

COLLECTOR'S EDITION



LIONS OF PUNJAB

ICONIC PERSONALITIES OF PUNJAB IN UAE

BY VIKAS BHARGAVA

This First Edition of the “LIONS OF PUNJAB”
Showcasing the Achievement and success stories of Icons from all walk of life.

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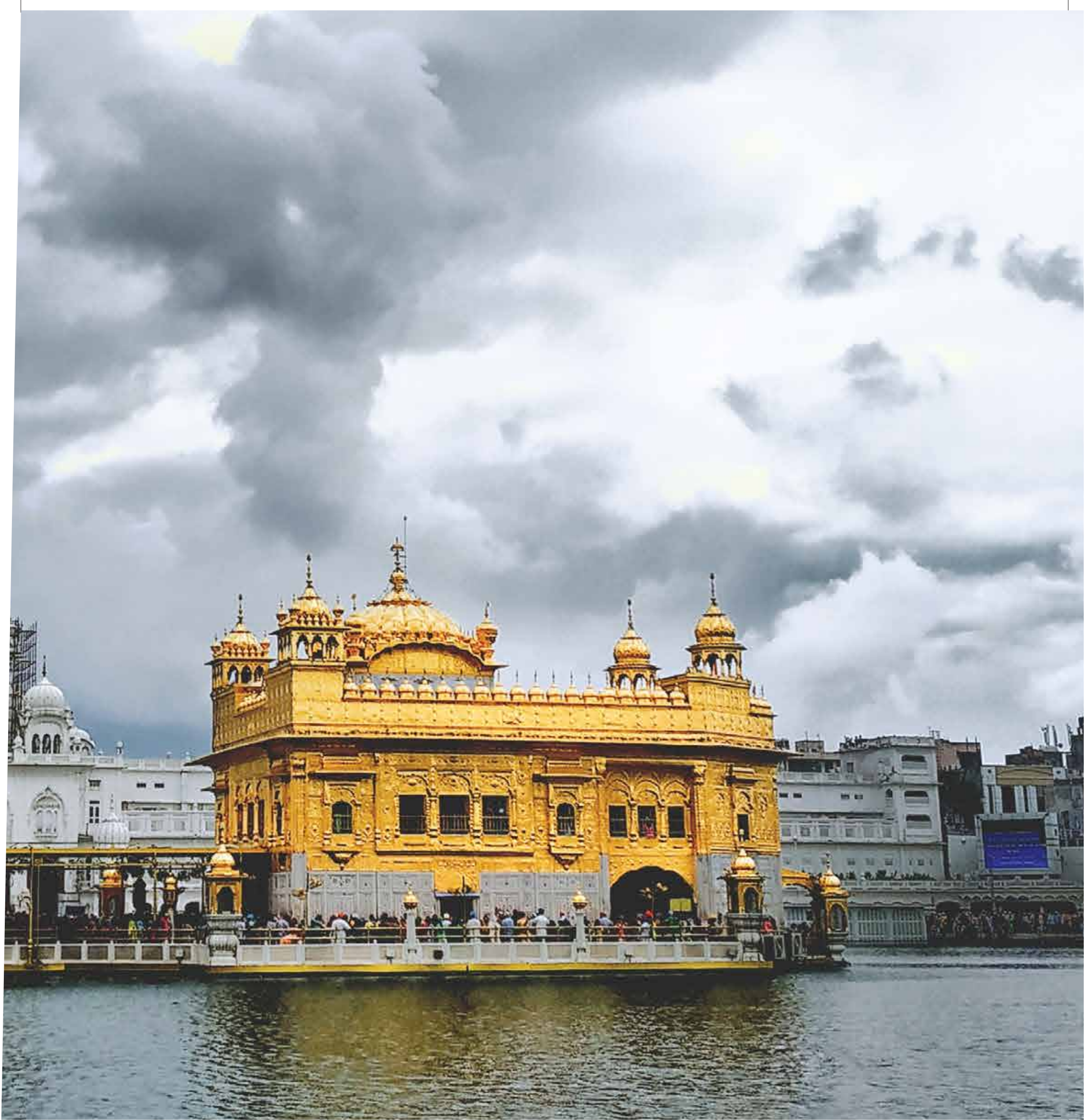
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Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Mr Vikas Bhargava of DCOM Design Co. FZE. supported by prominent businessman S. Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affairs, Govt of Punjab, and Member High Powered Investment Committee) have planned and successfully executed another edition of Coffee Table Book titled "Lions of Punjab in UAE" in association with PTC Punjabi channel.

It is my pleasure to associate with such genius personalities. When he elaborated this planning with me it looked like a tough task to accomplish but the way Mr Vikas and other people made earnest efforts it was unbelievable. It took long then expected but it was worth waiting for this enterprise.

It is commendable that the Punjabis have also contributed a lot in the progress of this nation with their dedication, zeal and zest. Being from the same land I feel proud over the holistic approach.

I convey my heartiest good wishes to all those who are associated with this Coffee Table Book "Lions of Punjab in UAE". I wish I can see more in the years to come.

(Harjeet Singh Grewal)

President,

National Gatka Association of India

Chairman,

International Sikh Martial Art Council



INTERNATIONAL SIKH CONFEDERATION

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Date: 31st Jan 2022

MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Mr. Vikas Bhargava
Greetings.

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Vikas Bhargava of "DCOM Design Co. FZE. Supported by Prominent Businessman Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affair, Govt of Punjab, and Member - High Powered Investment Committee). In association with PTC Punjabi Channel, Has planned and successfully executed another edition of Coffee Table Book titled "Lions of Punjab in UAE" it was my pleasure to be associated with him. When he planned and discussed with me it looked like a huge task but the way Vikas approached me and other people I believed in it. I took long then expected but it was worth waiting for it.

It's good as people of Punjab have always worked for the land where they have resided with the spirit of total commitment and dedication. Being from the same land I am proud of it.

I Convey my heartiest good wishes to all those who are associated with this Coffee Table Book "Lions of Punjab in UAE". As it will acknowledge the success the Punjabi's and motivate others for dedicating themselves for the cause of humanity and particularly for Punjabi community. I Wish all the very best and success for the event & also for your future endeavors.

Good Luck

GOD SPEED



Yours Sincerely
[Signature]
Col Jagtar Singh Multani
Secretary General
International Sikh Confederation

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Enlisted in the book different walks of life
500 Sikh Role Models Globally

PROLOGUE

Service rendered to humanity in any form with full love and devotion and without selfish motive is in fact the pre-requisite for a person to tread on divine path. This means that service rendered with one's own hands and feet for the welfare of humanity leads to the blessings of the Divine Lord.

The book, Coffee Table Book – '**Lions of Punjab in UAE**' themed on the high values propagated by **Sri Guru Nanak Sahib ji**, (1) '**Naam Japna**'- Ever remember God, which does not mean sitting cross-legged in abstract contemplation. It means reading, understanding and practicing the Revealed Divine Word to enable us to get a sense of perspective on life, (2) '**Kirt Karna**'– means to earn livelihood with honesty and hard work without any exploitation or cheating. (3) '**Vand Chhakna**' perhaps the most important of all, is sharing our earnings with other needy person; not only wealth but also our time, energy and skills. It is a practical approach embodied in the Sikh teaching of '**Sewa**'– service to others which leads us to strive for the welfare of entire mankind irrespective of any distinction .

It is an appreciable effort by the author **Shri Vikas Bhargava of “DCOM Design Co. FZE.**, supported by **Prominent Businessman - S. Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affair, Government of Punjab, and Member - High Powered Investment Committee)** who has done tremendous hard work to bring all accurate of the Sikhs and Punjabi. It is virtuous, as people of Punjab has always worked for the land where they have resided with the spirit of total commitment, hard work and perseverance.

I congratulate the author **Shri Vikas Bhargava** for such meticulous work in compiling the book, **Coffee Table Book – 'Lions of Punjab in UAE'**. I extend my warm regards and confident that rapidly this book and probably in succession will help mankind and make one understand that while walking lightly on this planet, one leaves remarkable footprints behind, that cannot be erased thousands of years.

(BHUPINDER SINGH KOHLI)

22nd January, 2022

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Letter of Best Wishes

UAE-based Indian expatriate, especially from Punjab (India) have also been at the forefront of giving back to the community, both here in UAE and in India. Moreover, these NRI- have been increasingly achieving great success, thereby using the fruits of their success to drive the growth and progress to all mankind

The UAE government has always lavished praise at the Indian expat community, for their role in building the modern and futuristic UAE.

I congratulate DCOM Designs for coming out with this publication, "Lions of Punjab in UAE" which details the achievements of UAE's most iconic community members. This is not the first such effort from Vikas Bhargava of DCOM Designs, who have always been enthusiastic about celebrating the accomplishments of the various community in the UAE. Supported by Mr. Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affair, Govt of Punjab, and Member - High Powered Investment Committee). In association with PTC Punjabi Channel.

I am sure that this book will serve not only as a source of pride for the Punjabi community, but also as a source of inspiration for young and upcoming Indian professionals and entrepreneurs who are driven by the dream of transforming our country into a global superpower



Awad Mohammad Bin Shaikha Mujren
Director General of Emirates Travelers Festival

From the desk of
Rizwan Sajan
Founder & Chairman



Message of Congratulations

For many decades now, the UAE has been a source of success and happiness for the large NRI community of unskilled laborers to businessmen and top professionals. The country has given endless opportunities to NRIs and provided a safe environment for pursuing careers and business interests in various fields.

UAE-based Indian expatriate, especially from Punjab have also been at the forefront of giving back to the community, both here and in India. Moreover, these NRI- have been increasingly investing in India, thereby using the fruits of our success to drive the growth and progress of our home country as well.

The UAE government has always lavished praise at the Indian expat community, for our role in building the modern and futuristic UAE. This gives us more reasons and motivation to pursue bigger ambitions in this beautiful "Karma Bhoomi".

I congratulate DCOM Designs for coming out with this publication, "Lions of Punjab in UAE" which details the achievements of UAE's most iconic community members. This is not the first such effort from Vikas Bhargava of DCOM Designs, who have always been enthusiastic about celebrating the accomplishments of the NRI community in the UAE. Supported by Mr. Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affair, Govt of Punjab, and Member - High Powered Investment Committee). In association with PTC Punjabi Channel.

I am sure that this book will serve not only as a source of pride for the Punjabi community, but also as a source of inspiration for young and upcoming Indian professionals and entrepreneurs who are driven by the dream of transforming our country into a global superpower.

Wishing everyone all the best in this endeavor.

Rizwan Sajan

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Date : 08/03/2022



The Punjab Community
Dubai

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Vikas Bhargava of "DCOM Design Co. FZE. Supported by Prominent Businessman Amanjeet Singh, (NRI Affair, Govt of Punjab, and Member - High Powered Investment Committee). In association with PTC Punjabi Channel. Has planned and successfully executed another edition of Coffee Table Book titled "Lions of Punjab in UAE"

I have seen some of the earlier publication by Vikas. His approach and style of work is very different – some of his books are very different and unique.

It is good, as people of Punjab have always worked for the land where they have resided with the spirit of total commitment and dedication.

I Convey my heartiest good wishes to all those who are associated with this Coffee Table Book "Lions of Punjab in UAE". Let people learn from the journey of such ICONS

With best regards,

For **Link Middle East Ltd**

Mrs. Shruti Gokhale
Dy.Managing Director





We take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Vikas Bhargava C.E.O of DCom Design for another launch of Coffee table book Lions of Punjab in association with Mr. Amanjeet Singh Founder of B2 innovations & Mr. Majid Khan C.E.O of NKN Media.

This is a great initiative in bringing prominent members of diaspora from Punjab in UAE on a single platform. The achievement of these Lions will be a source of great inspiration and motivation for the young generations. We are sure that this compilation will be of immense benefit to all the Indian community members and Emirati friends.

This is a remarkable endeavour in uniting notable members of the Punjab diaspora in the UAE. These Lions' achievements will act as a reference of tremendous encouragement and support for succeeding generations. I am assured that everyone in the Indian community and our Emirati friends will gain much from this compilation.

PTC Networks, which has always put greater emphasis on providing platform to budding individuals, is delighted to be collaborating with DCOM Designs. DCOM has taken a tremendous initiative to recognise the leaders of the UAE with its book Lions of Punjab, just as PTC Network focuses on encouraging and achieving the aspirations of exceptional people.

I believe that this book will act as a reference to future generations, inspiring them to fight and accomplish their goals. I congratulate the DCOM's whole team prosperity in their future projects and initiatives, and I am confident that the initiative will continue to rise to greater heights of achievement".

Rabindra Narayan

MD & President, PTC Network



Firstly I would like to thank all the Community members for giving me this opportunity to work on this wonderful project, not to miss the long waiting and calls but it all ending in great meetings and hospitality.

Each person and their family in a class of their own, there is lot to see, lot to learn and lot to write about them. Many we missed to meet yet felt the aura and grace while working on the designs.

Like always I say.... Initially seemed like a daunting task, but when I started all I had a vision which was supported by some great team particularly Amanjeet Singh of Punjabi Dhaba... had lot of discussion over chai and samosa. Real GEM... also I want to thank all the members in this journey, who not only stood by me also encouraged me to continue the work on this Coffee Table Book, they constantly was guiding me through to make this book a memorable one as each had a great source of content. Rest I'm sure the details of the book will explain.

On a personal note - many of the Icons are so different and motivating that I would like to travel with them to their home town and make a documentary film. I also would like to thank my boss (my wife) Teena Bhargava.

So let's meet over a 'Chai' again



Vikas Bhargava

Editor / Creative Director



THE HISTORY OF PUNJAB	001 - 016
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| **DIAMOND**

SANJEEV MATHARU	017 - 022
BALBIR SINGH RANDHAWA	023 - 028
BHUPINDER SINGH	029 - 034
GURJEET S. GREWAL	035 - 040
AMANJEET SINGH	

| **PLATINUM**

.....	041 - 044
ABHISHEK MAHAJAN	045 - 048
ASHISH MEHTA	049 - 052
JUGWINDER SINGH BRAR	053 - 056
ACHAL GHAI	057 - 060
O.P. MALLIK	061 - 064
GURINDER PAL SINGH	065 - 068
VINAY VARMA	
MUKESH KOCHHAR	

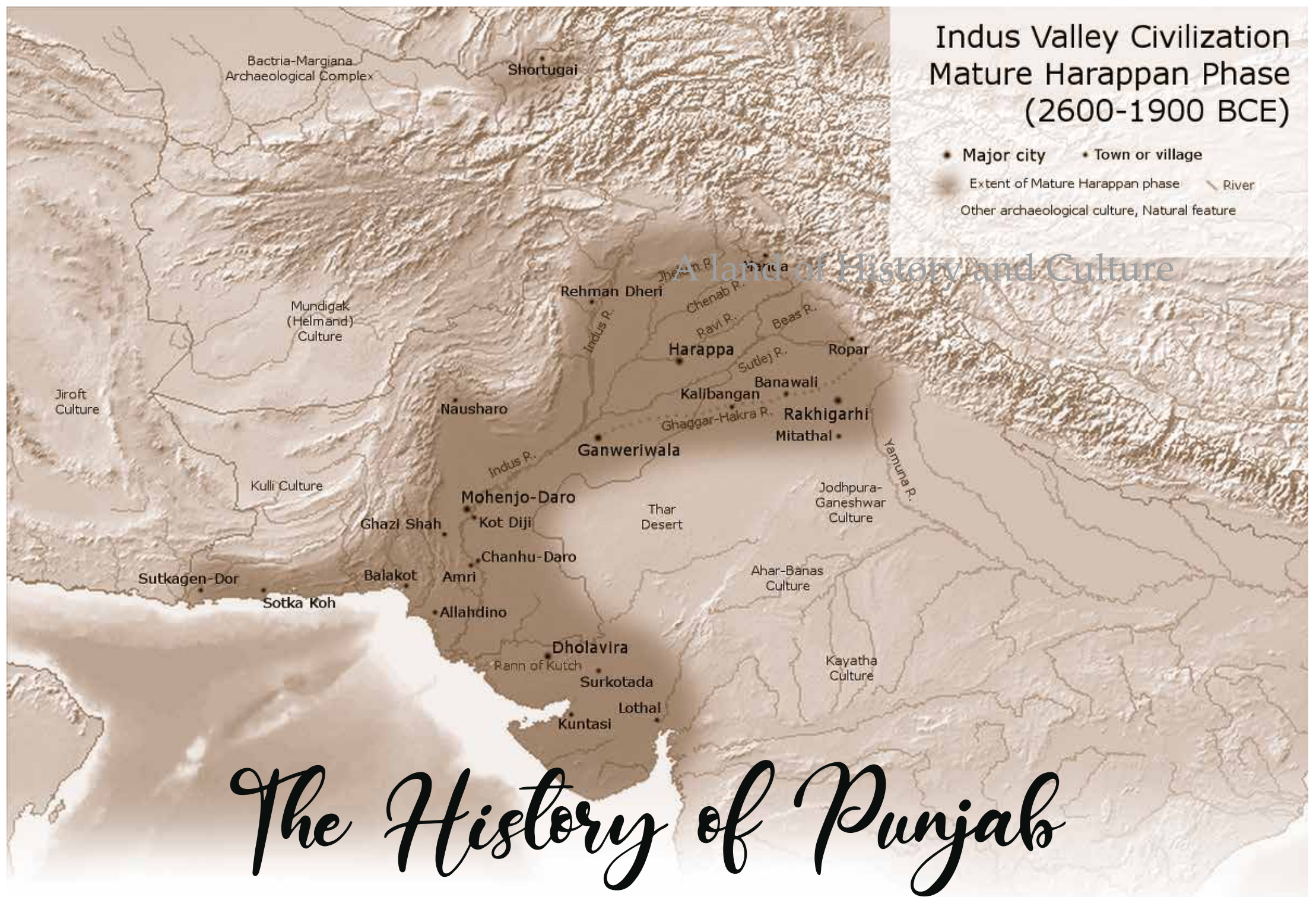
| **GOLD**

.....	069 - 072
.....	073 - 076
AMRIK SINGH	077 - 080
RANJIT SINGH	081 - 084
KUSUM DUTTA	085 - 088
HARJYOT OBEROI	089 - 092
REENU MOHINDRA	

VOTE OF THANKS

COMPLIMENTS BY:





The History of Punjab refers to the history of the Punjab region, a geopolitical, cultural, and historical region in the Indian subcontinent, comprising areas of eastern Pakistan and northern India. Ancient Punjab was the primary geographical extent of the Indus Valley Civilisation, which was notable for advanced technologies and amenities that the people of the region had used. During the Vedic period, Punjab was referred to as Sapta Sindhu, or the Land of Seven Rivers. Punjab was historically a Hindu region during this period. Intermittent wars between various kingdoms were characteristic of the time, except when

they temporarily unified under centralised Indian Empires or invading powers.

An interlude of Sikh rule under the Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his Sikh Empire briefly saw traditional culture resurface, until the British annexed the region into the British Raj. Following the end of colonial rule, Punjab was partitioned on religious lines - the Sikh and Hindu majority districts of East Punjab went to India, while the remaining Muslim majority districts of West Punjab went to Pakistan



It is believed that the earliest trace of human habitation in Punjab traces to the Soan valley between the Indus and the Jhelum rivers. This period goes back to the first interglacial period in the second Ice Age, from which remnants of stone and flint tools have been found.

Punjab and the surrounding areas are the location of the ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation, also known as the Harappan Civilisation. There are ruins of cities, thousands of years old, found in these areas with the most notable being those of Harappa, Rakhigarhi and Rupar. Besides the aforementioned sites, hundreds of ancient settlements have been found throughout the region, spanning an area of about 100 miles. These ancient towns and cities had advanced features such as city-planning, brick-built houses, sewage and draining systems, as well as public baths. The people of the Indus Valley also developed a writing system, that has to this day not been deciphered.

Vedic Period

Literary evidence from the Vedic Era suggests a transition from early small janas, or tribes, to many Janapadas (territorial civilisations) and ga a sangha societies. The latter are loosely translated to being oligarchies or republics. These political entities were represented

from the Rig Veda to the Astadhyayi by Panini. Archaeologically, the time span of these entities corresponds to phases also present in the Indo-Gangetic divide and the upper Gangetic basin.

Some of the early Janas of the Rig Veda can be strongly attributed to Punjab. Although their distribution patterns are not satisfactorily ascertainable, they are associated with the Porusni, Asikni, Satudri, Vipasa, and Saraswati. The rivers of Punjab often corresponded to the eastern Janapadas. Rig Vedic Janas such as the Druhyus, Anus, Purus, Yadus, Turvasas, Bharatas, and others were associated in Punjab and the Indo-Gangetic plain. Other Rig Vedic Janapadas such as the Pakhthas, Bhalanasas, Visanins, and Sivas were associated with areas in the north and west of Punjab. Pre-Islamic Punjab was also a centre of learning for Ancient India, and many ashrams and universities. The most notable of the universities is that at Takshash-Shila, which was dedicated to the study of the "three Vedas and 18 branches of knowledge". In its heyday, it had attracted students from all over India as well as those from surrounding countries.

Punjab in the ancient Vedic period was known as the Sapta Sindhu, or land of the seven rivers. The aforementioned seven rivers were the Vitasta and Vitamasa (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusni and Iravati (Ravi), Vipasa (Beas), and the Satudri (Sutlej).

Alexander's Invasion



After overrunning the Achaemenid Empire, Alexander turned his sights to India. This was the first time he moved beyond the limits of the Persian Empire. Alexander sent heralds ahead of him to the native rulers on the west side of the Indus and divided his army into two. After crossing the Indus, Alexander was welcomed by the native ruler of Takshashila, known to the Greeks as Taxila, and other allies. Onesikritos was sent to interview the native ascetics about their way of life, but the conversation was rumored to be difficult as the Greeks had to use three different levels of interpreters. Alexander was nevertheless impressed enough to bring an Indian philosopher whom the Greeks called Kalanos. After this, Alexander's first opponent was the Raja Porus. Porus and Taxiles were longtime enemies.

