, Mool Raj, Avinash Chander who also remained Chief Parliamentary Secretary in successive Akali Governments, inter alia, added to the pomp and show of the celebrations of Gurpurab and other related events. The two Gurudwaras in the Mohalla were given a facelift

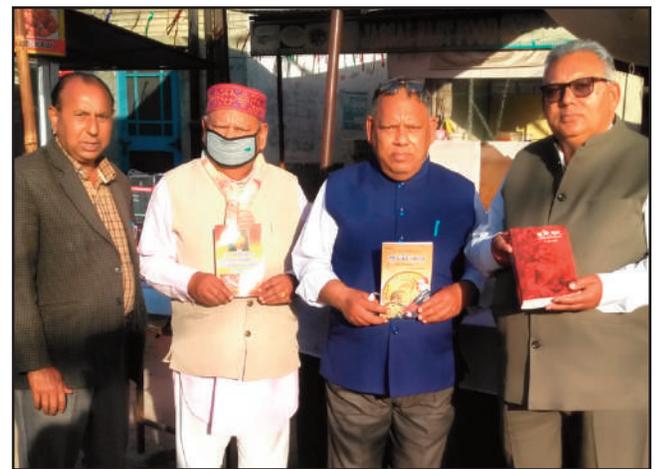
enjoy). Hans Raj Hans even improvised the famous Punjabi lore, Mahia and said – Do Patar Anaran De; Jis Sanu Milana Hove – Behde Ajae Chamaran De. The importance of Bootan Mandi may be gauged from the fact that icons and leaders like Ambedkar, Mangoo Ram, Joginder Nath Mandal, Jagjivan Ram, Nijlanguppa, Chand Ram, B.P. Maurya, Kanshi Ram, Mayawati, L.K. Advani, Ram Nath Kovind, Ram Bilas Paswan, almost all CM's of Punjab among others visited Bootan Mandi at one occasion or the other.

The glory of Guru Ravidass Jayanti kept on increasing with spontaneous participation of lakhs and lakhs of followers of Guru Ravidass and also merry makers to enjoy the Mela and celebrations over the year. But every good thing also has a neg-

ophy of the great Guru. These are my personal views which I decided to share with my fellow Bootan Mandians and the community at large though with a lot of remorse and pain. I have no intention to criticize or oppose anybody individually or collectively. The sole motivation to write this piece is to raise an early alarm before the situa-



**Ramesh Chander**  
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)  
91-99885-10940



some tribute to the lofty philosophy of the Gurus and our constitution giving equal status to the women folk and rightly so.

Over the years, the Disha and Dasha (shape and scope) of the two day celebrations at Bootan Mandi, have been evolving to meet the fast changing scenario of not only social and economic status of the dalits in the region and beyond but also the emerging political clout which dalits are holding, thanks to the efforts and struggle of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Babu Mangoo Ram Mugowalia and Manyawar Kanshi Ram. In the early years, these celebrations used to be a simple spiritual manifestation of the followers of Guru Ravidass in the region under the influence of Ad-dharm Mandal of Babu Mangoo Ram Mugowalia and Sants like Sarwan Dass of Dera Ballan on the out-skirts of Jalandhar and Hira Dass of Dera Chak Hakim near Phagwara among others. Babasaheb Ambedkar appeared on the scene and his visit to Bootan Mandi in October, 1951 and growing economic well being of leather merchants of the area tended to change the direction towards political orientation to the celebrations. Dalit youth of the area started taking interest and provided positive inputs. The celebrations became more educative and an exercise in generating awareness by way of organizing Kavi-Darbars, bringing out of souvenirs, printing and exchanging greeting cards, decorating and decking the entire route of the Jaloos – Shoba Yatra with colourful banners, arches, buntings etc. beginning the mid 1960s. I may add with



with added facilities befitting to the sites. The Bootan Mandi two-day annual celebrations were virtually turned into a huge mela on the calendar of events of the city towards the end of the century and first decade of the 21st century. All political leaders of standing felt obliged to come and pay obeisance at Guru Ravidass Dham, join the Shoba Yatra, join the spiritual darbars and register their presence at the much awaited and acclaimed Sangeet Darbar to conclude the ceremonies. The list of singers at the Sangeet Darbar, the climax event, reads like a 'Who's Who' of the cultural and musical fraternity from Narinder Biba to Hans Raj Hans to Master Saleem to Noora Sisters (their great mother Bibi Nooran belonged to Bootan Mandi) to Ginni Mahi and all other top-notch singers of Punjab, with the catch phrase - Bootan Mandi Ajao Jene Dekhana Nazara eh ( Come to Bootan Mandi to