Porus and Alexander had fought a battle on the banks of river Jehlum. The armies had met in June, when the monsoon had begun, and it was the first time Alexander and his troops had encountered Elephants in battle. Though, most of the western scholars claim the victory of Alexander but there are some sources which claim that the battle ended in stalemate, which ultimately resulted in their friendship. Later, when Alexander proceeded further, he faced stiff resistance from local tribes or Jnanapads. And finally, he was forced to return from river Beas without accomplishing his dream.

Maurya Empire

The Mauryan Empire around 265 BCE. Prior to Alexander's invasion, much of the region was ruled by the Mahajanapada of the Nanda Empire as well as other smaller Janapadas.

Chandragupta Maurya, with the aid of Kautilya, had established his empire around 320 B.C. The early life of Chandragupta Maurya is not clear. Kautilya enrolled the young Chandragupta in the university at Taxila to educate him in the arts, sciences, logic, mathematics, warfare, and administration. With the help of the small Janapadas of Punjab and Sindh, he had gone on to conquer much of the North West. He then defeated the Nanda rulers in Pataliputra to capture the throne. Chandragupta Maurya fought Alexander's successor in the east, Seleucus when the latter invaded. In a peace treaty, Seleucus ceded all territories west of the Indus and offered a marriage, including a portion of Bactria, while Chandragupta granted Seleucus 500 elephants.

Chandragupta's rule was very well organised. The Mauryans had an autocratic and centralised administration system, aided by a council of ministers, and also a well-established espionage system. Much of Chandragupta's success is attributed to Chanakya, the author of the Arthashastra. Much of the Mauryan rule had a strong bureaucracy that had regulated tax collection, trade and commerce, industrial activities, mining, statistics and data, maintenance of public places, and upkeep of temples. Mauryan rule was advanced for its time, and foreign accounts of Indian cities mention many temples, libraries, universities, gardens, and parks. A notable account was that of the Greek ambassador Megasthenes who had visited the Mauryan capital of Pataliputra.

Chandragupta was succeeded by Bindusara and Ashoka, who took the empire to its peak. Ashoka converted into Buddhism.... This also lead to further spread of Buddhism in Punjab,

Gupta Empire



The Gupta Empire at its maximum extent. The Gupta Empire ruled during a period known as India's Golden age.

The origins of the Gupta Empire are believed to be from local Rajas as only the father and grandfather of Chandra Gupta are mentioned in inscriptions. Chandra Gupta's reign was an unsettled one, but under his son, Samudra Gupta, the empire reached supremacy over India roughly similar to the proportions that the Maurya Empire had exercised before. Samudra Gupta was regarded as a patron of the arts and humanities. Inscriptions give evidence to the Raja not only being a learned man, but one fond of the company of poets and writers; one type of coinage even shows him playing on the veena.

Samudra Gupta was succeeded by his son Rama Gupta in whose time the Scythians, known as the Sakas, had begun to be recognised as a threat. Rama Gupta had attempted to pay off the Sakas, but this had cost him his throne. Usurped by Chandra Gupta II, the new emperor had begun to consolidate the power of the empire where traces of disruption had presented himself. Chandra Gupta II had

gone on to defeat the Sakas, earning him the name Sakari Chandra Gupta. By this time the Empire still ruled over much of North India, but the authority in the South seemed to lapse.

After the death of Skanda Gupta, the Empire suffered from various wars of succession. The last major Gupta King was Buddha Gupta; after him, the Empire had split into various branches across India. Nevertheless, by the sixth century, the Huns had established themselves and Toramana and his son Mihirakula, who has been described to be a Saivite Hindu, had ruled over the approximate areas of Punjab, Rajputana, and Kashmir. Several accounts, including those by Chinese pilgrims, make reference to the cruelty of the Huns. There had been several alliances throughout this time that had checked the advance of the Huns, but it was not until 533-534 that Raja Yashovarman of Mandasor firmly defeated them.

Empire of Harsha

After the disintegration of the Gupta Empire, Northern India was ruled by several independent kingdoms which carried on the traditions of the Gupta Empire within their own territories. Harshavardhana, commonly called Harsha, was an Indian emperor who ruled northern India from 606 to 647 from his capital Kanauj. Harsha's grandfather was Adityavardhana, a feudatory ruler of Thanesvar in eastern Punjab. Under his son Prabhakarvardhana, the dynasty emerged as a major state which was constantly at odds with the Huns and the nearby rulers of Malwa. Harsha was his nephew, and sought to conquer all of the country; at the height of his power, his kingdom spanned the entirety of Northern India.

He also converted to Buddhism.... During his reign, Punjab again witnessed the rise of Buddhism.

Medieval period

Arab conquests

At the beginning of the 8th century, Arab armies of the Umayyad Caliphate penetrated into South Asia. In 712 the Umayyads conquered Sindh and parts of southern Punjab including Multan. The newly conquered region became known as Sind and was the easternmost state of the Umayyad Caliphate. Umayyad rule was later replaced with Abbasid rule in 750.

In the mid 800s, Abbasid authority in Sind weakened and five independent principalities emerged. In southern Punjab the Banu Munnabih established themselves based at Multan. The Banu Munnabih later gave allegiance to the Abbasids, and remained unchallenged for over a century. Visitors at the time noted the power, prestige and prosperity brought to the region under Banu Munnabih rule. Between 982–5, the power of the Banu Munnabih began to erode and Multan was conquered by Halam b. Shayban on behalf of the Fatimid caliph based in Egypt. By 985, the traveller Al-Maqdisi noted that the city of Multan was Shia, that the Friday sermon was in the name of the Fatimid and all decisions are taken in accordance with his commands.

Hindu Shahis

In the mid 9th century, the Hindu Shahi dynasty supplanted the Buddhist Turk Shahi dynasty in Kabul. The last Turk Shahi ruler, Lagaturman, is said to have been imprisoned by his Brahmin Vizier, Kallar, who went on to establish the Hindu Shahi dynasty. At the beginning Hindu Shahi rule extended from Kabul to the Chenab river. The Hindu Shahis were expelled from Kabul in 870 and re-established their capital at Udabhandapura.

The medieval Rajput kingdoms of Sappatsindhu (Punjab and Sindh) area had become divided into several smaller feudatory royalties for the next three to five centuries. They were called mehtars or mehton kingdoms due to their relative relations with each other. Some of them were so small that they only had a state of 500 villages. Due to the enmity with each other, they were not able to stop any invaders. Except for the hilly area states, they too almost ended along with the Lodhi dynasty on the arrival of Mughals.

Ghaznavids

In 977, Sabuktigin, the Samanid governor of Ghazni, established an independent kingdom in western Afghanistan with Ghazni as its capital. The Ghaznavid dynasty, as they would be known, were a Persianate Muslim dynasty of Turkic mamluk origin. When the Ghaznavids began expanding eastwards they came into conflict with the Hindu Shahi. This led to the Hindu Shahi ruler to form an alliance with Rajput rulers in the Punjab to check the Ghaznavid expansion.

Sabuktigin's son Mahmud succeeded his father in 997, and began a series of raids into northern India. In 1001 he defeated Jayapala at the Battle of Peshawar and seized Hindu Shahi territory north of the

river Sindh. In 1006 Mahmud attacked the southern Punjabi kingdom of Multan, returning a few years later to massacre the local Ismaili population. Jayapala's son and grandson, Anandapala and Trilochanapala respectively, resisted Mahmud for another quarter of a century and later by Bhimapala and local Ghakkhar chieftains till Mu'izz ad-Din Muhammad's victory in Second battle of Tarain in 1192. Mahmud's battles against the Hindu Shahi between 1001 and 1026 were significant in establishing Muslim political dominance in the Afghanistan region and surrounding Gandhar region near Punjab. After the Turk invasions, many Hindu scholars of Sanskrit had fled to schools and universities in Benares and Kashmir. Al Biruni wrote: "Hindu sciences have fled far away from those parts of the country that have been conquered by us, and fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, to Benares, and other places." These places were later to face the same depredations.



In 1173 the Ghurid dynasty replaced the Ghaznavids in Ghazni, and under Muhammad of Ghor they began expanding eastwards. Between 1175 and 1192, the Ghurid dynasty occupied the cities of Uch, Multan, Peshawar, Lahore, and Delhi. In 1206, the Ghurid general Qutb-al-din Aybeg and his successor Iltutmish founded the first of the series of Delhi Sultanates. Each dynasty would be an alternation of various inner-Asian military lords and their clients, constantly vying for power. These sultanates would make Delhi a safe haven for Muslim Turks and Persians who would flee the eventual Mongol invasions.

The Khalji dynasty was the second dynasty of the Delhi sultanates, ruling from 1290 to 1320. This dynasty was a short-lived one, and extended Islamic rule to Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Deccan, and parts of Southern India. The Khalji dynasty reworked the tax system in India.

The Khalji dynasty was succeeded by the Tughluq dynasty, which had ruled from 1320 to 1413. Muhammad bin Tughluq was supported by Turkic warriors, and was the first to introduce non-Muslims into the administration, to participate in local festivals, and permit the construction of Hindu temples. After the death of the last Tughluq ruler Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, the Sayyid dynasty, Punjab, Dipalpur, and parts of Sindh had come under the rule of the Sultanates. During this time, various regions such as Bengal, Deccan, Malwa, and others had gained independence from the Sultanate. The rule of the Sayyid dynasty was characterised by frequent revolts by the Hindus of the various Punjabi doabs. The rule of the Sayyids experienced another revolt under the rule of their general Bahlul Lodi, who had at first occupied much of Punjab, yet failed to capture Delhi. In his second attempt, Bahlul Lodi captured Delhi and founded the Lodi dynasty, the last of the Delhi sultanates.

Early Modern period

In 1526, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan from the Fergana Valley (modern-day Uzbekistan) was ousted from his ancestral domain in Central Asia. Bābur turned to India and crossed the Khyber Pass. From his base in Afghanistan, he was able to secure control of Punjab, and in 1526 he decisively defeated the forces of the Delhi sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī at the First Battle of Panipat. The next year, he defeated the Rajput confederacy under Rana Sanga of Mewar, and in 1529 defeated the remnants of the Delhi sultanates. At his death in 1530 the Mughal Empire encompassed almost all of Northern India.

Bābur's son Humāyūn (reigned 1530–40 and 1555–56) had lost territory to Sher Shah Suri. Suris and Hemu ruled the area from 1540 to 1556. Akbar (reigned 1556–1605) defeated the Hindu king Hemu, also known as Hem Chandra Vikramaditya, the then ruler of Delhi, at the Second Battle of Panipat (1556) and reestablished Mughal rule. Akbar's son Jahangir had furthered the size of the Mughal Empire through conquest, yet left much of the state bankrupt as a result. Jahangir's son Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–1658) was known for his monuments, including the Taj Mahal. Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb had instilled heavy taxes on Hindus and Sikhs that had later led to an economic depression.

During the reign of Mu ammad Shah (1719–48), the empire began to decline, accelerated by warfare and rivalries, and. After the death of Mu ammad Shah in 1748, the Marathas attacked and ruled almost all of northern India. Mughal rule was reduced to only a small area around Delhi, which passed under Maratha (1785) and the British (1803) control. The last Mughal, Bahādur Shah II (reigned 1837–57), was exiled to Burma by the British.



Sikhism

In the fifteenth century, before Guru Nanak, the whole world, especially the Indian subcontinent, was entrapped in the dark age. The condition of Punjab was much more miserable than other parts. Indian community was rigidly divided into four broad castes, viz: Brahmins (priest class), Kshatriyas (royal class), Vaishyas (merchant and trader class) and Shudras (worker class). These were further subdivided into numerous subcastes and subclasses. The boundaries among them were so rigid, no room was left for any sense of brotherhood among the people. The degree of supremacy followed from Brahmins to Shudras. At that time, Brahmins were busy exploiting others by indulging them into the trap of countless superstitions and empty rituals. Kshatriyas had abandoned their duty to protect the dharma and indulged in the flattery of the ruling class. Vaishyas were being exploited by both the ruling as well as the priest class. The Shudras, on the other hand, were deprived of even the most basic human rights.

By that time, various invaders from Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, etc, had been invading India for more than five centuries. These communities who followed Islam, settled in the Indian sub-continent, and thus, Islam was introduced to India. But since most of them were ignorant of the true essence of religion, they were deeply drenched with the arrogance of being a ruling class. As a result, they used to discriminate against Hindus a lot and imposed numerous restrictions on their customs, traditions, and festivals. Hindus, on the other hand, viewed Muslims as outsiders and were not ready to embrace them. As a result, there was a feeling of enmity and hostility among the two. In a nutshell, the religious distinctions had become a hindrance to the development and formation of a harmonious society.

In this period of turmoil, the financial gap between the two ends of the society also increased a lot. The upper royal class, which included ministers, religious leaders, feudal lords, high-rank officers, etc., was completely engrossed in their luxurious life and sensual pleasures. The lower class, on the other hand, could hardly earn two square meals a day. Not only were they deprived of education, and justice, they were frequently subjected to exploitation by the higher sections of society.

The entire Indian subcontinent, especially Punjab was moving through a period of serious turmoil under the rule of Lodhi rulers at that time. Ibrahim Lodhi (1480-1526 CE) proved to be a useless ruler. Several revolts were taking place one after the other. Military commanders and courtiers were busy conspiring against each other. The provincial governors were more interested in establishing their independent kingdoms. The corrupt officials were busy merry-making and exploiting the poor. All these factors led to a state of complete lawlessness and insecurity. It was during this time, when Babur (1483-1530 CE) invaded India.

Punjab being the pathway to Delhi became his battleground, and witnessed a heavy bloodshed. Finally, he laid the stone of the Mughal empire in India after defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526.

In this dark period, the religious leaders, who were ought to help people, were themselves engrossed in numerous traps of superstitions, illogical practices, irrational and worthless controversies, fanatic beliefs, or even in building their own business worlds.

A very few individuals, like Yogis, who had some potential and had accomplished some wisdom, adopted ascetic worldviews. Consequently, there was no ray of hope for a common man. The condition of women, who are the backbone of the society, was far more miserable as they were considered inferior to men.

It was during this time, when Guru Nanak came into the picture and dispelled all the darkness. He did not just founded another religion and restricted himself to it, rather he delivered the message of universal brotherhood to the entire human race. In the context of Punjab, his arrival marks a significant turning point in history. That's why, all the people of the Punjab, irrespective of their faith, celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak with utmost devotion and love.



Maharaja Ranjit Singh listening to Guru Granth Sahib being recited near the Akal Takht and Golden Temple, Amritsar, Punjab, India.



Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE), the founder of Sikhism, the first Guru of the Sikhs was born in village Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, in present day Pakistan. His teaching is centered around the concept of 'One God' who alone is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the whole universe. The sole aim of human life is to merge with Him. And the path is: His continuous remembrance and selfless service of humanity. In order to propagate his message, he carried out four udasis (spiritual journeys), not only in India, but across the major portion of the South Asian subcontinent including Burma, Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, etc. He also established a city called Kartarpur (Land of the Creator), where he practiced his ideas and initiated the development of an 'ideal society' constituting 'ideal individuals'.

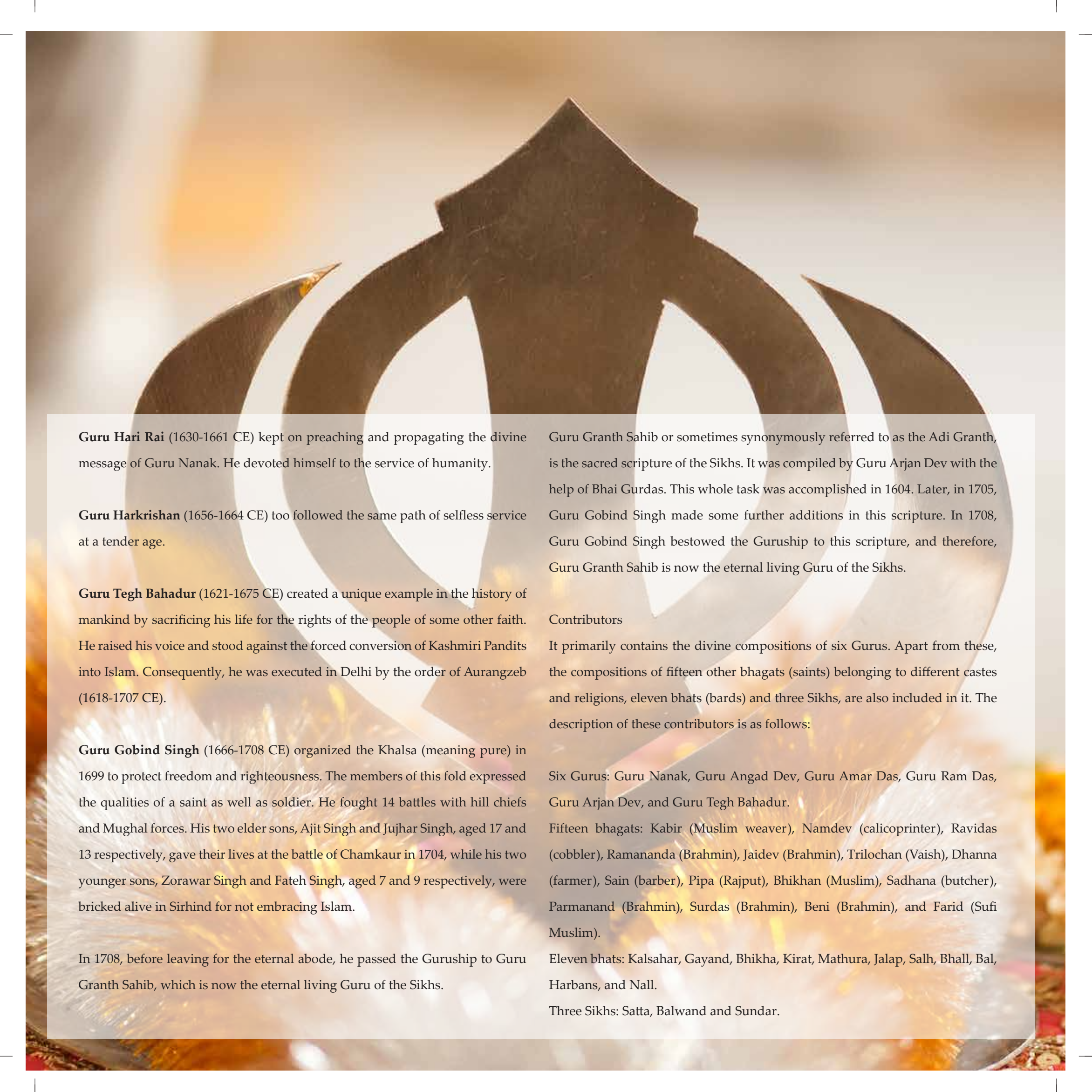
Guru Angad (1504-1552 CE), the successor of Guru Nanak, through his complete surrenderance and utmost devotion, gave the ideal of an ideal Sikh. He is known for standardizing Gurmukhi script, which later emerged as a prominent script for Punjabi language. Besides delivering the message of Guru Nanak, he also laid emphasis on education and sports.

Guru Amar Das (1479-1574 CE) further practiced and promoted the institutions of sangat (congregation of holy men) and pangat (eating together while sitting on the same floor, irrespective of any status). He also condemned irrational traditions like sati and promoted widow remarriage, inter caste marriage etc. For better organization of the Sikhs, manji system was established.

Guru Ram Das (1534-1581 CE) further strengthened the manji system and introduced the tradition of dasvandh (paying one-tenth of your earnings for community services). He founded the holy capital of Sikhs, Amritsar (Pool of Nectar).

Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 CE) constructed Sri Harimandir Sahib, popularly known as Golden Temple, in Amritsar. The foundation stone was laid by a Muslim saint, Mian Mir (1550-1635 CE). The Guru also completed the mammoth task of compiling the Adi Granth, the holy book of Sikhs, which included all the compositions of the previous Gurus. He was executed on the orders of Mughal emperor Jahangir (1569-1627 CE), who was overwhelmed by religious intolerance.

Guru Hargobind (1595-1644 CE) introduced the concept of 'Miri-Piri' (power and devotion) by constructing Akal Takht (Seat of Temporal Power) opposite to the Harimandir Sahib. He promoted martial practices among Sikhs and instilled the feelings of valor among them. He also fought four battles with Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666 CE), and he won all of them.



Guru Hari Rai (1630-1661 CE) kept on preaching and propagating the divine message of Guru Nanak. He devoted himself to the service of humanity.

Guru Harkrishan (1656-1664 CE) too followed the same path of selfless service at a tender age.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675 CE) created a unique example in the history of mankind by sacrificing his life for the rights of the people of some other faith. He raised his voice and stood against the forced conversion of Kashmiri Pandits into Islam. Consequently, he was executed in Delhi by the order of Aurangzeb (1618-1707 CE).

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 CE) organized the Khalsa (meaning pure) in 1699 to protect freedom and righteousness. The members of this fold expressed the qualities of a saint as well as soldier. He fought 14 battles with hill chiefs and Mughal forces. His two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, aged 17 and 13 respectively, gave their lives at the battle of Chamkaur in 1704, while his two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, aged 7 and 9 respectively, were bricked alive in Sirhind for not embracing Islam.

In 1708, before leaving for the eternal abode, he passed the Guruship to Guru Granth Sahib, which is now the eternal living Guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Granth Sahib or sometimes synonymously referred to as the Adi Granth, is the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. It was compiled by Guru Arjan Dev with the help of Bhai Gurdas. This whole task was accomplished in 1604. Later, in 1705, Guru Gobind Singh made some further additions in this scripture. In 1708, Guru Gobind Singh bestowed the Guruship to this scripture, and therefore, Guru Granth Sahib is now the eternal living Guru of the Sikhs.

Contributors

It primarily contains the divine compositions of six Gurus. Apart from these, the compositions of fifteen other bhagats (saints) belonging to different castes and religions, eleven bhats (bards) and three Sikhs, are also included in it. The description of these contributors is as follows:

Six Gurus: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan Dev, and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Fifteen bhagats: Kabir (Muslim weaver), Namdev (calicoprinter), Ravidas (cobbler), Ramananda (Brahmin), Jaidev (Brahmin), Trilochan (Vaish), Dhanna (farmer), Sain (barber), Pipa (Rajput), Bhikhan (Muslim), Sadhana (butcher), Parmanand (Brahmin), Surdas (Brahmin), Beni (Brahmin), and Farid (Sufi Muslim).

Eleven bhats: Kalsahar, Gayand, Bhikha, Kirat, Mathura, Jalap, Salh, Bhall, Bal, Harbans, and Nall.

Three Sikhs: Satta, Balwand and Sundar.

Philosophy and teachings

Ik Onkar

A Sikh literally meaning a student or a seeker, can be defined as any human being who faithfully believes:

- i. One Formless Being
- ii. Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib,
- iii. The Guru Granth Sahib,
- iv. The utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus.
- v. Amrit prepared by double-edged sword (khanda)

Sikh ethics emphasize the congruence between spiritual development and everyday moral conduct. Its founder Guru Nanak summarized this perspective as: "Truth is the highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living. Sikhism lays emphasis on Ėk nūr te sab jag upjiā, 'From the one light, the entire universe welled up.

1. Naam Japna: The Gurus led the Sikhs directly to practise Simran and Naam Japna – meditation on God through reciting, chanting, singing and constant remembrance followed by deep study & comprehension of God's Name and virtues (Gurbani the Compendium of ETERNAL truth). The inner voice of the Sikh thus stays immersed in praises and appreciation of the Creator and the ONE ETERNAL GOD Waheguru and his WILL.
2. Kirat Karni: He expected the Sikhs to live as honourable householders and practise Kirat Karni – To honestly earn by ones physical and mental effort while accepting both pains & pleasures as GOD's gifts and blessings. One is to stay truthful at all times and, fear none but the Eternal Super Soul. Live a life founded on decency immersed in Dharam - life controlled by spiritual, moral & social values.
3. Vand Chakna: The Sikhs were asked to share their wealth within the community by practising Vand Chakna – "Share and Consume together". The community or Sadh Sangat is an important part of Sikhism. One must be part of a community that is pursuing flawless objective values set out by the Sikh Gurus and every Sikh has to contribute in whatever way possible to the common community pool. This spirit of Sharing and Giving is an important message from Guru Nanak.

Structure

There are a total of 5874 Shabads or hymns which are written in 1430 pages of Guru Granth Sahib. It begins with 'Japu', followed by 'So Dar' and 'Sohila', which form part of the daily prayers. After these Banis, the compositions are classified according to their rags (musical tunes). There are a total 31 rags in Guru Granth Sahib, which belong to both north Indian as well as south Indian classical music. After these 31 rags, there are a couple of more compositions which are not categorized under any rag.

Concept of God

Sikhism is monotheistic that advocates the belief in One God and is signified by the term Ik Onkar, that may be loosely translated as 'One Supreme Being'. In Sikhism, the overall concept of God is Waheguru ('wondrous Teacher') considered to be nirankar ('shapeless'), akal ('timeless'), karta purakh ('the creator'), and agam agochar ('incomprehensible and invisible').

In Guru Granth Sahib, apart from these attributes, God has been addressed through various human relations like 'pita' (father), 'mata' (mother), 'pia' (husband), 'pritam' (beloved), 'sahib' (master), 'patisah' (emperor) etc. These terms signify a unique and a special kind of relation between man and God.



Remembrance of the Divine Name

A key practice by Sikhs is remembrance of the Naam (divine name) Waheguru. This contemplation is done through Nām Japna (repetition of the divine name) or Naam Simran (remembrance of the divine Name through recitation). The verbal repetition of the name of God or a sacred syllable has been an ancient established practice in religious traditions in India, however, Sikhism developed Naam-simran as an important Bhakti practice. Guru Nanak's ideal is the total exposure of one's being to the divine Name and a total conforming to Dharma or the "Divine Order". Nanak described the result of the disciplined application of nām simran as a "growing towards and into God" through a gradual process of five stages. The last of these is Sach Khand (The Realm of Truth) – the final union of the spirit with God.

Gurmat Sangeet

Sikhs refer to the hymns of the gurus as Gurbani ('Guru's word'). Shabad Kirtan is the singing of Gurbani. The entire verses of Guru Granth Sahib are written in a form of poetry and rhyme to be recited in thirty-one Ragas of the Classical Indian Music as specified. Guru Nanak started the Shabad Kirtan tradition and taught that listening to kirtan is a powerful way to achieve tranquility while meditating; Singing of the glories of the Supreme Timeless One (God) with devotion is the most effective way to come in communion with the Supreme Timeless One

Service and Action

The Sikh gurus taught that by constantly remembering the divine name (naam simran) and through selfless service (sēvā) the devotee overcomes egotism (Haumai). This, it states, is the primary root of five evil impulses and the cycle of birth and death. Service in Sikhism takes three forms: Tan (physical service, i.e. labor), Man (mental service,

such as dedicating your heart for service of others), and Dhan (material service, including financial support). Sikhism stresses kirat karō: that is "honest work". Sikh teachings also stress the concept of sharing, or vand chakkō, giving to the needy for the benefit of the community.

Justice and Equality

Sikhism regards God as the true king, the king of all kings, the one who dispenses justice through the law of karma, a retributive model and divine grace. According to the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, states Pashaura Singh (a professor of Sikh studies), "one must first try all the peaceful means of negotiation in the pursuit of justice" and if these fail then it is legitimate to "draw the sword in defense of righteousness". Sikhism considers "an attack on dharam is an attack on justice, on righteousness, and on the moral order generally" and the dharam "must be defended at all costs". Forgiveness is taught as a virtue in Sikhism, yet it also teaches its faithful to shun those with evil intentions and to pick up the sword to fight injustice and religious persecution. Sikhism does not differentiate religious obligations by sex. God in Sikhism has no sex, and the Sikh scripture does not discriminate against women, nor bar them from any roles. Women in Sikhism have been in positions of leadership, including leading in wars and issued orders or hukamnamas.

Language

A strong influence of Punjabi can be seen in most of the Bani in Guru Granth Sahib. Besides this, words from various other languages like Hindi, Rekhta, Sindhi, Rajasthani, Braj, Sanskrit, Marathi, Arabic and Persian can also be seen. Apart from these, various dialects of Punjabi are also found like Pothohari, Multani, etc. The entire work, though in different languages, has been written only in one script, that is, Gurmukhi script.



Guru Angad Dev Ji (1504-1552)



Guru Ram Das Ji (1473-1541)



Guru Arjun Dev Ji (1569-1606)



Guru Tegh Bhadr Ji (1621-1675)



Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539)



Guru Har Rai Ji (1630-1661)



Guru Hargobind Ji (1595-1635)



Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708)



Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539)



Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708)

The term Guru comes from the Sanskrit *gurū*, meaning teacher, enlightener, guide, or mentor. The traditions and philosophy of Sikhism were established by ten Gurus from 1469 to 1708. Each Guru added to and reinforced the message taught by the previous, resulting in the creation of the Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was the first Guru and appointed a disciple as successor. Guru Gobind Singh was the final Guru in human form. Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh decreed in 1708, that the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* would be the final and perpetual Guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Nanak stated that his Guru is God who is the same from the beginning of time to the end of time. Nanak said to be a God's slave and servant, but maintained that he was only a guide and teacher. Nanak stated that the human Guru is mortal, who is to be respected and loved but not worshipped. When Guru, or SatGuru (The true Guru) is used in Gurbani it is often referring to the highest expression of truthfulness.

Guru Angad succeeded Guru Nanak. Later, an important phase in the development of Sikhism came with the third successor, Guru Amar Das. Guru Nanak's teachings emphasised the pursuit of salvation; Guru Amar Das began building a cohesive community of followers with initiatives such as sanctioning distinctive ceremonies for birth, marriage, and death. Amar Das also established the *manji* (comparable to a diocese) system of clerical supervision.

Guru Amar Das's successor and son-in-law Guru Ram Das founded the city of Amritsar, which is home of the Harimandir Sahib and regarded widely as the holiest city for all Sikhs. Guru Arjan was arrested by Mughal authorities who were suspicious and hostile to the religious community he was developing. His persecution and death inspired his successors to promote a military and political organization of Sikh communities to defend themselves against the attacks of Mughal forces.



A rare Tanjore-style painting from the late 19th century depicting the ten Sikh Gurus with Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana

The Sikh gurus established a mechanism which allowed the Sikh religion to react as a community to changing circumstances. The sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, was responsible for the creation of the concept of Akal Takht (throne of the timeless one), which serves as the supreme decision-making centre of Sikhism and sits opposite the Harmandir Sahib. The Akal Takht is located in the city of Amritsar. The leader is appointed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Pabandhak Committee (SPGC). The Sarbat ālsā (a representative portion of the Khalsa Panth) historically gathers at the Akal Takht on special festivals such as Vaisakhi or Hola Mohalla and when there is a need to discuss matters that affect the entire Sikh nation. A *gurmatā* (literally, 'guru's intention') is an order passed by the Sarbat ālsā in the presence of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. A *gurmatā* may only be passed on a subject that affects the fundamental principles of Sikh religion; it is binding upon all Sikhs. The term *hukamnāmā* (literally, 'edict' or 'royal order') is often used interchangeably with the term *gurmatā*. However, a *hukamnāmā* formally refers to a hymn from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* which is given order to Sikhs.

The word guru in Sikhism also refers to Akal Purkh (God), and God and guru can sometimes be synonymous in Gurbani (Sikh writings).

Scripture

There is one primary scripture for the Sikhs: the Gurū Granth Sāhib. It is sometimes synonymously referred to as the Ādi Granth. Chronologically, however, the Ādi Granth – literally, 'First Volume' – refers to the version of the scripture created by Guru Arjan in 1604. The Gurū Granth Sāhib is the final expanded version of the scripture compiled by Guru Gobind Singh. While the Guru Granth Sahib is an unquestioned scripture in Sikhism, another important religious text, the Dasam Granth, does not enjoy universal consensus, but is considered a secondary scripture by many Sikhs.

Ādi Granth

The Ādi Granth was compiled primarily by Bhai Gurdas under the supervision of Guru Arjan between the years 1603 and 1604. It is written in the Gurmukhī script, which is a descendant of the Landā script used in the Punjab at that time. The Gurmukhī script was standardised by Guru Angad, the second guru of the Sikhs, for use in the Sikh scriptures and is thought to have been influenced by the Śāradā and Devanāgarī scripts. An authoritative scripture was created to protect the integrity of hymns and teachings of the Sikh Gurus, and thirteen Hindu and two Muslim bhagats of the Bhakti movement sant tradition in medieval India. The thirteen Hindu bhagats whose teachings were entered into the text included Ramananda, Namdev, Pipa, Ravidas, Beni, Bhikhan, Dhanna, Jaidev, Parmanand, Sadhana, Sain, Sur, Trilochan, while the two Muslim bhagats were Kabir and Sufi saint Farid.

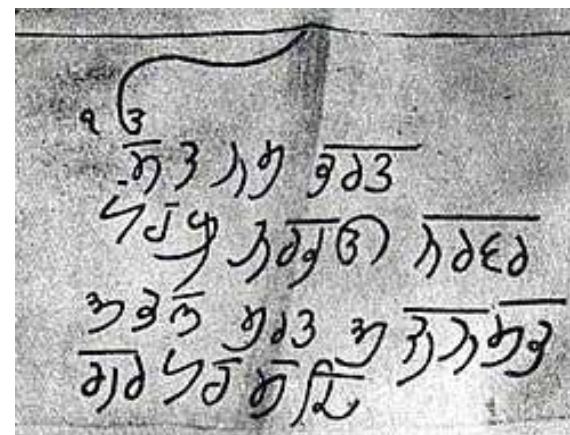
Guru Granth Sahib

The Guru Granth Sahib is the holy scripture of the Sikhs, and is regarded as the living Guru.

The Guru Granth started as a volume of Guru Nanak's poetic compositions. Prior to his death, he passed on his volume to Guru Angad (Guru 1539–1551). The final version of the Gurū Granth Sāhib

was compiled by Guru Gobind Singh in 1678. It consists of the original Ādi Granth with the addition of Guru Tegh Bahadur's hymns. The predominant bulk of Guru Granth Sahib is compositions by seven Sikh Gurus – Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. It also contains the traditions and teachings of thirteen Hindu Bhakti movement sants (saints) such as Ramananda, Namdev among others, and two Muslim saints namely Kabir and the Sufi Sheikh Farid.

The text comprises 6,000 śabads (line compositions), which are poetically rendered and set to rhythmic ancient north Indian classical music. The bulk of the scripture is classified into sixty rāgas, with each Granth rāga subdivided according to length and author. The hymns in the scripture are arranged primarily by the rāgas in which they are read.



Mul Mantar written by Guru Har Rai, showing the Ik Onkar at top.

The main language used in the scripture is known as Sant Bhā ā, a language related to both Punjabi and Hindi and used extensively across medieval northern India by proponents of popular devotional religion (bhakti). The text is printed in Gurumukhi script, believed to have been developed by Guru Angad. The language shares the Indo-European roots found in numerous regional languages of India.

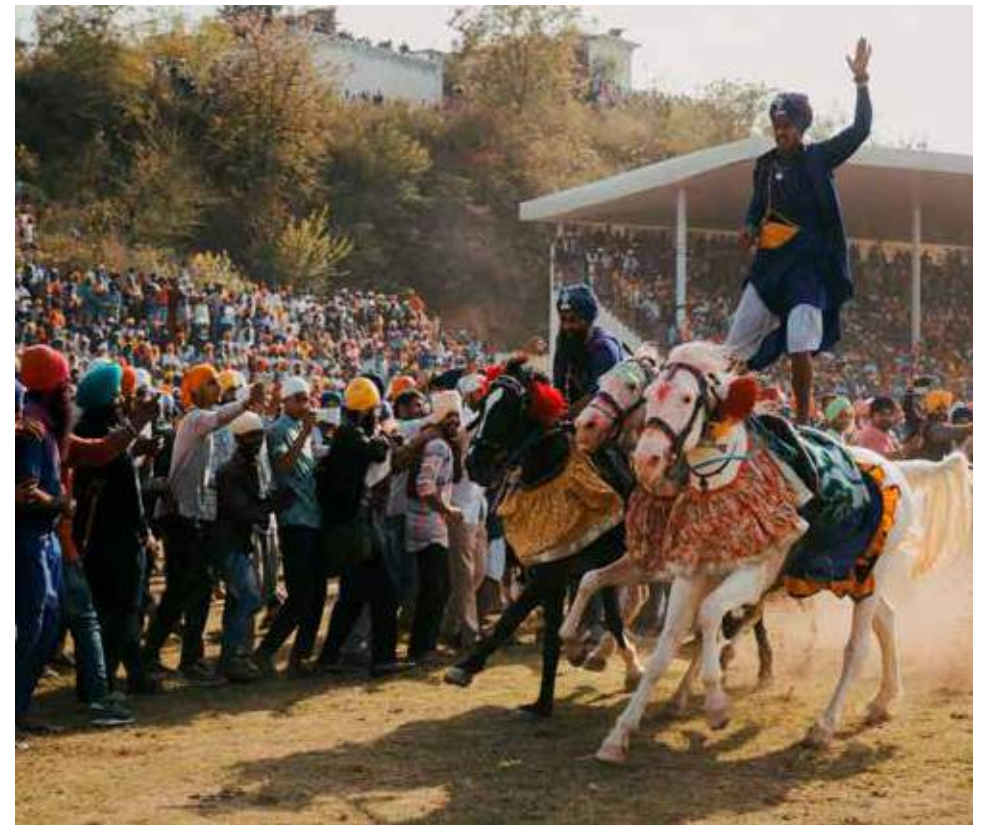
Sikh Festivals/Events

Vaisakhi is one of the most important festivals of Sikhs, while other significant festivals commemorate the birth, lives of the Gurus and Sikh martyrs. Historically, these festivals have been based on the moon calendar Bikrami calendar. In 2003, the SGPC, the Sikh organisation in charge of upkeep of the historical gurdwaras of Punjab, adopted Nanakshahi calendar. The new calendar is highly controversial among Sikhs and is not universally accepted. Sikh festivals include the following:

- **Vaisakhi** which includes Parades and Nagar Kirtan and occurs on 13 April or 14 April. Sikhs celebrate it because on this day, which fell on 30 March 1699, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, inaugurated the Khalsa, the 11th body of Guru Granth Sahib and leader of Sikhs until eternity.



- **Band Chor Diwas** has been another important Sikh festival in its history. In recent years, instead of Diwali, the post-2003 calendar released by SGPC has named it the Bandi Chhor divas. Sikhs celebrate Guru Hargobind's release from the Gwalior Fort, with several innocent Raja kings who were also imprisoned by Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1619. This day continues to be commemorated on the same day of Hindu festival of Diwali, with lights, fireworks and festivities.



- **Hola Mohalla** is a tradition started by Guru Gobind Singh. It starts the day after Sikhs celebrate Holi, sometimes referred to as Hola. Guru Gobind Singh modified Holi with a three-day Hola Mohalla extension festival of martial arts. The extension started the day after the Holi festival in Anandpur Sahib, where Sikh soldiers would train in mock battles, compete in horsemanship, athletics, archery and military exercises.
- **Gurpurbs** are celebrations or commemorations based on the lives of the Sikh Gurus. They tend to be either birthdays or celebrations of Sikh martyrdom. All ten Gurus have Gurpurbs on the Nanakshahi calendar, but it is Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh who have a gurpurb that is widely celebrated in Gurdwaras and Sikh homes. The martyrdoms are also known as a Shaheedi Gurpurbs, which mark the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Number

Sikhs in India—	
State/UT	Percentage
Punjab	58%
Chandigarh	13.1%
Haryana	4.9%
Delhi	3.4%
Uttarakhand	2.3%
Jammu and Kashmir	1.9%
Rajasthan	1.3%
Himachal Pradesh	1.2%

Estimates state that Sikhism has some 25-30 million followers worldwide. However, there are millions of people throughout the world who revere the Sikh gurus and the central tenets and beliefs of the Sikh faith. According to Pew Research, a religion demographics and research group in Washington DC, "more than nine-in-ten Sikhs are in India, but there are also sizable Sikh communities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

Sikhs also migrated to East Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Smaller populations of Sikhs are found within many countries in Western Europe, Pakistan, Mauritius, Malaysia, Philippines, Fiji, Nepal, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Singapore, United States, and many other countries.

The states and union territories of India where Sikhs constitute more than 1.5% of its population are Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir. Forming 4.7% of the total population, the western Canadian province of British Columbia is home to over 200,000 Sikhs and is the only province (or similar major subnational division) in the world outside India with Sikhism as the second most followed religion among the population.

Sect

Sikh sects are sub-traditions within Sikhism that believe in an alternate lineage of gurus, or have a different interpretation of the Sikh scriptures, or believe in following a living guru, or hold other concepts that differ from the orthodox Khalsa Sikhs. The major historic sects of Sikhism have included Udasi, Nirmala, Nanakpanthi, Khalsa, Sahajdhari, Namdhari Kuka, Nirankari, and Sarvaria.

Namdhari Sikhs, also called the Kuka Sikhs are a sect of Sikhism known for their crisp white dress and horizontal pagari (turban).

Independence and Partition

Colonial rule had a profound impact on all areas of Punjabi life. Economically it transformed the Punjab into the richest farming area of India, socially it sustained the power of large landowners and politically it encouraged cross-communal co-operation amongst land owning groups. The Punjab also became the major centre of recruitment into the Indian Army.

An important event of the British Raj in Punjab was the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919. The British brigadier-general R.E.H Dyer marched fifty riflemen of the 1/9th Gurkhas, 54th Sikhs, and 59th Sikhs into the Bagh and ordered them to open fire into the crowd that had collected there. The official number of deaths given by the British was given as 379 people dead, but there are reported to be greater than 1000 killed. There had been many Indian Independence movements in Punjab at the time as well. Notably, the actions of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru on 17 December 1928 in which the trio was responsible for killing J.P Saunders in revenge for the latter's murder of Lala Lajpat Rai. Nevertheless, the use of violence in the Indian Independence movement became unpopular after the execution of the trio on 23 March 1931.

Punjabi culture

The culture of Punjab encompasses the spoken languages, written literature, cuisine, science, technology, military warfare, architecture, traditions, sacrifices, values and history of the Punjabi people native to the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The term 'Punjabi' can mean both a person who lives in Punjab and also a speaker of the Punjabi language. This name originates from the Persian language 'panj', (five), and 'ab', (water). In Rigvedic times, this area was called Sapta Sindhu or 'Seven Rivers' illustrating the extent of Undivided Punjab. Indus River (the largest river in this five river system), and the five other rivers to the south eventually join Indus or merge into it later in the downstream of the Punjab valley. All the rivers start and flow out of the Himalayas. These other five rivers are Jhelum River, Chenab River, Ravi River, Beas River and Sutlej River.

Art

Few of the famous Artist from Punjab

Manjit Bawa, Teji Grover, Sohan Qadri, Phulan Rani, Sidharth, Devender Singh, Gurcharan Singh, R. M. Singh, S. G. Thakur Singh, Trilok Singh, Satish Gujral, Amrita Sher-Gil, Ishwar Singh, Arpana Kour, G.S.Sohan Singh, Gyan Singh Naqqash, Manmohan Bawa, Tarun Bedi, Paramjit Singh, Jaswant Artist are just the few....



Music

Bhangra is one of the many Punjabi musical art forms that is increasingly listened to in the west and is becoming a mainstream favourite. Punjabi music is used by western musicians in many ways, such as mixing it with other compositions to produce award-winning music. In addition, Punjabi classical music is increasingly becoming popular in the west. Devotional songs are played by dhaddi jatha groups, with instruments like sarangi and dhadd drums.



Dance

Owing to the long history of the Punjabi culture and of the Punjabi people there are many dances, normally performed at times of celebration, including harvests, festivals and weddings. The particular background of the dances can be non-religious and religious. The overall style can range from the high energy "bhangra" men's dance to the more reserved "jhumar," the "gidha" women's dance and "Malwayi Gidha" is a form of dance can be performed by both men and women together.