active side, it is said. The Mela aspect of the event is gaining strength and currency as the profile of the community in general. But the agenda and purpose of the event got diluted beginning the decade of 2020. Personal rivalry, jealousy, family quarrels, decreasing economic profile of the so called Seths of Bootan Mandi and also rising political profile of Akalis, BJP, AAP to replace the traditional stronghold of Congress and Republican Party/BSP etc. The Gurpurab is celebrated as it used to be but the underlying current indicated that it was losing steam under the leadership of spent forces that is 'Chale Hue Kartoons' in Punjabi parlance. They are full of ego and don't want to pass on the baton to the younger generation with sheer vested motives. It is a matter of concern to many like me who have emotional attachment and sense of belonging not only to Bootan Mandi but also to the lofty ideals and philos-

tion worsens and the glory of my native place Bootan Mandi which is called the 'Capital of Dalits'; informally. I pray to Guru Ravidass to bless us with soul and mind to understand and arrest the decline in our thinking and approach to rectify the situation in the larger interests of the area and the community at large. Let us be tolerant. Let us learn from each other. Let us encourage the younger generation to come forward and take over. The sooner the better. With these humble submissions, I conclude with Al-lama Iqbal's nazam:

Hawaida Aaj Apne Zakhm-e-Pinhan Kar Ke Chorun Ga  
Lahoo Ro Ro Ke Mehfil Ko Gulistan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

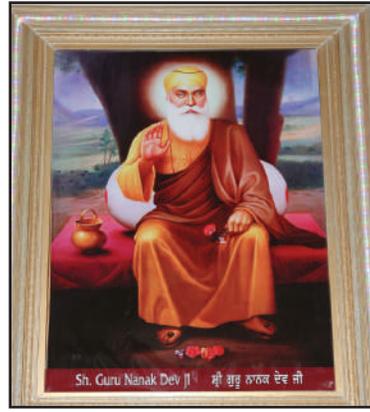
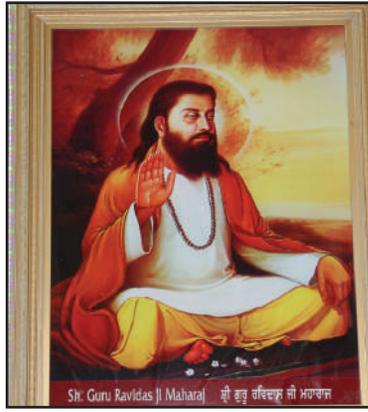
I will surely exhibit all my hidden wounds today  
I will surely change assembly to a garden with blood-mixed tears  
Jalana Hai Mujhe Har Shama-e-Dil Ko Souz-e-Pinhan Se  
Teri Tareek Raaton Mein Charaghan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

I have to light every heart's candle with hidden pathos  
I will surely create bright illumination in your darkness  
Parona Aik Hi Tasbeeh Mein In Bikhare Danon Ko  
Jo Muskhil Hai, To Iss Mushkil Ki Asan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

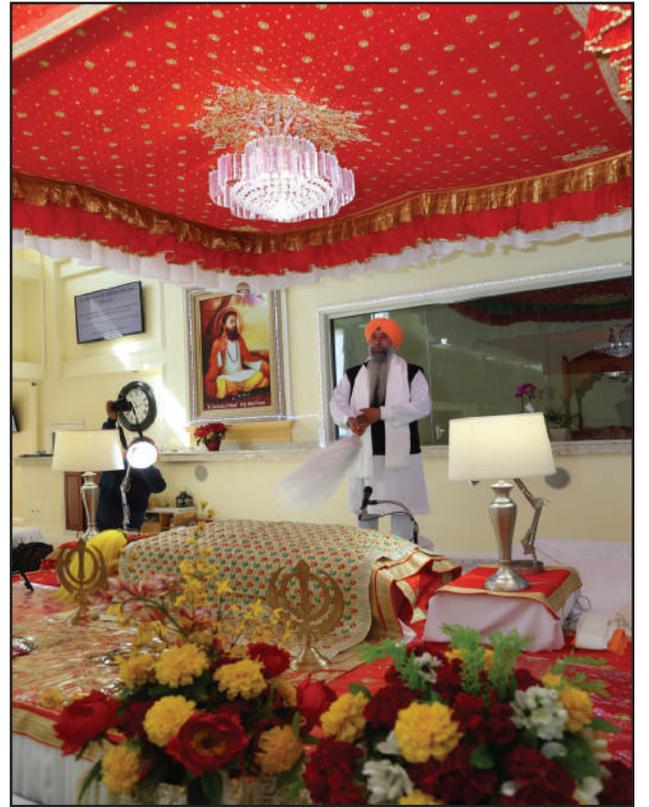
If stringing these scattered pearls in a single rosary  
Is difficult, I will surely make this difficult task easy

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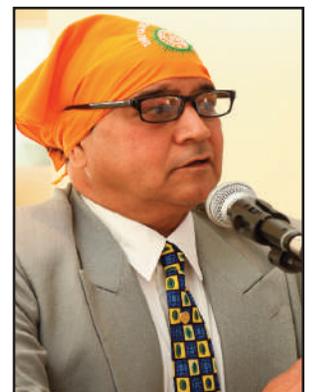
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