Crafts

The city of Amritsar in the Punjab state of India is home to the craft of brass and copper metalwork done by the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, which is enlisted on the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Years of neglect had caused this craft to die out, and the listing prompted the Government of Punjab to undertake a craft revival effort under Project Virasat.

Dress

In the ancient Punjab region, people wore cotton clothing. The tops lied till knees for both the genders. A scarf was worn over the tops which would be draped over the left shoulder and under the right.



Ancient svasthana and varbana outfit worn during Gupta Empire, the basis of the Punjabi suthan suit



18 the Century Himanchal Pradesh



Women in Punjabi suthan 1890



19th Century

The Punjab region had a flourishing industry in cotton during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when various kinds of coarse cotton cloths including lungi, khes, datahi, chadders, coasting, shirting, curtains, susi, tehmat, durris, towels, dusters, patkas were manufactured in Hoshiarpur,

Gurdaspur, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jhang, Shahpur, Jalandhar, Delhi, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Karnal, Rewari, Panipat etc. Various types of dresses are worn based on different Punjabi festivals, local events and ceremonies. The use of the suthan in the Punjab region also called suthana in Punjabi is a survival of the ancient svasthana. Svasthana referred to a lower garment which can be described as a type of trousers.

Kurta

The kurta with its side slits in the Punjabi kurta can be traced to the 11th century C.E. female kurtaka worn in parts of north India. The kurtaka was a short shirt, with sleeves extending from the shoulders, to the middle of the body, and had slashes on the left and the right sides. The kurta also draws inspiration from the jama and the Punjabi angarkha. The kurta can be worn with a salwar, suthan, tehmat, lungi, dhoti, Punjabi ghagra and jeans.

Phulkari sari

The Phulkari sari is the most loved sari that is available in Punjab. In Punjabi, the word 'phulkari' signifies floral designs. The sari derives its name from the unique floral motifs that are used to decorate the sari.

Punjabi phulkari kurta

A Phulkari kurta is embroidered using the Phulkari embroidery

Punjabi bandhani kurta

Bandhani tie-dyeing is popular in the Cholistan desert area of the Punjab region. Bandhani patterns are used on kurtas.

Salwar Kameez

The Salwar is the traditional dress of women in the Punjab region. It is made up of a kurta or kameez and a straight cut salwar. In some parts of the Punjab region, men also wear the Punjabi suit.

Punjabi tamba and kurta

The Punjabi version of the dhoti is known as tehmat/tamba or laccha. Whereas the tehmat is of one colour and has no border, the laacha has a border and is variegated so that it has more than one colour.

Chola

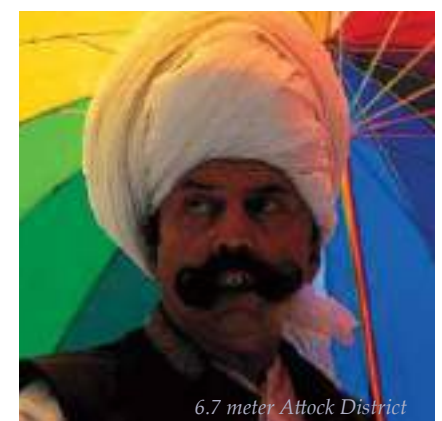
The chola is a long outfit which is similar to a gown. It is worn by women and men and can reach the ankles, or fall just below the knees. The traditional chola is closed by loops and is tied on either shoulder and tends not to have side slits. The chola is the traditional alternative to other upper garments of the local region



Punjabi ghagra

The Punjabi ghagra was the traditional apparel for women before the advent of the Punjabi suit. It is still worn in parts of the Punjab region and the outfit comprises the head scarf, kurta/kurti, suthan/salwar and the ghagra.

Turban



Punjabi Cuisine



With its strategic position on the legendary Silk Route, it was quite natural that those qafilas (convoy of travellers), groaning under their loads of textiles, spices, indigo, sugar, rice and unimaginable luxuries to the markets of Bukhara, Ishfahan and beyond the Caucasus Mountains, also carried away with them tales of this wondrous land.

Punjab may have been India's pride, it was also the envy of its neighbours – judging from the number of invasions it bore the brunt of over the centuries. Punjabi cuisine today is a *mélange* of Indo-Mughal-Persian-Afghani nuances. With the fleeing Punjabis from Pakistan came the tandoor, which opened up a whole new world of barbequed fare for the rest of India. From Persia came the samosa, which was embraced and localised with a spicy potato filling instead of the traditional minced meat filling of Iran, and also cottage cheese (paneer). With the cross cultural winds from the North West Frontier arrived the simple but robust flavours of a

nomadic people. Tandoori meats, fish, slow cooked mutton burra and mutton tikka – Peshawari cuisine, with its Afghani influences and the minimal use of spices, was the great legacy of undivided Punjab. It became as integral to the repertoire of India's Punjabi cookhouse as sarson ka saag, makki di roti, maash dal, parathas and aam ka achar.

These cross-cultural influences were reflected in the embracing of fresh and dried fruits and a wide range of exotic nuts, from Afghanistan and Central Asia – chilgoza (pine nuts), pistachios, almonds, apricots, khubani (dried apricot), sarda (galia melon), muskmelons and the like.

While traditional Punjabi cooking is pretty straight forward, recipes are rife with the largesse of milk, curd, butter and cream. Punjabis today are known for having one of the richest cuisines in India. Today Punjab's ubiquitous 'tandoori chicken' knows no borders as it continues to conquer the culinary world.



Guru ka Langar

The eating of and the sharing of food carries sacred connotations for the Punjabi, and nowhere is this more evident than in the tradition of the Guru ka Langar, a free community kitchen where all may come and partake of the simple but wholesome food cooked and served by kar sevaks of all faiths in the dining areas of the Gurudwaras.

The Arrival of the Dhaba

Punjab's iconic dhaba culture evolved out of need for survival for the displaced peoples of Punjab, who fled their homes both sides of the border with the Partition of India. The dhaba culture of Amritsar has paeans sung to it for its fabulous array of culinary experiences from kukkad (chicken) to stuffed kulchas to lassi peda maar ke.

Few of the Punjabi vegetarian dishes – sarson ka saag and makki di roti with a dollop of white butter, maa di dal, rajma-chawal, chana-chawal, kadhi-chawal, mattar-paneer, gobhi-aloo, baingan bharta, palak paneer, chana-bhatura/ puri/ kulchas have made their way into menus across India. The non-vegetarian table is dominated by kukkad, lamb, goat and fish in various forms – tandoori chicken, kadhai chicken, chicken tikka, mutton curry, mutton burra, keema-mattar, pan-fried Amritsari fish and more.

Desserts consist of kheer, gajar ka halwa, panjeeri, seviyan and jalebis amongst others.

In the winter the ladies of the household make a spicy drink called kanji from black carrots. In fact they also make potato chips, vari (baked lentil cakes) used in a curry with potatoes – and of course pickles – especially mango pickle and gobhi-shalgam-gajar ka achar. Murabbas are also made at home.

Preparations

The Punjabi bhathi (oven) was made of bricks or mud and clay and topped with a sheet of metal. An opening was fed with wood and grass to light the fire. The tandoor was found in many Punjabi homes as tandoori fare rose in popularity after partition.

Brass and copper utensils, believed to be beneficial for health, were used in the Punjab.





some of the Lions of Punjab of yesteryears



Maharaja Ranjit Singh ji



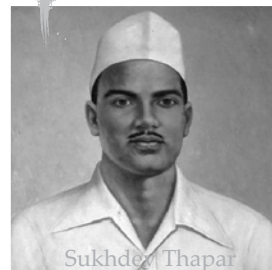
Lala Lajpat Rai



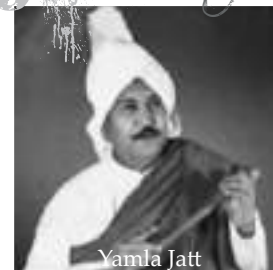
Bhagat Singh



Bhai Parmanand



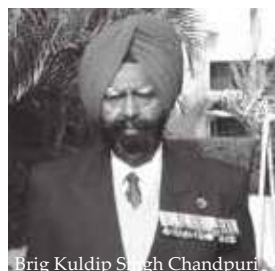
Sukhdev Thapar



Yamla Jatt



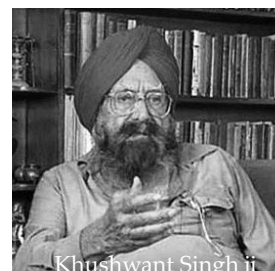
Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora



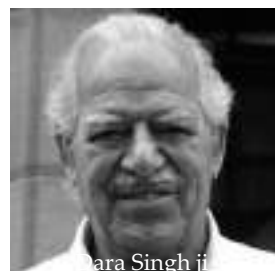
Brig Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri



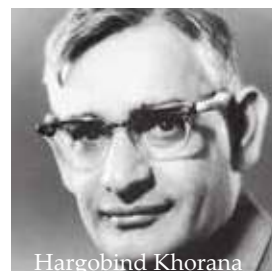
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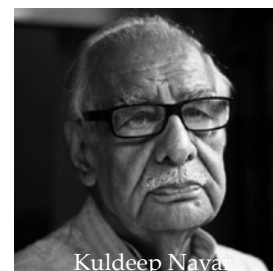
Khushwant Singh ji



Tara Singh ji



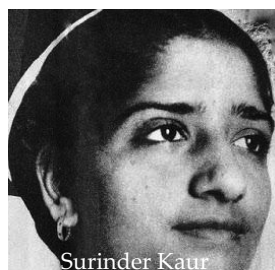
Hargobind Khorana



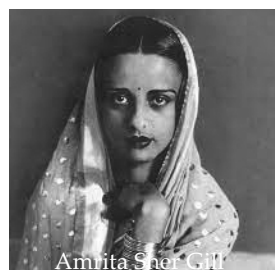
Kuldeep Naya



Bhai Vir Singh Ji



Surinder Kaur



Amrita Sher Gill



Fauja Singh



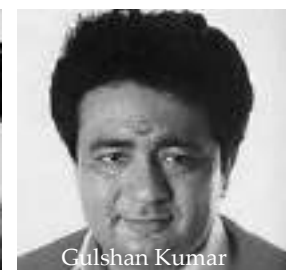
Kalpana Chawla



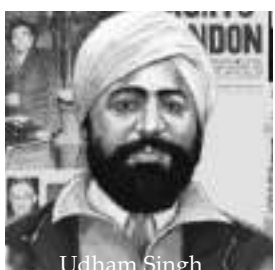
Sampooran Singh Kalra



Dharmendra



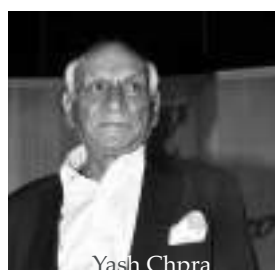
Gulshan Kumar



Uddham Singh



Manmohan Singh ji



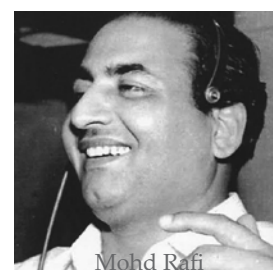
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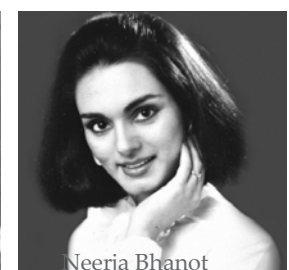
Sunil Mittal



Kapil Dev



Mohd Rafi



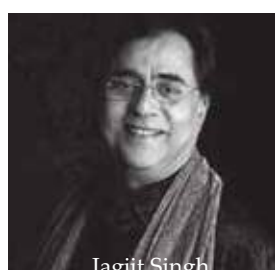
Neerja Bhanot



Rakesh Sharma



Kiran Bedi



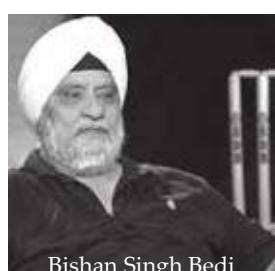
Jagjit Singh



Raj Kapoor



Hans Raj Hans



Bishan Singh Bedi

While these were the Icons of that have created history and contributed immensely to the growth and development of the country across all aspects, we're now presenting the icons of the present day Punjab - the men and women who've carried forward the glorious legacy left behind by their stalwart ancestors, and presented Punjab in a completely new way on the global map.

Embark on a journey with us as we uncover their stories, struggles, successes and achievements that will engage and inspire one and all.



A born business leader

SANJEEV MATHARU, Chief Executive Officer · MSBM General Trading LLC



“Failures to be equivalent to success as, without one, the other is irrelevant.”

Some leaders are made and for some leadership is in-built. Their experience, errors, and trials make them stand out from the crowd. As a child of the soil and a strong, courageous member of the Martial community of India, Sanjeev Dulip Singh Matharu, has always believed in the power of leadership. His fearless and determined spirit helped him lead by

example at various sporting events held at school. The discipline and structure imbibed in him by the Sacred Heart Boys' High School is something that he has carried all his life. A border cannot alter destiny, and despite moving to Bombay from different cities in Pakistan, his parents were destined to get married to each other.



*"As I had great Mentors,
I would also like to mentor and guide as many as possible"*

His chest is full of pride when he talks about the strength, vigor, and risk-taking attitude of the people of his community. The ability to create, innovate, and lead came naturally to him.

From a very young age, he had the passion and determination to transform his life. From working at a petrol station at the age of 15 to summer internships at VIP, Thumbs Up, etc., to his 6-days week job at the Four Square Factory, Sanjeev excelled at everything. Soon, he got a

job at Micky Jagtiani's Landmarkgroup in Bahrain, where he impressed everyone with his dedication and hard work. It was his never-give-up attitude, flexibility, diligence, and willingness to learn that led him to move to the UAE.

Even during the Pandemic, Sanjeev believed in the power of dynamism. He is of the opinion that nothing is impossible and things are never static. To survive and grow, one must

continuously learn to evolve and take on new challenges. It paved the way for success and led you to outstanding results.

Considering the Pandemic to be the best teacher of all times, Sanjeev gives it credit for setting up his online business. As someone in the fashion and trading industry, he confirms that change is the only thing constant in our lives, and we must all be adaptive and resilient.

With his brick-and-mortar operations in Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and the UAE, Sanjeev learned the online way of conducting business. He not only excelled at it, but it also became an important part of his brand portfolio.

With his out-of-the-box thinking and spirit of optimism, he is confident that he is heading in the right direction. He considers failures to be equivalent to success as, without one, the other is irrelevant.

When asked What Brands that are associated

with his company? With his usual smile, he say, “In the Franchise model I have Yubiso, Latt Liv and Mievic. All these 3 are the “300 Yen” stores and are operated on a Franchise format. These are typical Japanese inspired Value stores and are getting highly popular across the globe. In the second model, I have brands like Uniq Kidz, Tiny Hug, Jam, Jelliene, Lacy Dreams and Dream Decor. All these are In-House brands of MSBM and these are trading On-Line across all the top Portals, the next stage of this is to open Brick & Mortar stores so that we are into Multi Channel retail”.

“My company has already embarked on an exciting transitional journey since 2021. Our “300 Yen” is moving from Franchise model to our Private Label. Going forward we will be launching our own brand in this model of business and taking it beyond GCC into North Africa and East Europe.

This year we will also see ourselves starting our operations in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. So definitely, our plans are boisterous and hope we can meet our own expectations”.





Lastly, he says, “We have plans for India, sooner or later i will definitely venture there but since it’s a big country with big market, we cannot go in there with small plans. We will also need to do a lot of research for our better understanding of what offering we can bring

in. I am also aware of the complexities that are prevalent in India and therefore our planning needs to be top notch not to forget the finances that will be required to fund the operations there; I am looking for a suitable partner who will help me to fund this business.

While, just like all of us, he realized the importance of relationships, health care, and overall well-being during the pandemic period, he says the most important lesson has been about financial savings. It also led to him cultivating the habit of saving in his daughter.





*“Our need for finances could arise any time,
and it’s our savings that can save our day’*

“Our need for finances could arise any time, and it’s our savings that can save our day’, reaffirms Sanjeev.

Despite their different professions and interests, Sanjeev and his wife Bhupinder make time for each other and are each other’s best guide and support. He considers her to be his biggest motivator and doesn’t fail to discuss important business matters with her.

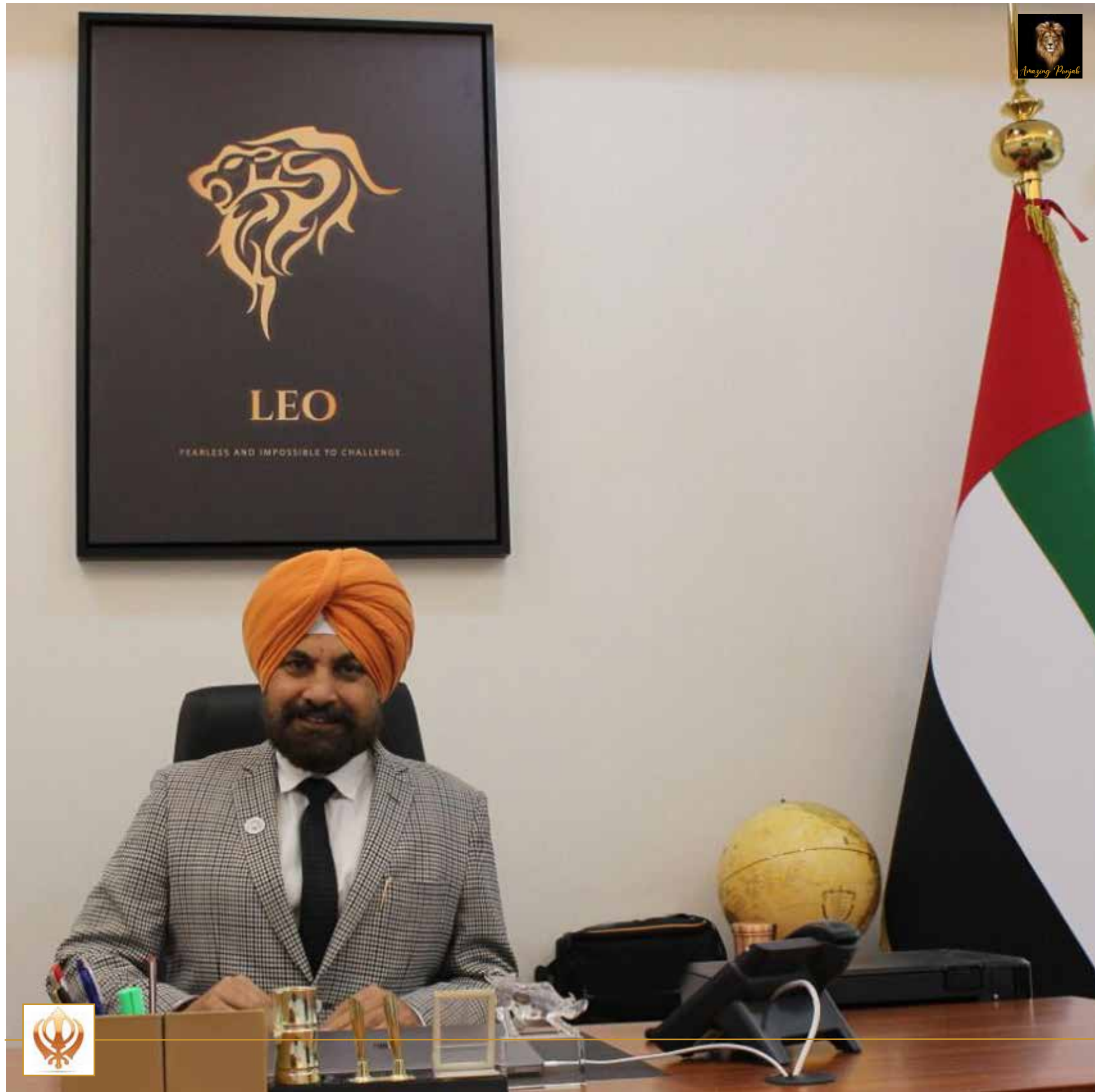
As a true Punjabi, Sanjeev likes to strike a balance between personal life, professional life, and his me-time. A good

jog and a refreshing drink are what he needs daily to keep him happy and chirpy. As someone who is extremely ambitious, passionate, full of vigor, and looks at the bigger picture, Sanjeev believes that Dubai has many good things to offer.

According to him, the repercussions of the Pandemic would soon be gone, given everyone’s efforts and the nation is sure to boom again.

He advises everyone to work hard, believe in his or her dreams, and do everything it takes to get there.





Against *all* Odds

BALBIR SINGH RANDHAWA, Director, Abu Mansoor Plastic Factory L.L.C & Philanthropist



*“With hard work and effort, you can achieve anything”
-Antoine Griezmann*

September 1, 1978 - a young 20 year old boy, overwhelmed with emotions, torn between two worlds, unaware of what the future holds but with a motivation to achieve his one and only goal to succeed in life, this feeling is still as fresh when

you ask him about his journey as a successful Expat businessman in the UAE, Balbir Singh Randhawa. Owner of Abu Mansoor Plastic Factory & Trading Company Sole Proprietorship LLC, Abu Dhabi, UAE.



Balbir was born in a small village called Dharmuchak in Amritsar, Punjab to Mr Sardul Singh and Mrs Surjit Kaur who had migrated to this village from Singapore after the Second World War Sardul Singh was in the Indian Air Force and Surjit Kaur was a typical house wife. Like most houses in those times, resources were limited and therefore Balbir did not get to enjoy a fancy childhood, as he recalls how he used to go to the farms for cultivation and harvesting after his day at school and during free time he used to wrestle with the boys in and around his village.

He was fond of Hindi movies as a young teenager and chose to cycle 36 kms up down to secondary school so he could save up bus money to watch a movie in the cinema. He was good at studies and a topper in Mathematics,

but due to limited resources and having seen the struggle, he decided to discontinue his further education after class 12th and go out of his village to earn money.

Surprised to his decision, his parents did question him again if he was doing the right thing, but he assured them that this is what he wanted to do. Being related to the legendary wrestler Shri Dara Singh Ji, he tried his hand out as a part of the managing team for a few wrestling matches within India for a couple of months. But this was not sufficient.

Thanks to Dara Singh Ji who referred him to an electronic giant in those times and got him to Abu Dhabi, UAE to work as a general laborer for that group. During his tenure with the group, over the years he was promoted from

laborer to messenger because he could read and write and then to salesman because of his customer friendly attitude and then salesman and collection.

This itself reflects his drive to learn more and more. Things were going well and back home in India his parents had fixed his marriage and in 1985 he got married to Barinder Kaur in Amritsar, Punjab, with whom he has three kids today, one son and two daughters. He had requested his seniors to grant him a family visa so he could bring his wife to UAE, but they refused because he was not eligible as he had no educational degree. Therefore he was left with no option but to resign from there and look for something else so he could get a family status.



"I believe in servings, it can either be people, community, society or Country.... always ready"



ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਟੀਮ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਹੋਈ, ਕੋਰਨੀਅਲ ਬਲਾਈਡਨੈੱਸ ਫਰੀ ਵਰਲਡ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ



ਫਗਵਾੜਾ 20 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ (ਕਮਨ ਰਾਏ) —ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਈ ਥੈਕ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਡਾ. ਹਰਿਜ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਅਕਿਸ਼ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਆਈ ਥੈਕ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨ ਦਾਨ, ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਦਾਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਐਨ. ਆਰ. ਆਈ. ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀ: ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਬੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਤਨੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਬਲਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਖਾਬੜਾ ਜੋ ਯੂ.ਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਹਨ, ਨੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗ ਦਾਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਆਸੂ ਧਾਬੀ ਤੋਂ ਉਪ ਸਮਾਜ ਸੇਵਕ

ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਬਲਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਤਨੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਨੀਨਾ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ, ਜੋ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਨਾਲ ਅਰਬ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਰਨੀਅਲ ਬਲਾਈਡਨੈੱਸ ਫਰੀ ਵਰਲਡ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪੀਨ ਸਾਗਰਭੜਾ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਸੂ ਧਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਘਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਸੇਵਾ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਿਸ਼ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਲ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਵਨੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਲਾਹੀ ਹੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭਵਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਦੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਸੁਖੀ ਬਾਨ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ. ਐਸ. ਏ. ਅਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਘਰ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਮੇਂ ਨੇਤਰਦਾਨ, ਅੰਗਦਾਨ ਕੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੇਂ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਫੈਲਾਓਂ ਜਾਏਗੀ

• ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਈ ਥੈਕ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਮੇਂ ਤੈਧਾਰ ਕੀ ਰੂਪਰੇਖਾ



(ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ, 19 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ ਵਿਚ) — ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਈ ਥੈਕ ਦੇ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਡਾ. ਹਰਿਜ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਅਕਿਸ਼ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਆਈ ਥੈਕ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨ ਦਾਨ, ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਦਾਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਐਨ. ਆਰ. ਆਈ. ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀ: ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਬੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਤਨੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਬਲਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਖਾਬੜਾ ਜੋ ਯੂ.ਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਹਨ, ਨੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗ ਦਾਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਆਸੂ ਧਾਬੀ ਤੋਂ ਉਪ ਸਮਾਜ ਸੇਵਕ

ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਬਲਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਤਨੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਨੀਨਾ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ, ਜੋ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਨਾਲ ਅਰਬ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਰਨੀਅਲ ਬਲਾਈਡਨੈੱਸ ਫਰੀ ਵਰਲਡ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪੀਨ ਸਾਗਰਭੜਾ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਸੂ ਧਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਘਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਸੇਵਾ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਿਸ਼ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਲ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਵਨੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਲਾਹੀ ਹੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭਵਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਦੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਸੁਖੀ ਬਾਨ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ. ਐਸ. ਏ. ਅਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਘਰ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਬਲਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਤਨੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਨੀਨਾ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ, ਜੋ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਨਾਲ ਅਰਬ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਰਨੀਅਲ ਬਲਾਈਡਨੈੱਸ ਫਰੀ ਵਰਲਡ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪੀਨ ਸਾਗਰਭੜਾ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਆਸੂ ਧਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਘਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਸੇਵਾ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਿਸ਼ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਲ ਮਹਿਰਾ ਵਨੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਲਾਹੀ ਹੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭਵਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਨਰਜੋਤ ਦੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਸੁਖੀ ਬਾਨ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ. ਐਸ. ਏ. ਅਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਘਰ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।



That's when in 1985, he started his own small shop as a trader where he would buy and further sell electronic goods. Because of his customer friendly attitude, business was starting to pick up and over the next decade he started attending exhibitions in foreign countries and then import those items to UAE. In the initial years Balbir worked like a one man army without any staff, making two trips a day to Dubai to purchase goods. He would come back home by midnight and then again go early in the morning. This

was his usual routine back then. In the 80's and 90's electronics was really picking up and therefore bigger players had started to enter the market and it was getting difficult to compete with them. It was at that time when Balbir decided to switch his line else he felt it would get difficult to survive.

It was in 1998 when he switched his line from electronics to building materials. He started to import and sell building material and hardware items.

People close to him say that Balbir is a very gullible and an easily trusting man which is why he has been backstabbed multiple times by people whom he called his well-wishers. He recalled "There have been many such incidents which we shall not revisit. I know I have been cheated and abused multiple times, but it's okay. I have not done bad to anyone or cheated anyone and so God has blessed me with much more than I deserve. Everyone has their share of ups and downs and so did I but I have no regrets. God has been very kind.

"The building material business was doing well. He was importing and selling in bulk. When asked "How did you get into manufacturing?", he replied "I was noticing a boom in the industries here and it occurred to me why not produce and sell a Made in UAE product. I went to the higher authorities and explained to them my proposal and they were as always very kind and believed in me and in 2006 they gave me a plot in ICAD 1, Musaffah, to start my unit, which was the next shift in my story and soon I built my unit from scratch and opened up in 2007. It really wouldn't have been possible without the help of UAE authorities and the government. They have always been very kind and supportive."

"What you get is a mix of fate, your hard work, good karma and most importantly God's blessing. Sometimes you have to take risks in business. I still remember when I started my building materials line, I made a deal to buy 14 containers stuck at the port without any money in my pocket. People called me crazy but I assured the seller I will repay him in 90 days and I kept my promise and repaid him in under 90 days infact."

"I was the first one to introduce Indian scaffolding to Abu Dhabi"





"I have learnt one thing very early in life, money is key. I want to give my children the life I couldn't afford in my early years." He also says "I am happy with what God has given me. Yes I'd like to have gone to college but I am happy that I could give my children the education which I couldn't afford. Today by God's grace, my son is an Engineer and an MBA graduate from UK, my one daughter is a Cardio Thoracic Surgeon in USA and other daughter is a law graduate from USA and is practicing corporate law here. Even though back in those days I couldn't afford but I chose to prioritize and spend on the education of my children."

"I am just a 12th pass. I cannot lecture much on vision and all. I hope to sustain what I have created but yes, I will keep exploring for newer opportunities and diversification and rest is

God's will." He also says "Just work with good intentions and God will surely help you to achieve what you want. Do not scare away or get demotivated with failure. Failures are a part of life. Take it as a learning lesson and aim to do better."

"I believe God has blessed me with more than I can ask for and so it is my duty to try and help the needy and if it is within my capacity I will surely help in whatever way I can. I make sure every worker who is working for me has made a house back in their home country because I know the feeling when you are trying to make a living away from your parents or loved ones, so I try to help them in achieving this."

He concluded by saying "India is my Janam Bhumi (birth place) and UAE is my Karam Bhumi (land of actions). I am forever thankful

to the leaders of UAE who allowed expats like me to explore the opportunities and supported us in every possible way. It is because of them and their leadership, UAE became a home away from home for me. I extend my heartfelt gratitude with folded hands to the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the higher authorities of UAE who supported me in every phase of my life when I needed their help."

Balbir Singh Randhawa, a man who came to UAE as an ordinary laborer, today is the owner of a company that manufactures and imports construction related items and exports them all over GCC.

His story is truly inspirational and teaches us that if you work with dedication, determination and good intentions nothing can stop you from achieving your goal.



New Way *Forward* Begins With You

BHUPINDER SINGH, G.M. & CFO- Dalma Mall



“We are the masters of our fate... We are the captain of our souls.” Many of us have come across this phrase. But how often do we contemplate our actions in different circumstances. Well, in the case of Bhupinder Singh, he has always been a firm believer in following a determined approach and refocused resilience in life that has uplifted him both

professionally and personally. A Glimpse of his success story.

Bhupinder’s story began in Delhi, sharing his native roots in Patiala. While his father was a small business owner, his mother was a simple homemaker who devoted herself to her family and children.

“We are the masters of our fate... We are the captain of our souls.”



He completed his schooling in Delhi and pursued a degree from Delhi University and CA from institute of ICA. Right from working with the hospitality industry to his stint with the export house in Delhi, he dipped his toes in different ventures and sectors wherein each job added to his learning curve. However, the urge to grow and excel did not allow him to stagnate and brought him to Dubai.

As he welcomed a new beginning in a city of dreams, he was filled with vigor to see what life had in store for him. Dubai Journey started as a finance professional with MAF Investment

group with the newly opened first shopping mall of the region the Deira City Center. Ascending the ranks, soon he was handling the finance division for Deira City Center, Sharjah City Center and Ajman City Center. His expertise and determination were very soon noticed by the management, and he was promoted to head the Finance for then newly opened Muscat City Center. This further opened newer windows of exposure and growth in the few years he spends in Muscat Oman.

The City of dreams but had further roadways

laid down for him and he soon returned back to his Karam Bhoomi this time as “VP Finance for the Shopping Mall division of the biggest real estate conglomerate of the region “The Emmar Group” where he served couple of years in that capacity and was very instrumental in the opening and operations of the most popular mall of the Region “The Dubai Mall”.

Later he moved into a senior position with Meeras Group another leading real estate, retail, and shopping enterprise. This was the period of recession when real estate had its downfalls, and the industry was in turmoil.

“At the end of the day, delivery is the key. Knowledge have to be cultivated and executed at the same time,”



For some this would have been a losing point but for those who succeed, adversities are hidden gems of opportunities, and that's when he found his opportunity with a newly opened Dalma Mall to lay foundation for his footprints in the history of shopping malls. From a Mall commonly in early days called as Carrefour mall to the only mall in the UAE with one of the largest GLA and yet the highest occupancy levels and being mentioned as Abu Dhabi's Favourite Mall had been a constant warfare. The journey for him has been satisfying and refreshing.

The man being the guiding light leading Dalma Mall from being a nominal neighbourhood centre to Abu Dhabi's Favourite Mall and a reference point in entire retail industry.

From being the visionary, the Leader of the Team, the team player, and to being the Steward of the Asset, A Custodian for all the stakeholders fruitfully executing each role and enhancing the asset value since its incubation.

He is currently General Manager & Chief Financial Officer Of Dalma Mall. They've

reached a stage in their company where they've managed to create more than 10000 jobs in all the retail units, housekeeping facilities, security, landscape, and many more. It has helped them accommodate more people and has contributed to the growth of the economy at large.

“I've seen both sides of the business. One is working with big organizations and gaining experience, and using the same experience to manifest something bigger,” he remarks.



“In today’s corporate world, you need to be good leader”

With an extensive experience of 35 years with leading professional conglomerates, Bhupinder has garnered great credibility in the industry. He is recognized in many retail bodies such as the Retail Middle East and the Middle East Council of Shopping Centers & Retail. Along with bagging senior leadership in

various retail and mixed use assets, he has also won accolades and media laurels for social causes, humanitarian initiatives and community events. He attributes much of his successes to the UAE Government, which has created a supportive environment for expatriates like him. “If you respect the law of

the land and have the required qualifications, then the sky's the limit here,” he affirms. He believes that if you deliver, you are recognized well. “At the end of the day, delivery is the key. Knowledge have to be cultivated and executed at the same time,” he says.





At every juncture of his life, he has collected memorable moments that have given him a sense of belonging. Graduating from college in 1985, becoming a Finance Professional in 1990, landing his first job, and moving to a different part of the world in 1998, have been worthwhile experiences in his life. As he excels as a corporate guru, he is also an admirable figure in the lives of his children. His daughter Tanya Singh has followed in his footsteps by becoming a Chartered Accountant from India & UK and successfully carving a career at Deloitte in Dubai whereas his son Angad Singh is currently pursuing his further education in the UK's well know Warwick University. Of course, his story would not be complete without his lady luck, his better half Meena Singh who has stood by him like a pillar through his journey giving him the much needed emotional and moral support and ever

being a loving and caring wife and mother to his kids.

Being a team player and an inspiring presence in the lives of his loved ones, he perceives himself as a leader. "In today's corporate world, you need to be a good leader. You need to know how to delegate, nurture talent, and ensure a work-life balance among your team," he says. He believes in leading by example and empowering people along the way. His benevolent nature is one of his defining features as a Punjabi. When asked for his advice to the younger generation, he says, "In today's digital and ever changing world, people demand quick results. However, it is pertinent to take life one step at a time and gain as much experience as you can, before mindlessly chasing after materialistic pursuits."







Celebrating Life, *One Opportunity at a Time*

GURJIT S. GREWAL, Director · Metel Group of Companies

There are times in life when we miss incredible experiences due to our own inhibitions that dictate our circumstances. Embracing each and every opportunity that comes our way, is how we must make the most of everything that life has to offer. This is the mindset of Gurjit Grewal, who has achieved great things by harnessing his true potential and strong values.

Born and raised in the village of Narangwal Khurd,

Ludhiana, Gurjit enjoyed the simple pleasures of a rural life. Brought up under the nurturing presence of his father, who was a teacher and a homemaker mother with three other siblings, he completed his graduation from Punjab University. While reminiscing about his childhood years, he vividly remembers the days that he and his brothers had to walk two kilometers to the neighboring village to attain higher education.



. “During the former years of my career, I was lucky to come across a lot of opportunities that brought success into my life and pushed me to take a leap of faith and start my own business”



He landed in Dubai in 1976, and worked for the first five years under reputed companies - where his skills and education was further enhanced. Those years established and cultivated many valuable business lessons that till date are the root of his life philosophy. In 1982, he started his own company - Metel Trading LLC. “Those days there was a massive requirement for hardware supplies in the U.A.E. We participated in a lot of projects initiated by Etisalat, Municipalities and other

government organisations,” he said with beaming pride. At the same time he also ventured into the food and electromechanical industry. Currently Metel Trading LLC is supplying food to the GCC market. His latest venture - Metel Industries LLC assembles UL Certified Civil Defence approved fire fighting pump sets that are being supplied across the Middle East. His tryst with success empowered him in a plethora of ways - and enabled him to meet and make many lifelong friends and build

a reputable bond with suppliers and buyers across the globe. “During the former years of my career, I was lucky to come across a lot of opportunities that brought success into my life and pushed me to take a leap of faith and start my own business”.

His company was initially supported by Elcome Group, and with time he went on to become a partner and now runs the company along with Chairman Saif Al Shafar.

Gurjit has witnessed the transformation of U.A.E, from a quite small town with a sedentary life that has now burgeoned into a modern world replete with international level living. It offered him a way of life that helped him to cater to the needs of his family.

He has always believed that luck has played a very important role in his life and enabled him to reach the stature that he has in life today, along with the strong support of his wife Priyajeet. If given a chance to do anything different, he would not change a thing - he is content with where his journey has brought

him. He is a loving father to his two daughters, and a doting grandfather to his grandchildren.

An energetic and entrepreneurial enthusiast, Gurjit surrounds himself with positivity at all times and does not allow negativity to ever weigh him down. He found his second love a little late in life - but it has become one of his most passion driven efforts other than his business - Golf. An avid golfer, Gurjit can be found on the golf course at least three times a week - no matter what the weather. A constant learner who seeks inspiration from everyone he meets socially or through work, Gurjit

encourages all their ambitions and ventures.

"When someone comes to me with ideas, I believe in looking into it in a positive manner, irrespective of whether I can support them in it or not," he said with a content smile.

Always humble, down to earth and approachable, he is a true mentor to anyone who needs his guidance. When asked for his advice to the youth, he simply said," One should always work on developing their skills and working towards a set goal, before entering the working world. The future is in skilled and knowledge driven jobs - where there is focus and growth."







Aspire to Inspire

AMANJEET SINGH, Businessman, Philanthropist, Restaurant Owner
NRI Affair Govt of Punjab Member - High Powered Investment Committee



In the first few months in Dubai, Amanjeet Singh recalls an incident that changed his view of the living conditions of Indian expats in the UAE. He went to a restaurant with his colleagues and was approached by a distressed Indian man who asked for his help, “The guy was in tears and asked me for my phone to call back home. I gave him the phone, and he was crying during the entire conversation he had with his family. Intrigued by what had happened to him, I asked him what was going

wrong. He answered that he is a teacher from Bihar who was cheated by his agent, who gave him false hope of good jobs and money. Not only did that man lose his money, but the promise of jobs was also a lie. That man left his teaching job to dig potholes. He had no money. No means to contact his family, and his living conditions were abysmal.” explained Amanjeet as he went on to mention many similar events that eventually led him to start working for his community.



Originally from Jalandhar, Punjab, Amanjeet was born in the Doaba region, which is famous as an NRI Hub of Punjab due to the significant percentage of the population migrating to western countries. During his school days, like many aspiring

Indian students, Amanjeet also aimed for admission in the coveted Indian Institute of Management (IIM), "Those two years were the hardest years of my life. It was all about studies. But luckily, I got in." Amanjeet's hard work paid off and he got into the IIM. After

completing his studies he got an excellent white-collar job in the City Group as a management trainee. Starting his academic and then professional life on a strong foot, Amanjeet kept working towards his and his family's future.



His ambition landed him a job in the UAE. Apart from his critically acclaimed restaurant, Pure Punjabi, Amanjeet also runs an IT firm, 2B Innovations, which caters to multiple clients, providing them with state-of-the-art IT infrastructure and cyber security solutions. He is one of the many examples who have helped shape the UAE as it is today. “The influence of the Asian community is there in every sector. From blue collar to white collar. The UAE has also helped people get a better professional outlook,” added Amanjeet.

Today, he is an IT magnate, a skilled restaurateur, and a committed social worker. He is a true hero for numerous expats he has helped over the years to get a hold of their lives in the Middle East.

“The influence of the Asian community is there in every sector. From blue collar to white collar. The UAE has also helped people get a better professional outlook,”

After the 2008 recession, Amanjeet came across many unfortunate incidents where people were losing their life's earnings due to factors out of their control. Committed to helping people in need, he joined with his fellow IIM alumnus to form an organization called Savera (Morning). With the new organization, Amanjeet started on an advisory role where he used his banking knowledge to help people via many counseling sessions held across the UAE. “I helped people in deciding what loans they should take and helped them close the loans.

I also helped people in labor camps and did countless jobs with many different NGOs,” added Amanjeet. For the last two years, Amanjeet is conducting the SEWA (Social and Environmental Welfare Association) awards. The main aim of the event is to recognize the unsung heroes who have contributed to the welfare of the people around them in the UAE.





During the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the entire world, Amanjeet served over 60,000 meals to the needy even though his restaurant was suffering from significant financial setbacks, but his will and determination to feed the hungry people were above it all. "Even when I started my restaurant, the main goal was to help fellow Indians in need to get a job," added Amanjeet.

It takes great determination and will to help others and to put your own financial needs on the back burner. Amanjeet managed to do just that, "At the end of the day, you can only control your actions. Other than that, I do not even try to think what other people are thinking, what they are talking about, and what they are doing. God has laid down a path for all of us, we just have to persevere."

"Even when I started my restaurant, the main goal was to help fellow Indians in need to get a job,"






Perseverance *is* Power

ABHISHEK MAHAJAN, Managing Director - Fly High Abroad

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The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but a lack of will. Many times, we give up when circumstances turn against us. However, Abhishek Mahajan has always embodied the values of perseverance and strong will that have brought him

ahead in life. Born in the city of Jalandhar, Abhishek Mahajan was raised in a small middle-class family that preached the importance of hard work from a very young age. While his father had his own catering business, his mother was a nurse at the civil hospital for forty long years.





He completed his correspondence MBA in Symbiosis, Pune, and immediately got married in the year 2009. With the ambition to gain exposure to the international market, he shifted to the UK to pursue his further education. For two years he juggled between work and studies. While living in the UK, he was compelled to work at a restaurant to manage his finances, whereas in India he had a managerial post at an insurance company. This new transition taught him the value of perseverance.

After his brief stint in the UK, Abhishek decided to return to his country with his wife and was blessed with a child. He started working with the same insurance company but had a renewed perspective towards his career. With his recently curated experiences in the UK, he was struck with the thought of entering the

“It is a noble business because it is associated with the dreams of people,”

immigration industry. “Everyone was applying for student visas and the market looked very promising,” he remarks. With that intention, he took a leap of faith and started his institute in Jalandhar that dappled with various aspects of the immigration industry. However, after a while, he grew discontent with his progression. “It wasn’t enough for me as I was working solely as an agent who covered the important paperwork and then handed over the case to an immigration company, who received a major chunk of the commission,” he said.

With that thought in mind, he joined a company that was reputed in the immigration industry. During his tenure, he worked at a senior position for five years and familiarized himself with the dynamics of the industry. After absorbing knowledge from everywhere, he decided to embark on his venture by starting his own business. It was a huge step for Abhishek, who had reached so far in life by trusting his entrepreneurial instincts. His business did not suffer, even during the pandemic. People were constantly looking for opportunities to enter the European market and he was the bridge that connected them to their dreams. While talking about his work ethic, he says, “Service is the key in today’s world. The client shouldn’t

continuously be reminding you to serve them, you have to be diligent with your services and ensure that they reach their goals.”

He opened branches in India, Canada, and Europe and further aspires to spread his wings in the UAE as well as Africa. “It is a noble business because it is associated with the dreams of people,” he says.



By networking with people, Abhishek has strengthened his credibility and grown a reputation for himself. At each stage in his life, he has learned from different experiences. He perceives himself as a perpetual learner as he consistently updates himself with the immigration laws and policies that his industry demands. Starting his firm in the UAE proved to be a great decision for Abhishek, who continues to expand his horizons. He not only restricts himself to procuring visit visas, permanent residencies, or work permits but

also dabbles with the real estate world and citizenship rights. Abhishek is truly thankful to the UAE Government for their tremendous contribution. "Setting my business in the UAE has been a rewarding experience especially due to the ease and efficiency ensured by the Government officials, who are very swift with their approvals and help you set up your business within a week," he affirms.

Having spent his childhood in Jalandhar, Abhishek is always connected to his Punjabi

roots. He is a passionate guitarist who loves the theatre. Although he describes himself as an emotional individual who is very gullible at times, it is his emotions that help him form long meaningful relationships.

He believes that the present generation has great potential and is efficiently riding the wave of technological innovation. When asked for his message to the younger generation, he says, “Always plan and set your goals for the future. Be visionaries and embrace positivity in life.”





Raising the bar *for the* Legal Profession

ASHISH MEHTA, Founder & Managing Partner, AMA Lawyers



Ashish Mehta founded his law firm Ashish Mehta & Associates (www.amalawyers.com) in the year 2000 and now it is a multi-jurisdictional law firm operating in Dubai, New Delhi, London and Singapore. Since a young age, this high profile senior

lawyer has a celebrity client list that includes leading multinational, Indian, regional and local corporates, political personalities from the sub-continent, ultra-high net worth families, Bollywood celebrities, to name a few.



You get a fair hint of Ashish Mehta from the moment you walk into his office. Rare photographs line the walls of his office, showing Ashish sharing very comfortable space with some eminent political and public personalities including Prime Minister Modi, President of India, Teresa May, Boris Johnson, Rahul Gandhi, L.K. Advani, Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Rajiv Gandhi, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Robert Vadra, Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Abhishek Bachchan, senior leaders of BJP and Congress Party and members of ruling family. “Law has upped its glamour quotient today. Compared to what it was even two decades ago, the practice of law has changed. In the past, the focus was on litigation; today it’s much wider and complex.”

For Ashish, the practice of law is not only a profession, but a vocation. He loves its challenge and its ever-changing complexity. “I enjoy my profession as it synchronises with my persona. I enjoy interacting with people. I never

wanted to go for a profession that was going to be monotonous in nature,” he points out. Every day brings him a new case – new facts, new people, new nuances.

The potential to excel in the practice of law is limitless. There is never a dull moment with the multitude of challenges that are unique to each situation.

As a member of the student’s council in school and as an office bearer of a political party in the Delhi university, I actively participated in learning about the grievances of my fellow students and resolving their issues. Subsequently, I developed an interest in assisting others to resolve their grievances and enjoyed public dealings since that time. After knowledge of the law, the second most important ingredient in the practice of law is interaction with people from different spheres of life. I thoroughly enjoy interacting with people and participating in affairs affecting common people.

The practice of law provides the opportunity to come across and deal with different types of legal issues each day where facts vary from one matter to another matter, interact and liaise with people from different cultural, religious, ethical and educational back grounds. Each day is a learning process. Generally speaking, I enjoy the challenges and ever changing complexities experienced in the practice of law. Is the electoral best served by illiterate / semi-illiterate politicians having no knowledge or understanding of the laws of our country OR by politicians who are educated and possess specialized knowledge and understanding of the laws of our country? What is best for the electoral?

In my opinion the electoral is better served by lawyers who turn politicians, as their knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the complex laws allow them to better apply the law to resolve the socio-judicial grievances and other issues affecting the people of India.



Is there a synergy at play? He responds by quoting: "Hazon jawabo se achchi hai Khamoshi meri, Na jaane kitne sawalo ki aabru rakhe." (My silence is better than a thousand answers; it keeps intact the honour of innumerable questions).

In truth, there are several Ashish Mehta's. There is the eminent senior lawyer who has a passion for law and believes potential to excel in the practice of law is limitless and there is never a dull moment with the multitude of challenges that are unique to each situation. Then there's the Ashish Mehta who believes

lawyers are apt at politics and further believes it is not mandatory to contest elections to be in public life. Then there's the Ashish Mehta who is a writer and political analyst who regularly writes legal and political columns for leading publications. Finally, there's the Ashish Mehta who reaches out to less privileged sections of the UAE society by providing free legal counseling to the deserving expatriate members of the Indian and other communities. In this way, this legal eagle fulfils his social responsibility to give back to the society that has given him so much.

As part of corporate social responsibility, since many years the firm has been and continues to provide pro bono (free) legal services to Indians residing in the UAE through the offices of the Indian Workers Resource Center in Dubai, which is established by the Government of India in Dubai to assist Indians who are in distress in the UAE.

He provides free advice by his weekly questions and answers column in Khaleej Times, a leading newspaper in the UAE, which is partly owned by an entity of the government of Dubai.

"Hazon jawabo se achchi hai Khamoshi meri, Na jaane kitne sawalo ki aabru rakhe."





Entrepreneurship *through a philanthropic lens*

JUGWINDER SINGH BRAR , Managing Director - Prime Tankers LLC



"A thousand families are five thousand mouths,"

"A thousand families are five thousand mouths," is a statement that gives us a glimpse into the attributes of Jugwinder Singh Brar who reeks of selflessness. One of the striking aspects of his personality isn't his fervent passion towards his career, but his

compassion that extends beyond the four walls of his house. He says, "Although I would love to take time out for myself, I am also aware of the fact that I have people depending on me for their next meal; so I keep up the pace."

"Although I would love to take time out for myself, I am also aware of the fact that I have people depending on me for their next meal; so I keep up the pace."



With ancestral roots tracing back to Pakistan, Jugwinder Singh Brar fondly reminisces the anecdotes shared by his great grandparents recalling their journey to Punjab. He comes from an erudite family, with a great-grandfather who possesses a triple M.A and worked for the Indian railway and his grandfather was a senior engineer for northern railways. His father took a different route by joining the Indian Army and is a national horse rider. Following his father's footsteps, Jugwinder embraced his passion for horseriding and won his first national prize at the young age of seven. Hailing from a military background, he spent his childhood leaving his traces in different cities that become a part of him. At the age of nine, he enrolled at the Military School of Ajmer that was previously known as the King George Royal Military School. Blessed with the sports gene, Jugwinder

won a lot of accolades in horse riding, athletics, and boxing at the national as well as state level. He is a proud father to three children. His oldest daughter is a marine lawyer in the USA. After the death of his first wife, he married again, which gave him two lovely children who are currently pursuing their further education at the University of London.

His wife Capt Guppaji Nagra is from the second batch of women officers commissioned into the Indian Army, and the first ever Lady Officer to be inducted into the Army Marksmanship Unit. She wears the badge of a National sharpshooter. Being surrounded by ambitious individuals at all times, he joined the merchant navy at 18 years of age. After sailing for thirteen to fourteen years, he was promoted to the position of the captain of the fourth largest ship in the world. He quit sailing in 1993 and settled in Singapore for three years. Very soon he made his way to Dubai and started his own company called 'Prime Tankers' in 1996.

As he takes a trip down memory lane, he is content with the trajectory of his life. Having lived in the times where he witnessed the shortage of even the simplest of things like soap and slippers, he was always taught to stay

grounded. Wastage of things was considered to be an unthinkable act. Right from books to clothes, everything was passed on from the oldest to the youngest. It was there that he learned the true value of sharing. "My pocket money was two rupees per month. In that money, we managed to watch a movie, indulge in samosas and a warm cup of tea, rent a bicycle for a few hours, and at the same time spare some money to offer to the temple," he reminisces. When asked about his role as a parent, he breaks into a smile and remembers a time when he was a child who got into trouble for even the smallest of blunders.

He believes that the best way to reach out to a child is through the language of love and patience. He says. "I feel that not giving a hug to my child is the biggest punishment my child will have to endure."



When the time came to settle, he had to pick a job near places with a shipping hub that included Hongkong, Singapore, and Dubai. His decision to settle in Dubai was influenced by a myriad of factors. Firstly, It allowed him to stay close to his parents who were in India. Secondly, he was averse to the corrupt environment that had plagued India and wanted to stretch his wings far apart and embrace new opportunities.

He animatedly speaks about the Punjabi community which has its lasting imprints on how he interacts with the world. "I believe that as Punjabis we've left no stone unturned in achieving great milestones wherever we've laid our foot," he says. However, he is saddened about how things are panning out for the younger generation who have lost touch with

their roots. He further adds, "We no longer teach our children to speak our mother tongue. Day by day they are have begun to stray away from their culture and no longer hold on to their roots."

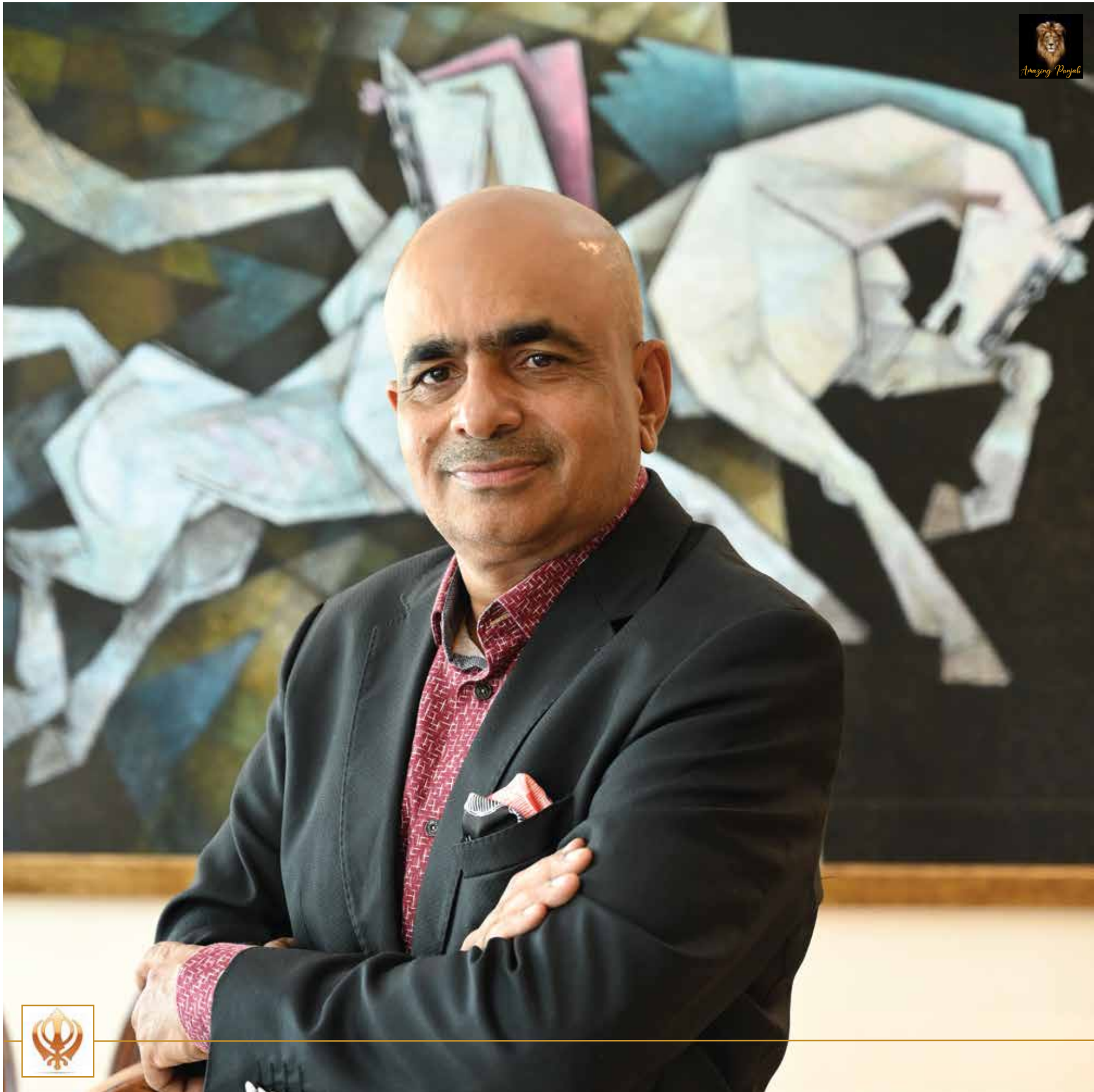
He believes that there is no end to the learning curve. With a humble demeanor, he says, "With more than a thousand employees working for me, I'm always open to the opinions and perspectives of every employee no matter their rank." "Along with being a lifelong learner, I also love the thought of sharing my knowledge with people around me," he adds.

He recalls an anecdote where he mentored his employee which brought him great joy and satisfaction. One of his employees who could barely spell the word 'ship' has now

transformed into a well-rounded individual under his tutelage and manages to run his office in his absence. Truly an empowering figure, he envisions building a school in Punjab for the underprivileged. By endorsing practical learning, he aspires to touch their lives and bring the joy of learning to their lives. He loves going to the gym and playing golf during his free time. He says, "Golf is one of the biggest levelers that imparts important learning lessons."

On a concluding note, Jugwinder who hasn't had a whole day to himself in the entire span of his career finds motivation in the happiness of the people around him. Driven towards bringing a ray of sunshine in the darkest corners of the lives of others, he goes the extra mile to make things happen.





Benevolence

Precedes Entrepreneurial Ambitions

ACHAL GHAI, Group MD- Legacy Emirates Group



“Building a business is not as satisfying as giving back to society and until you don’t experience this phenomenon, you will never believe it.”

Achal Ghai take a life of their own as they touch the hearts of people and speak volumes about his benevolent nature. Born in a middle-class family with a humble upbringing, Achal Ghai’s story does not follow a conventional route but has its own tryst with destiny and welcomes new possibilities that the future has in store for him. Being brought up in

a highly erudite family, academic excellence always triumphed over everything else.

He spent his early childhood in California, as his father was a part of an exchange program between the government and the University of Fresno, California.

“It was difficult for me to transition from a banking mentality and embrace the aggressive approach of a businessman,”

He was a distinguished scientist working with the irrigation department. Achal returned to Amritsar at the age of nine and completed his schooling in St. Francis, Amritsar, followed by his higher education in DAV College, Amritsar. He then catapulted himself into the ever-dynamic world of corporates by pursuing MBA from FMS, Delhi University. It opened doors for him in the banking industry, which bestowed him with a rewarding career as he navigated through five banks in three different countries, in the span of twenty years, before embarking on his own venture in the year 2004.

He landed in the city of opportunities when destiny came knocking his way. For nine years, he ran three offices in Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai with sixty employees under his leadership from his base in Dubai. However, on finding it a rather cumbersome process since he was miles away from everything, he sold his companies to an organization in New York and aspired to build a strong base in Dubai itself.

He is looking forward to his new venture on introducing a Swiss bank as an equity partner in DIFC, which resonates with him as an ex-banker. Although he came to the city with no purpose of staying back, he was carried away by its gracious nature and the comfort that it brought to his life.

One of the most challenging phases in his life came at a time when he was determined on writing his own narrative in the entrepreneurial world by building his own legacy as an entrepreneur. “It was difficult for me to transition from a banking mentality and embrace the aggressive approach of a businessman,” he affirms. It took him two long years to wipe out twenty years of corporate conditioning and drive his business acumen to greater heights by welcoming a fresh new start. He believes that life isn't always a smooth-sailing affair. “Businesses have their own ups and downs. Once, you reach a certain threshold it doesn't matter,” he says. But he manages to rise to the challenge and raise the bar with his voracious appetite for learning and a hunger to dream bigger. While giving us a glimpse of the times when he was put to test, he dives into a heart whelming anecdote that reaffirms our faith in goodness. He narrates, “Hailing from a service background, I

could resonate with the difficulties endured by my fellow employees during the pandemic and chose not to downsize during such a crisis. With the blessings of the good lord and unwavering faith in ourselves, we managed to recover 18 months of loss in a period of five months. If I had to downsize substantially, I wouldn't have the resources to scale back up again. Such mindful thinking goes a long way in helping you make difficult decisions in life.” Truly a spiritual being from within, Achal has always sought refuge in his spirituality and his internal connection with his roots has always seen him through everything in life.





As he fumbles through the challenges which are a part and parcel of life, he also collects precious memories along the way. “Although life is replete with precious moments, right from having children to watching them grow in a stable environment, I am grateful to be a part

of Dubai that has allowed these precious moments to flourish with my family, friends, and working professionals,” he says with a content heart. Being a part of the Punjabi community has always been a matter of pride for Achal who believes that their generosity surpasses the four walls of their house and extends towards the entire society. At the same time, he is saddened by the current scenario that is unraveling right in front of his eyes. The present generation has begun to shy away from their values and has failed to revive the essence of their culture. He believes that he owes his upbringing to his heritage that continues to emanate his goodness from within.

As an inspiring presence in the lives of his children, he has always harped on gaining professional independence from an early age. His son is a senior product manager with a tech company whereas his daughter is a fashion journalist at Harper Bazaar. Having achieved

these milestones at a very young age, they have already taken a page out of their father’s book and aspire to fill his shoes someday.

His wife Sonia Ghai is an Art Curator who owns more than 600 art pieces and has been running ‘Legacy Art’ in Dubai for fifteen years. When asked for his message to youngsters he says, “At a young age, we are overwhelmed with desperation and wish for too much too soon, that we make a lot of mistakes along the way. But by embracing patience and building on your core skills, you allow destiny to take its course and hope for a promising future for yourself.”







Soaring *through the tides*

Om Prakash Malik, Philanthropist and Owner Five Oceans Ship Repairing & Marine Services LLC



"I enjoy learning about civilization and how it all began. I think learning is something that we should never leave. This is something I want to impart to others as well."

Om Prakash Malik was born on the 1st Jan 1938 at a small village of Pir-Mahal, his father was serving at that time as agriculture and accounts minister with Government of Muscat Oman. His father did his graduation from the Lyallpur Agriculture University and stood second in graduation. Those

days the personal who stood First and second were given Scholarship to the UK for higher education but his father was selected for the Muscat, Oman Post. After returning in the year 1946 his father took up a job with the Agriculture Department with the Punjab Minister at Mianwali City.

Om Prakash did Schooling in a small Village which was 4 Miles from the village and he use to do the voyage everyday by mule, horse or by foot to and fro till 1947 and later migrated to Jalandhar during the partition the family came in a caravan which took Days and which is in a pathetic state with the passengers suffering from so many various sicknesses it took 15 days to cross in Jalandhar.

Finished by graduation from DAV College Jalandhar and finally government college of Ludhiana. During this period appeared for the entrance examination for NDA, Aligarh University and Kharagpur IIT and finally selected with Shipping Institute DMET (Mumbai and Calcutta). After completion of the studies in DMET joined Shipping Co-operation of Indian, Mumbai first in the sailing team and then later in the office as a Superintendent.

“I came to UAE in 1979 and started my workshop in Sharjah – Five Oceans Ship Repairing and Marine Services LLC. I remember when I started the workshop there was no Electricity in that area and we had started the workshop with using Electrical Generators for Source of Power”.

Om Prakash started his shipping career in the 1960's with a passenger ship that sailed between India and many major ports in the

Middle East. He later worked on a tanker ship that carried oil from Bahrain to Iran. In between that route, his ship used to stop at Ras Al Khaimah for spares. “We took water and food for people in Ras Al Khaimah for their survival and in return they used to give us fish,” added Om as he went on to describe how he has sailed in almost every kind of ship there is; from wooden to air conditioned ones. He settled in UAE in 1979 and started his workshop, Five Oceans Ship Repairing and Marine Services LLC, in Sharjah. Today, he is a shipping veteran who has actively participated in developing the Middle East’s shipping industry, and with his continual efforts, his company has flourished into a shipping powerhouse and handles multiple routes in almost every ocean.

SPECIALIZED REPAIR WORK AT SEMBAWANG PAGES 2 & 3

SBM Loading System
installed on *Desh Bandhu*



The 36,816-dwt tanker, *Ceyth Bandula*, arrived at Cumbung Shipyards on 29th January 1976 for her annual docking and repairs, and the installation of a new SSM Loading System. Owned by the Shipping Corporation of India, the vessel's new SSM Loading System was dominated by an

bracket projecting from the starboard bow, which was tested to a proof load of eight tons. Strengthening arrangements in the way of an A bracket and lower brace were installed, and a pipeline was run from the bracket to the No. 3 oil line, subsequently branching off to connect existing lines.

A new pipe for the fire-fighting system was installed in the pump room leading to Nos. 5 and 6 cross tanks and Nos. 7, 8 and 9 centre tanks. Left-hand/starboard tanks were converted into star tanks. All expanded tanks were dismantled, checked, washed and the necessary labour

Above: The Deck Manila in the Yard with the SSM Loading System in the foreground. Below: The SSM Loading System as viewed from Deck.



In addition, work was carried out

10th March 1970 saw the departure of the Dash Ganche, following completion of the new incubation, repair and tests.

Mr. O. P. Malik of Shipping Corporation of India supervised the modifications and repairs to the above vessel. Mr. Malik spent some four months at Sembawang Shipyard, during which time he also supervised repairs to the following vessels: *Chandana*,

get [Bell's Response Pressed](#)

Mr. O.P. Mills of Shipping Corporation of India



1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

"It's always blessing to be part of any history - Sharjah Khalid Port is one of it, for me"

Expat discovers his uncle was part of Omani history

Saman Haziq

SHARJAH — As patriotic fervour grips the Sultanate of Oman on its 49th National Day today, 40-year Sharjah resident Om Prakash Malik couldn't help but celebrate and feel proud that his family had 'special ties' with the country.

The septuagenarian recently discovered that his uncle — his father's brother — was mentioned in the historical records of Oman as the Wazir (minister) to the Ruler of the Sultanate from 1932 to 1939.

"I went to the US a couple of years ago and met the grandchildren of this uncle — RS Malik Dhuli Chand — at a wedding. There they made a passing reference about their grandfather being one of the advisors of the Ruler of Oman but didn't have any details about it. That statement made me dig through the history of Oman. I even made a few visits to the country. The facts and history I stumbled upon during the journey surprised me," said Malik.

He found that his uncle played a crucial part in consolidating Muscat and Omani territories. Dhuli Chand — after serving as secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs of India at Baghdad, Iraq, in 1932 — was transferred to Muscat and promoted to the rank of Wazir.

"He was welcomed by the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, the late Said Bin Taimur and British protectorate-in-charge, Major Watts. My uncle was known to be excellent at math (calculation) and had also served as treasury in-charge in Iraq previously, which is why upon taking charge as the Wazir of Oman, he immediately planned various custom duties on import and export articles.

"With his finance strategies, he started planning to improve the country," Malik said.

"Uncle Dhuli Chand was proficient in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu languages and would tour the port on horses, camels and chartered small ships at times with the Sultan or local

TRUSTED ADVISER: RS Malik Dhuli Chand played a crucial part in consolidating Muscat and Omani territories.



Oman National Day is very special and nostalgic as I am reminded of the love and hospitality of Omani people who trusted and accepted my uncle as their own."

Om Prakash Malik,
Sharjah expat

officials. He generated revenue from the rich fisher folks, landowners and businessmen.

"I felt proud of his contribution. It is emotional and overwhelming for me to read about my own uncle in the historical records of Oman," he said.

Malik also discovered that his uncle played a role in building roads, bridges — and even walkways — in Muscat. He also introduced agriculture and started growing vegetables, coconut trees, dates and even wheat.

The enormous treasure of information about his family's ties with Oman has kept the country close to his heart. "Oman National Day is very special and nostalgic as I am reminded of the love and hospitality of Omani people who trusted and accepted my uncle as their own," Malik said.

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As the saying goes, luck favors the brave; Om recalled a particular instance of importance from his life. He described that during the Iran-Iraq war, he opted to look after the Iranian ships in the war zone. He states this as the most challenging situation he encountered in his life. Despite the reluctance of many, he took up the opportunity and went to the war-stricken zone to help mend Iranian ships. This experience alone helped Om build strong ties to numerous individuals of authority in the Gulf and eventually helped his shipping business reach new heights.

Devrishi Malik, Om's son, is following in his footsteps and currently manages Five Oceans as its operating and marketing manager. "Throughout my life, my father has taught me the value of money and the value of efforts," added Devrishi as he recalled how Om acted as a mentor and framed his professional outlook. Wanting to leave his mark on the world, he



believes that a person should be known by his own efforts and not by whose son he is or which company he works for. Om's wife also follows a similar mindset. In the era where Indian women only looked after the household, she completed her Master's and still enjoys learning to this day.

Past his professional and personal life, Om is a firm believer in the notion that our body is not meant to be kept idle and needs to keep going, "The part of the body which does not get fresh blood will start paining. To reduce that, I keep my body moving and do yoga." Despite his old age, Om has the outlook of a young man. He does what he wants to and keeps his mind busy, "I enjoy learning about civilization and how it all began. I think learning is something that we should never leave. This is something I want to impart to others as well." he added.

Om Prakash daughter in law Pooja is also a pillar to the family, there is grand daughter who he calls "Princess"

"The part of the body which does not get fresh blood will start paining. To reduce that, I keep my body moving and do yoga."





Heads to hearts, *winning everything along the way*

GURINDERPAL SINGH, Founder – CEO, Talent (Enabling People)



His story begins in the small town of Amritsar, Punjab where he was born to a family of three, his parents and an elder brother. Shortly after, they relocated to Bhilai, Chhattisgarh as his father had secured a job there. Having completed his high school education and Mechanical Engineering in Bhilai, Gurinderpal pursued his MBA at the prestigious IIM Ahmedabad. Professionally, he

started his career as a Software Engineer in a startup company where he recalls he was the second employee after the office boy. He witnessed the company grow to 450 employees in only a short span of time, and this Gurinderpal recalls as: "...a phase that taught me how to grow a company with limited resources in less time..." It was this experience that he later on used to establish his own firm.



"I not only learn from my mistakes but also from those of others."

He starts with his story, Just as he concluded a productive day working on his new startup, he logged off from his system and was about to head home. As soon as he sat in his car, he received a call from his primary investor who had been instrumental in motivating Gurinderpal to start his own business. In fact, he had assured him an investment of INR 1.25 cr which was soon to come in.

Excited for a good news, he answered the call. "I cannot invest in your company, Gurinderpal," the voice from the other side of the phone echoed. "I have incurred heavy losses in a few of my past investments and I cannot proceed any further." And he disconnected the call.

Shocked, Gurinderpal did not know what to do. He had left a high-paying job as a recruitment head at one of India's second-largest IT firm to start this business. Without an investment, how would he proceed further? These thoughts daunted him.

"I didn't go home that night," said Gurinderpal Singh. "I sat and cried in my office, spoke to a couple of friends who urged me to get back to recruitment. But I had come too far to leave and go back. I had exactly INR 5,775 in my pocket, my office in my car, I restarted my journey."

A few years down the line, today Gurinderpal Singh proudly stands as the Founder & CEO of Talent 21 Management and Shared Services with operations in four cities in India, with a staff of over 216 people serving three countries on a daily basis. A living legend on his own, Gurinderpal believes that failures teach you more than successes in life.

He gradually moved into the field of HR and worked with a couple of prestigious companies like Wipro and Satyam Computers until it was taken over by Tech Mahindra. It was, however, in 2010 that he decided to leave his corporate job and pursue entrepreneurship. He then started his first company which he sold off in 2015 and then started Talent 21 Management which continues to achieve unprecedented heights to date. The brand now has an office in Dubai and the US as well.

While Talent 21 Management and Shared Services is what he is known for, quite a few people are aware of his other firm - The Growth Fund, which focuses on empowering startup entrepreneurs who have ideas, connecting them with potential angel investors and supporting investors in finding out the right people to invest in so they don't incur losses.





But he hasn't let his success take away time from his family. A staunch believer in living a balanced life, Gurinderpal enjoys spending time with his wife and three daughters, one of whom is pursuing Liberal Arts in a University while the other two are in school.

In his free time, he loves to cook for his daughters. "I ensure that at least 2-3 times a week, I cook at least one dish for them. Cooking is my stress buster," he adds. Apart from cooking, he loves reading books and listening to Gurbani, a compilation of traditional sikh religious hymns. "These values had been cultivated by my parents and I continue to live with them. My parents have instilled in me the

values that have helped me cross over the worst of times with perseverance and determination."

Being an ideal leader, Gurinderpal also believes in giving back to society. For example, \$35 from every invoice generated in his office goes in support of over 200 underprivileged children whose education his company sponsors. In addition, 10% of his staff are people from the underprivileged section of the society and 10% are the people of determination. He recalls coaching a batch of blind students into HR to an extent that now they're working in corporate organisations and drawing handsome salaries. "When I hire people, I check whether they

actually need the money or not, would it make a genuine difference in their lives. If yes, I hire them," he adds.

Deep inside, Gurinderpal is a learner. "I not only learn from my mistakes but also from those of others. You will often find me asking people not how they're doing today but how have they overcome the challenges that they faced. This inspires me," and that's exactly what he wants the future generation to focus on as well. "I believe everyone should start working with a small organisation or a startup. What you learn from there, you don't learn anywhere else. As long as you're learning, you're growing," he concludes.

"These values had been cultivated by my parents and I continue to live with them. My parents have instilled in me the values that have helped me cross over the worst of times with perseverance and determination."



Persisting *with Optimism*

Vinay Varma, Founder – Founder & Owner - The Royal Orchid Group



“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.” People do not always gravitate towards hope. It takes more than a positive mind to look for a silver lining behind the darkest of clouds. Vinay Varma is one such optimist who has turned every difficult situation into a worthwhile opportunity.

Raised in a city that reeks of staunch military ideals, Vinay Varma began to mirror many patriotic attributes from a very early age in his life. His father

was a military engineer who was first transferred to Bareilly, before making his way to Meerut, where Vinay spent most of his childhood.

Growing up as a kid, Vinay often ran into many soldiers and officers and loved spending time with them. Being enamored by the armed force, he hoped to be a part of one someday. Keeping that in mind, he completed his senior Cambridge. However, life had other plans in store for him; and he landed in the city of Mumbai.



“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.”

He was suddenly at a crossroads in life, where he was anxious about the future. Wanting to stand on his own feet and pursue his passion for food, he aspired to join the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology at Dadar. However, at that moment the admissions were closed, which further stalled his process. In the meanwhile, he decided to join a friend's business as a salesman. He went from one lane to another, selling files on the streets of Mumbai. Soon, he secured his admission and graduated after three years in 1970. He worked briefly for five-star hotels in Mumbai and immediately got an offer in Abu Dhabi.

Having made his way to Abu Dhabi on 17th October 1970, he joined a multinational company. Vinay was determined to scale up the corporate ladder. “If I can contribute to such an

extent in my field while working for others, imagine the heights I will reach on my own,” he vocalized. Thus, with a renewed perspective, he walked towards a new challenge. On witnessing the dearth of North Indian Restaurants in Abu Dhabi, he started Quality Restaurant, which garnered success overnight. Once experienced the taste of success, there was no turning back for Vinay. With encouragement from his wife, he embarked on a new venture with his closest friend and opened two new restaurants: Chhappan Bhog and Royal Orchid in Abu Dhabi.

Life wasn't always an easy ride for Vinay, who endured his share of pain before basking in the glory of his success. In the year 1982, he met with a serious accident. He was the sole survivor among a group of five who were returning home after a long day at work. At that

time, his daughter was five years old, whereas his son was only two. This incident was a true game-changer and inspired him to start his own business.

Now his children have grown and contributing to the family business. His son Gaurav, completed his education in Le Roche Switzerland and daughter Sheetal from America, they returned to the UAE and live a contentful life with Vinay.





“I love Abu Dhabi and it loves me back. I only pray to God that I continue to live here till my very last breath,”

Vinay has grown with the city and experienced monumental changes along the way. He reminisces a time when he used to live in small local houses. Right from walking to the airport roads and requesting the Pathans for water when the pumps stopped working to facing electricity cuts for hours, he now welcomes the growth and prosperity of Abu Dhabi with a thankful heart. He has high regard for the locals and emiratis, who have magnified the beauty of the place with their generosity. Along with the locals, he is also in awe of the rulers who have willingly given him a golden visa in the country. He fondly recalls a time when he crossed paths with the crowned princes of Saudia Arabia and Abu Dhabi, who enthusiastically took a picture with him at his son’s request. Vinay also had the opportunity

to settle in the USA, but his love for Abu Dhabi kept him rooted in the country. “I love Abu Dhabi and it loves me back. I only pray to God that I continue to live here till my very last breath,” he says spiritedly.

Along with being a gourmand, he is fascinated by cricket too. He has watched all the matches in Sharjah and had great outings with Gavaskar and Kapil Dev, whom they sponsored during that time. He loves socializing with his loved ones and engaging with social work. When asked about his ties with his Punjabi roots he says, “Although I’ve not lived in Punjab, I still resonate with its culture that lives within me. During my travels to India, I always go to Amritsar to pay my respects in the Gurudwara.”





Building *a legacy* with empathy

MUKESH KOCHHAR, Director - Sunny Gen. Trdg. LLC / Sunny Foodstuff Mills & Packing LLC



“If you cannot find time for yourself, and are relentlessly chasing after materialistic goals, you are failing to serve the purpose of life,”

“Failing to see a smile on the face of my subordinates is something that immediately dampens my spirits.”

These words enunciated by Mukesh Kochhar paves the way to new leadership, one that is inspired by empathy.

Raised in a city that sings ballads of the brave-hearted Rani Lakshmi Bai, who is popularly known as 'Jhansi ki Rani', Mukesh truly embodies her valiant spirit in his fierceness as an entrepreneur. He completed his schooling in Jhansi and pursued his B.SC in Solan followed by an M.SC in Kurukshetra.

Mukesh comes from a defense background with his father being the 10th officer at the Royal Indian Armed Forces, and his brothers in law serving in the army too. In the year 1976, his father moved to Kuwait to initiate a low-cost housing project, whom he joined after sometime. Although Mukesh wanted to join hands with his father, he did not have the qualifications of a civil engineer which became a major roadblock in his way and he was left to fend for himself. Mukesh was determined to prove his mettle as an entrepreneur. So when an

opportunity came to take care of rice supplies in the UAE and other neighbouring GCC countries, he grabbed it with pleasure. He came to Dubai in the year 1985 and ventured into the rice industry with a friend. "In those days, only Pakistani rice used to come to Dubai and India's representation in the country was as good as negligible," he affirms. Being the staple food of the locals, he aspired to bring more ease into their lives and serve them in the most holistic manner. He introduced smaller packaging that was easier to lift in comparison to the big bags that were being used. He also ensured that people were provided with the highest quality of supply, that came from Punjab, the largest source of quality rice production in India.

He believes that there is no end to the learning curve. Every stage of life unravels its own lessons and challenges that might make or

break a person. While giving us a glimpse into his growth trajectory, he narrates one incident in particular that reflects his business acumen. He said, "Those days, we used to sign a contract for 5,000 to 10,000 tons of rice. However, since the yield seemed to be very promising we signed a deal for 30,000 tons of rice which were worth 740 dollars. To our misfortune, we had heavy rains that damaged the crop along with shooting up the prices to 2000 dollars." Besides, the 2008 economic changes caused immense price fluctuations leading the UAE government to step in and take care of the food security program themselves. "Although I suffered a huge loss, I jumped onto the opportunity of helping the government with their food security initiative."

With his sincere demeanor, he continues to win hearts and yield positive results in his business.





Very often we are so engrossed with our responsibilities, that we tend to turn a blind eye to our personal needs. Mukesh has never been a victim of this fallacy. He loves socializing and is an ardent golfer who has embraced a well-rounded lifestyle for himself. "If you cannot find time for yourself, and are relentlessly chasing after materialistic goals, you are failing to serve the purpose of life," he states. Along with taking care of himself, he also extends a helping hand to society by adopting deaf and dumb students and taking care of their education, clothing, meals, and medical expenses and ensuring that they end up with a stable job at a later stage in life. He dreams of raising them with the ability to stand on their own feet, a dream that he shares with his wife. As a parent, he is very proud of the achievements of his children. One of the happiest moments in his life was when his son

got into UCLA. He has also never fallen behind in fulfilling the duties of a good citizen, be it providing aid to the needy during the Iran-Iraq War or the earthquake in Gujarat.

Commenting on how times have changed, Mukesh recognizes the stark differences in the upbringing of the present generation. "Kids these days are always handed over things on a platter. They always want to take the easy route and fail to acknowledge the role that societal values play in their upbringing," he says with a discontent sigh. Being born in a small city, the memories of his childhood still lie fresh in his mind. He has high regard for his Punjabi roots and heritage that brings with it a history of resilience. With great pride, he speaks about the green revolution and white revolution initiated during CM Kairon's time. "This was the biggest gift of Punjab to the entire nation.

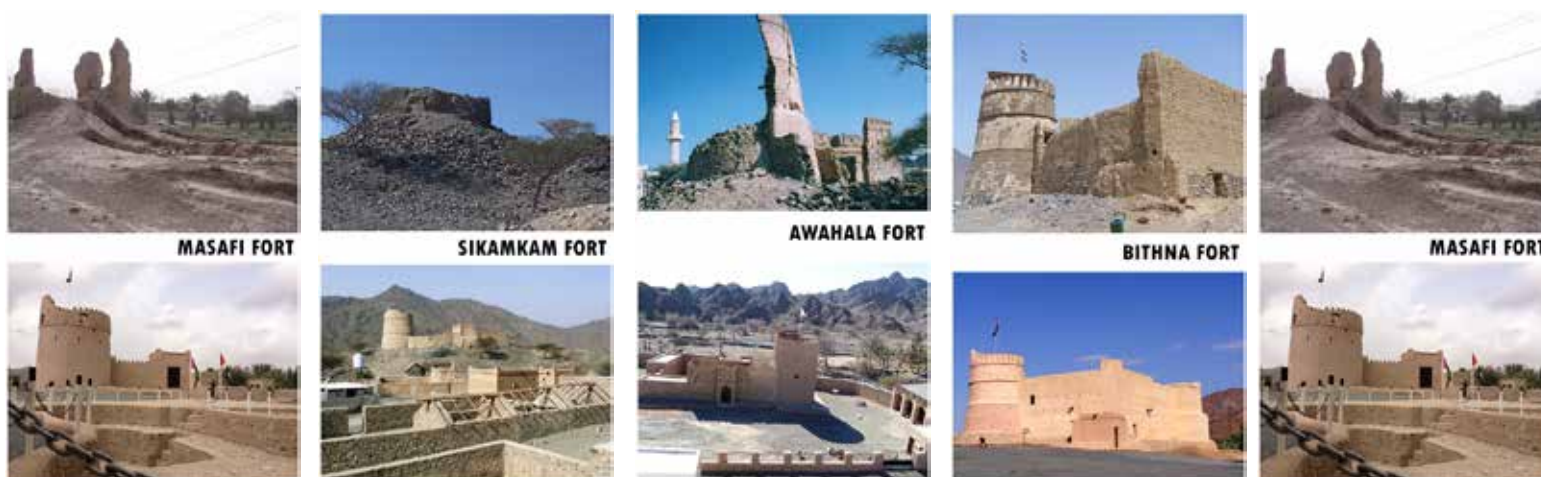
As a state, we've witnessed many wars and massacres that invokes a spirit of patriotism in our blood," he declares. As he continues to uplift people, he leaves behind him an interesting legacy that is fueled with empathy.





Tale of unwavering passion

AMRIK SINGH PLAHA, Restorer Engineer at Government of Fujairah



“People are so consumed with their overnight successes that they’ve turned a blind eye towards their heritage,”

It is said that “The only way to do great work is to love what you do.” This phrase holds true in the life of Amrik Singh Plaha, who has always found solace in working to the best of his capability.

Born and brought up in the small village of Gardhiwala, Amrik brings with him a rich legacy of Punjabi culture and heritage. Having lost his father at

a very young age, he was raised with the nurturing love of his older siblings. They owned a small book shop that exists to date. He studied at the Punjab School Education Board and further pursued a Building Structure Certificate Course. With the aspiration of achieving something big in life, he landed in Bombay in the year 1972. Here, he completed his diploma and secured his first job with Voltas.

“One of the best qualities of the Sheikhs is that they never ask people to retire,”



Gradually, he was able to stand on his own feet and find stability in his career. Wanting to step out of his comfort zone, he left for Oman. He was presented with an opportunity at the Ministry of National Heritage & Culture. It was truly a life-changing opportunity, that gave him the chance to network with like-minded people and step up his game. It was here that he met with Dr. Enrico D'errico the head of UNESCO, who was immediately impressed with his unwavering passion and hired him as an assistant. He also had a chance to work with Dr. Poulo Costa (Archeologist), Still Dr. Enrico is his mentor and advisor for restoration work to protect and give values to the rich heritage of Fujairah and UAE. His journey with UNESCO was indeed a meaningful one and he began thriving under the mentorship of Dr. Enrico D'errico. Even as the team dispersed and went their separate ways, he continued working with UNESCO independently as a restorer for five years.

Amrik was always keen on returning to his land and using his recently acquired experience to bring a radical change in his own country. He left for Punjab and started setting up his factory. However, life has other plans for him. Soon, he received a call from the UAE who needed his services in Fujairah. Although he was hesitant on leaving, he was encouraged by his wife who persuaded him to be open to new experiences. On reaching UAE, he was deeply saddened with the present reality that has drastically affected age-old monuments. “People are so consumed with their overnight successes that they’ve turned a blind eye towards their heritage,” he remarks. However, on being questioned by the present generations they have grown wary of their conscience and aspire to rebuild these spaces that belonged to their great grandfathers. Thus, with a team of architects and designers, he commenced the restoration process.

Amrik always wanted to retire at the age of 60 and

return to his homeland. “All my earnings will be dedicated to the well-being of my country,” he said with a content heart. However, the Sheikhs weren’t ready to part ways with him and over time had grown to respect him. “One of the best qualities of the Sheikhs is that they never ask people to retire,” he affirms. He is overwhelmed with their amiableness and holds them in high esteem. “Sheikhs are the special creation of God, they aren’t ordinary people,” he says.

While speaking about their gracious nature, he shares a heart whelming anecdote with us. Once, when he took his wife to visit the Sheikh, she requested him to visit the Langar in Amritsar while leaving. In a few days, he gets a phone call from the Sheikh office, requesting him to come to visit them. On meeting him, he showed Amrik a picture of him relishing food at the Langaar while clothed in Punjabi attire. It left him brimming with joy and his respect for them increased by tenfold.



Amrik is a cricket fanatic who passes his free time by browsing through different matches. He loves spending time with his family, especially with his wife, with whom he has many animated conversations.

His daughter who pursued her LLB currently resides in California while his son who completed his MBA in Chandigarh, Punjab

frequents back and forth between India and Dubai. One of the best and defining moments in his life is when he bid adieu to the tourism department and began his professional journey with the Sheikhs of Fujairah working under his tutelage and the others were required to cooperate accordingly," he says beaming with pride.

Throughout his career, he has experienced

many highs and lows, but the one thing that bothers Amrik the most is the lack of interest that the locals have in restoration work. "Restoration isn't merely work carried out by the mind and hands, it is the work that demands a passionate heart," he says. He takes immense pride in his work and continues to win hearts with his charismatic nature.





A Saga of Passion and Hard Work

RANJIT SINGH, Managing Director- Ranjit Group of Companies
Ranjit Cargo Transport by Heavy Trucks LLC, RCT Technical Services LLC, R7 Interiors



*"I'd rather put all my effort into actualizing my own dreams
rather than toiling away for some other man." "*

Very often, we are so enamoured with the idea of success that we lose perspective of the bigger things in life. Your journey to success isn't an easy task, it is one that is plagued with ups and downs that wear you down, only to make you stronger with time.

Ranjit Singh's tryst with success began at a similar juncture in life. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth but fought his way through every trial and tribulation that life threw in his way, only to emerge victorious towards the end.

“One must not be afraid of an uncertain future but work towards a nurturing present that will gradually pave the way for a comfortable life ahead.”



Born in the village of Pandori Rajputtan in Punjab, he had all the makings of an honest man who was always willing to go that extra mile for his family. He left for Dubai at the age of eighteen years, landed his first job as a manual labourer and worked his way to a truck driver and was later promoted to a transport manager.

Later on, when his career came at a standstill and there was no hope for another promotion, a perplexed Ranjit was torn between providing for his family and building a strong foundation for his career.

“There was an insurmountable pressure of paying the bills on time and providing a comfortable life for my family,” he said with a heavy heart. However, his entrepreneurial instincts drove him to resign from his post and build his own venture in the field of transport. He embraced the idea of struggling in order to make ends meet and his hard work and sincerity did not forsake him and he finally was able to launch two successful companies.

He said: “I’d rather put all my effort into actualizing my own dreams rather than toiling away for some other man.” With this thought in mind, he began to face every obstacle in his path with a renewed sense of hope. He owes his successes to nothing other than honest work which always inspired him to be the best version of himself.



"I've never imposed my own dreams on my sons. I've given them free rein to learn from their own mistakes and believed in their aspirations."



his heart. Most of their factories being set up in Dubai itself, Singh had labourers coming all the way from Sharjah which took them at least two hours on a daily basis. Soon after being aware of their plight, he had them relocated to Dubai despite the surge in expense. Being a labourer himself during his former years, Singh treads with empathy and is always sympathetic towards the needs of his labourers.

A true entrepreneur at heart, he welcomes each day with a renewed sense of vigour. After drawing inspiration from even the most challenging circumstances in life, he has had his own share of failures and setbacks that did not hamper his spirit. When asked about his message to youngsters, he simply states that nothing in life comes easy. He said: "One must not be afraid of an uncertain future but work towards a nurturing present that will gradually pave the way for a comfortable life ahead." Such is the thinking of Ranjit Singh, who is now an inspiring presence in the life of his family.

Both his sons Kamalpreet Singh and Sarab Preet Singh are successful businessmen who are now taking the family business forward and reaching new heights in their individual careers. He said: "I've never imposed my own dreams on my sons. I've given them free rein

to learn from their own mistakes and believed in their aspirations." The sons also have high regard for their father and always look up to him for advice. One of his personal anecdotes narrated by his oldest son Kamalpreet Singh gives us a glimpse into the inner workings of



Seeing *the silver lining*

KUSUM DUTTA, Painter, Writer and Social Worker



Kusum Dutta, a avid member of the Indian Social diaspora in the UAE, started her journey in the Middle East when she moved to Kuwait with her family in 1974. She recalls that her early years in the Gulf were nothing but peaceful. Her daily work-life kept her busy and community relationships kept her happy. She had settled into

her new life in the Gulf, but then came Saddam Hussain, who attacked Kuwait in 1990. Kusum recalls that her husband helped in the evacuation of the stranded Indians, and she also tried her best to help anyone in need. She sent all three of her children to India in a boarding school, and she left the war struck Kuwait in 1991 to Dubai, UAE.

"Since our childhood, we have been taught to give back to society and to look after others. This is something we took from our parents as we try to live an ethical life ourselves."



Moving to a new place is not an easy task for anyone. Luckily, Kusum's husband had opened an office in Ajman in 1989. This helped them financially as they eased into their new life in a new country. It is aptly said that God has different plans for everyone.

For Kusum, her life in the UAE provided her with a new job and opened her eyes to the

country's lingering social evils. "I got connected with the Consulate General's wife, and she put me in the Indian Ladies Association Committee.

It was not all fun and games, many people came to the committee in search of help," said Kusum. With the new job, Kusum started working towards the welfare of society. In 2010, she formed her own organization to spread

awareness through arts and literature and helped numerous people along the way. She also loves doing gardening in her spare times .

Kusum is still working as a member of the Indian Consulate and is a prominent speaker in social gatherings where she addresses public welfare issues to a wider audience.





"We have to live once ... live happily"



Eldest of the nine siblings, Kusum has witnessed the struggle for India's independence and the partition first hand. Despite of these setbacks in her early life, she chose academics as a creative outlet, and with her siblings, she aimed to always be on top of her studies.

"We were known as the doctor family, and we were always the winners. Sometimes, we even had to return our awards because we used to win them all, and then there were none left for the

other kids," replied Kusum with pride.

Kusum has done her best to instill her personality and work ethic in her children. All three of her kids are working as distinguished doctors in their fields. Her youngest daughter Ritu Dutta is working in the USA as an obstetrician-gynecologist.

She adds, "Since our childhood, we have been taught to give back to society and to look after

others. This is something we took from our parents as we try to live an ethical life ourselves."

"Learning can never stop if you are alive," says Kusum as she comments that every chapter in her life has taught her something new. She says that learning is a part of her life that has helped her cope with all the adversities life threw her way, and she still finds time to learn something new every day.





Atryst

between dreams and destiny

HARJYOT OBEROI BOHRA, Journalist

“What is meant to be, will truly find its way.”

True in every sense of the word, the above quote truly encapsulates the life trajectory of Harjyot Oberoi Bohra, whose destiny played a very important role in shaping major events across the span of her life.

Born and brought up in the close-knit town of Lucknow, Harjyot reveled in the presence of all her family members. Their bond is often celebrated in every family event. “We used to celebrate the smallest occasions in the biggest way,” she fondly

reminisces. She completed her schooling in Modern School and then went ahead to pursue her MBA in Marketing and Finance at Amity in the year 2007. Landing her first job at Times of India was a fated journey in itself. After facing rejection from various campus recruiters, she had begun to lose her morale. However, as destiny would have it, she finally found her true calling in the domain of media which paved the way for a promising career. She said: “I was always passionate about media and I feel that this job was best suited for me.”



She reached Dubai in the year 2015 on account of her husband's job in an IT firm that demanded a lot of traveling from his end. Having made it to Dubai, she transferred to Star India Private Ltd and then while working in India got a call from Khaleej Times. After giving multiple interviews, she was hired and began heading the magazine division with 8 magazines under her tutelage. Her journey so far has been professionally eye-opening that has provided her with various opportunities to learn and grow into the best version of herself.

She is deeply in awe of her father, who has always been an encouraging figure in her life and has shaped her into the independent woman she is today. She also credits Khaleej Times for being her source of empowerment and helping her realize her true potential.

Although destiny played a vital role in bringing her so far, she had her own share of trials and it wasn't a smooth-sailing affair always. Being a woman in a male-dominated culture wasn't an easy challenge for Harjyot

and her sister. But with the support of their close family, she embraced every obstacle in her way. Her marriage of 13 years with her husband Kamesh Bohra wasn't a cakewalk either. Like any other intercaste marriage, she was afraid of being labeled as a cultural misfit by her in-laws. Nonetheless, the love and support that she received from her in-laws cast her fears away. "On my first birthday after marriage, my father-in-law gifted me a dress, something my own father wouldn't approve," she said beaming with pride.



"We celebrate the smallest occasions in the biggest way,"



backseat and went straight back to work in a week's time. She treads each day with resilience and believes that women can overcome everything and achieve wonders in life.

As she takes life one day at a time, she hopes to add more value to society with her work. She is part recently partnered into a new venture 'Just Vegan' and is eagerly looking forward to bringing it to life.



She feels welcomed and honoured to settle in a country like UAE wherein her Punjabi community is thriving and all their dreams have been fulfilled. Right from building a beautiful Gurudwara to organizing concerts for her community, the government has truly made them feel at home.

She also suffered a personal loss during the course of her marriage that left her heartbroken and dejected. Her first baby was born prematurely with multiple heart problems. They Consulted doctors around the world, but as fate would have it she lost

her child and almost lost herself in the process. She said: "I buried myself with work from the third day itself and did not even allow myself to grieve." As time passed by, soon she conceived a healthy baby boy. However, she did not allow her job to take a

When asked for her advice for youngsters from her community, she simply asks them to be themselves and find humour in every difficult situation.





Turning *dreams* into reality

REENU MOHINDRA, Interior and Events Planner



By allowing your passion to become your purpose, one day you will surely pursue it as your profession. The journey of Reenu Mohindra holds testament to the above statement. She is an individual who never

dared to play small by settling for a life that is less than the one she is capable of living. A true visionary at heart, her professional journey is an inspiring tale of passion and courage.

“Helping my clients visualize their dream house or office and bringing their vision to reality is one of the most gratifying experiences as a designer that pushes me to strive for excellence,”



Having grown up in the town of Panipat, Reenu enjoyed the blissful upbringing that a small town offers. She said: “The biggest advantage of a small town is that you find friends that last for a lifetime.” Her father worked at the National Fertilizers Limited and her mother was a homemaker who always doted on her. Her family has always been her biggest support system and has shaped her into the person that she is today. After her marriage at the age of twenty-three, she shifted to Bahrain. She worked as a lecturer at the Kingdom University of Bahrain. However, life took a turn for Reenu when her husband moved to Dubai. Her husband who is an alumnus of Harvard Business School, Insead, and London Business School is an entrepreneur and runs two businesses. One of his businesses is based in

Dubai and is focused on National Security and Intelligence in the Middle East, Africa, and the Indian Subcontinent. The other one has its basis in manufacturing for Defence, Aerospace, Automobile, and Warehousing sectors with factories in Chennai, Bangalore-Hosur, and Sharjah with a focus on India & GCC.

After her shift to Dubai, she decided to take a plunge and follow her passion for interiors. She left academia and started her own business and hasn’t looked back ever since then. She strongly believes that being a part of the Punjabi community has gifted her with strong entrepreneurial qualities. “I recently came across a study which stated that Punjabis are one of the five communities that include Parsis, Marwaris, Gujratis, and Sindhis who have

established their own businesses in India despite being a small-sized community in terms of population,” she said beaming with pride. She believes that her community has reached greater heights in the entrepreneurial world along with leaving their own legacy behind by working for international companies or have climbed the corporate ladder as engineers, lawyers, doctors, and many more fascinating endeavours.



Filled with passion and charisma from a very young age, she has always been ambitious and greets each day with laughter and positivity. “Helping my clients visualize their dream house or office and bringing their vision to reality is one of the most gratifying experiences as a designer that pushes me to strive for excellence,” she said with a passionate smile. Most of her business has grown due to word of mouth and she believes that the route to success lies with contented clients. Such is the magic mantra that gears her up for every challenge and brings success to her corner at all times. Having roots in academia, she aspires to be a lifelong learner and keeps up to date with

the latest news in her field along with bringing more novelty and innovation at her workplace. At the same time, she has embodied the role of a teacher. She said: “As humans, it is our duty to pass on our experience and knowledge to the next generation so that they can meet their potential.” She considers herself equally lucky and blessed to have gained the opportunity to follow her dreams. “When you are passionate about your work, you are in a state of flow at all times and work doesn’t seem like a burden,” she says enthusiastically. She has encountered various challenges along the way and has made her own share of mistakes that have become valuable lessons in her life.

Reenu’s transition from a salaried lecturer to a businesswoman has been a self-reflecting one that has given her an insight into her true potential. As she straddled between two different worlds, she embraced every change with resilience and is now content with her journey. She is blessed with twin daughters who are studying in grade eight at Raffles World Academy in Dubai. She continues to find solace in her family and considers meditation and books as her stress-busters. When asked for her message to the next generation she says: “Focus on lifelong learning, always uplift others and embrace your work with passion.”

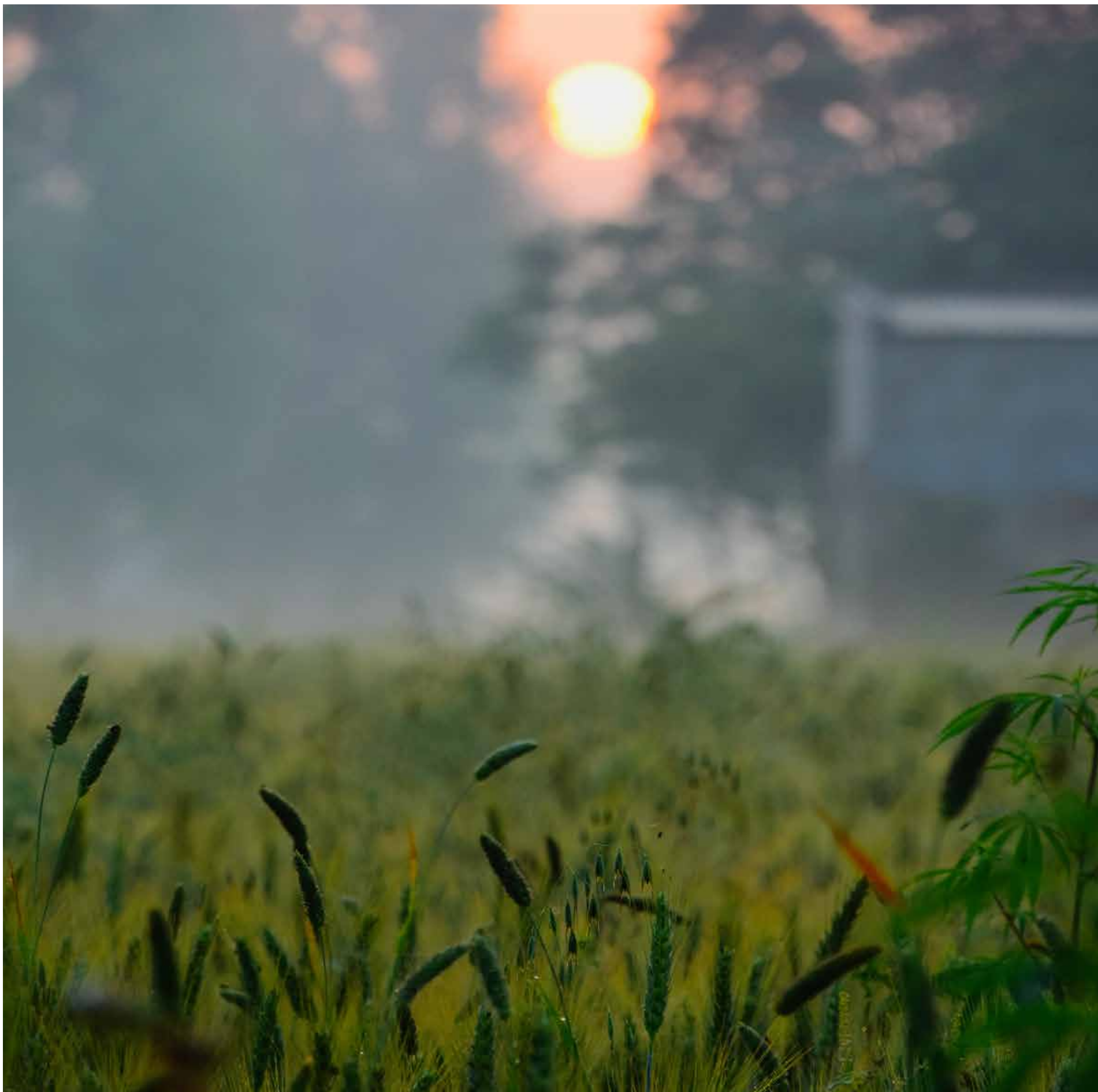


“As humans, it is our duty to pass on our experience and knowledge to the next generation so that they can meet their potential.”





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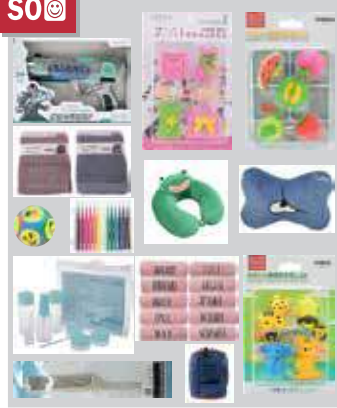
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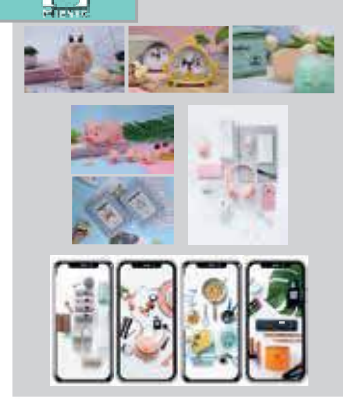
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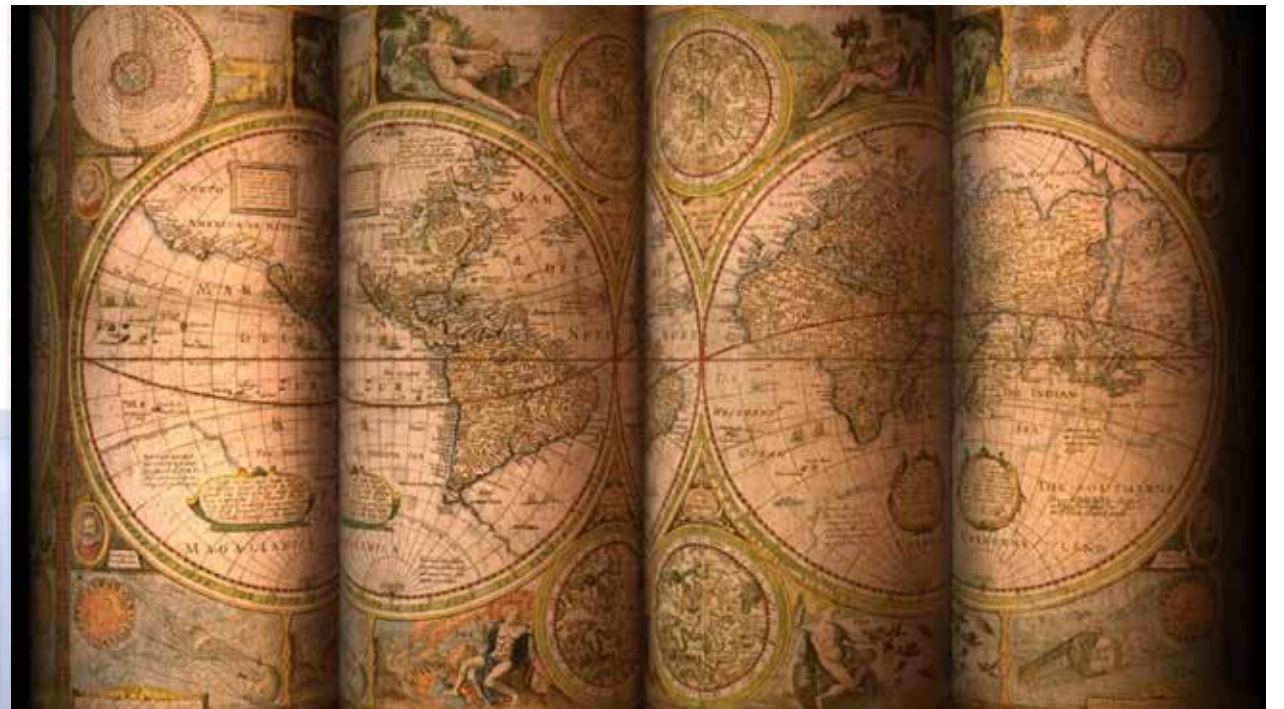
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This empowered outlook enabled Asha Sharma to build a thriving career spanning 16-17 years as a financial advisor and wealth management coach. Raised in Indian army back ground which instilled massive discipline and laser sharp focus in her. And travelling stretches across the world was most rewarding experience which taught her to leave the comfort zone when needed.

Choosing career in 2003 as Financial Advisor with Zurich intl Life Ltd. in UAE, being a young woman financial Advisor indeed was brimming with challenges. But her passion was always a war with in her. With burning desire to succeed to stand out in male dominated industry made her never to give up. Belief that I am there only to add value to peoples lives so despite challenges, she kept strengthening her strengths and diminishing her weaknesses. But rightly said is, Success only comes by persevering despite failure. Many setbacks and barriers were there but her passion to succeed was above and beyond.

Her contribution towards Women Financial Literacy is commendable. As time passed she realized when we talk about financial literacy its women who need it most. While taking any long or short term financial decision women generally leave it to there spouse, what if spouse is no more. Mostly third world countries where at this age also Men of the home take most of financial decisions is not disagreeable but women needs to be well equipped with knowledge.

She started coaching women on financial Literacy and soon companies started invited her to hold sessions and talk shows.... And that's where she finds her heart and soul lies in. 'financial literacy' forms the core of Asha's work-life today. She feels, "Financial literacy among women can bridge the gap of gender inequality. Women must take charge of their finances and the first step towards that is to understand money."

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THE **TURBANATOR** RIDERS IN THE REGION





Singhs Motorcycle Club: The Sikh Turbanator Riders in the MENA Region

Precisely on April 14th, 2014, which marks the day of the Sikh harvest festival, Vaisakhi, a group of passionate bikers, businessmen by profession, originally belonging from the land of Punjab came together to establish the Singhs Motorcycle Club. Grounded in the UAE, the club is slowly expanding with chapters in India and Australia.

Singhs Motorcycle Club's core ideology is to promote the brotherhood of Sikh culture amidst the youth and other communities, while also being actively involved in philanthropic and charitable deeds. With its core values and ethos of their state, Punjab, SMC aims to bring both bikers and non-bikers on board while cultivating the essence of equality and humanity.

The slogans Deg Tegh Fateh, 'Chardi Kala' and 'Sarbat da Bhala' originally cited in the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which translate to 'victory to charity and arms,' 'always in high spirits' and 'everyone is blessed' drive SMC's members.

The group holds a commitment to carry forth the value of the Sikh turban towards the next generation, which is no less than a 'crown' and is the pride of every Sikh. SMC holds faith that these beliefs can make the world a better and more empathetic place to live in.

Register authority & events executed, SMC is registered as NGO in India & with Emirates Motorsports Organization in the UAE.

The club was founded by an Indian businessman, S. Gurnam Singh, and Co-Founder, S. Tanuj Singh, who is an architect by profession. Residing in the UAE for over 30 years, they are both passionate bikers and strong believers in the Sikh religion.





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