

CURRENT ISSUE JANUARY 20, 2003

LIVING: TRAVEL TRAUMA

Face Off

<http://www.indiatoday.com/itoday/20030120/living.shtml>

Many foreign-bound Sikhs remove their turbans and clip their hair to escape post 9/11 racial profiling

When Harmanjit Singh Sandhu, 24, got admission to an MBA programme in a California university, it was a dream come true. But, 48 hours before he left for the US in August 2002, panic gripped the computer engineer. He feared his turbaned appearance would invite trouble in the post-9/11 US. So he cut his hair short, removed the turban, went for a clean-shaven look and applied for a fresh passport. His old passport was valid till 2010 but he wanted one with his new photo. "Cutting his hair was a painful decision but we wanted to avoid any humiliation abroad," says his father Gurmail Singh.

Sagar Annie Singh, Student in Romania: Removed his turban and tied his hair in a ponytail after he was called "Bin Laden" Harnamjit Pal Singh Kehal, Business executive: Had a hassle-free Hong Kong trip as he had shaved his beard and cut his hair

Sandhu's case is not an exception but a trend as the queue of shaven Sikhs lengthens at passport offices in Punjab. The most visible section of the Indian diaspora, the Sikhs are dashing for a passport carrying their new photo. The Chandigarh passport office received 600 such applications last year. "This disconcerting trend has been more pronounced since the September 11 attack," says Arvind Kumar, regional passport officer, Chandigarh. The two highly publicised hate attacks on Sikhs in the US linger in the memory of many foreign-bound Sikhs. That the security personnel in foreign airports are particular in frisking travellers with turbans and beards have not helped. "They suspect anyone with a beard and headgear as an Islamist fanatic," says Jasvinder Singh Osan, a globe-trotting electronic engineer who heads a software company in Chandigarh. He had cut his hair two years ago for "comfort" but retained the old passport. However, when he went to the US recently, he got his photograph changed. "I had a lurking fear that my old photo with Sikh looks could arouse suspicion," says Osan.

It seems the fears of the 1984 Sikh riots, when many had cut their hair to escape communal fury, have come to revisit. The youngsters are troubled by stories of racial profiling at the airports. The apprehensions are not entirely unfounded. Sagar Annie Singh, a medical student in Romania, took off the turban and wore his hair in a ponytail. His turbaned appearance never caused any trouble in the first four years of his stay abroad. But since September 11, the world changed for Sagar too. "Anyone sporting a turban and beard is seen as a fanatic or Taliban," he says. On the streets people taunted him, calling him "Bin Laden". "They mistake me for an Iranian or an Afghani," he says. When he came to India and applied for a new passport, however, the authorities refused to give it at a short notice. The turban trouble is more serious in East European countries which have a relatively less Sikh

population than Britain or the US. Some, like Haramrit Pal Singh Kehal, a business executive in Ludhiana, say the new looks work wonders. Kehal, who went for the razor, says he "didn't face any problem on my recent Hong Kong trip";.

JASVINDER SINGH OSAN, ENGINEER:

Feared his Sikh looks could arouse suspicion in US

Not many globe-trotting Sikhs, however, buy the argument that a new appearance raises the comfort level. "Security checks at the airports are stricter but it is wrong to say that Sikhs are more vulnerable because of their appearance," says Jagjot Singh, a frequent-flier based in New Delhi.

Passport authorities are cautious in issuing new passports-there will be a fresh police verification if there is a considerable difference in appearance

-since changing the looks is an old trick to get a new passport in place of the one bearing visa rejection stamps.

In a state where the lust for foreign lands has fuelled a Rs 500-crore immigration racket, people are taken in by claims of travel agents that a shaven face will help a Sikh escape detection by foreign security agencies that crack down on illegal immigration.

After Italy allowed the stay of illegal immigrants, passport authorities got a plethora of requests for fresh passports from them. "Most verification documents carry their clean shaven photos," says Kumar.

Along with the changing face of Punjabi youth, there is a rising concern over apostasy. But dollar dreams seem to have got the better of religious symbols.

-Ramesh Vinayak

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STATES: PUNJAB

<http://www.indiatoday.com/itoday/20030120/states-punjab.shtml>

The Home Coming_or conning.

As more and more NRIs are duped of their property, the state Government moves to ease their legal woes

By Ramesh Vinayak

It was a homecoming Gian Singh is unlikely to forget in a hurry. Settled in Canada since 1970, the affluent transporter flew to India in August last year with a one-point agenda: to claim his share of ancestral land at Raipur Rasulpur village in Punjab's Jalandhar district. The 16 acres, he hoped, would help bring his children closer to their roots. It was a futile hope. Not only did his brother refuse to part with the land, but instead registered a case of theft and trespassing against Gian on what is, as per revenue records, a joint holding. The hapless NRI had to surrender his passport and has since been shuttling between the police station and the court. Though exonerated of the theft charges, a dejected Gian says, "There's no justice for NRIs here."

HARCHET S. BAINS, a London-based NRI, has spent two years getting one of his five shops in Garh Shankar vacated. "Lower courts don't follow the letter of the law," he says.

It's a fact more and more expatriates from Punjab are finding hard to reconcile with. With real estate prices in the state registering a 100 per cent hike in the past five years, NRIs are flocking back home to stake claim to their assets. But they find themselves embroiled in tedious litigation after being duped of their ancestral property or one purchased by remitting money back home. According to a recent survey conducted by the state Government, at least 3,000 cases involving NRIs in property-related disputes are pending in courts—a bulk in the dollar-rich Doaba region comprising Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala districts, home to 1.4 million expatriates.

BALJIT SINGH BAINS has been shuttling between London and Garh Shankar for the past six years. "How can I return to the UK with the legalities going on for years?" he asks. The Government's concern is not misplaced. The insecurity among expatriates over their properties is recognised as a major hurdle in attracting NRI investment. "The NRIs now see property investments as a risky gamble," admits Jalandhar MP Balbir Singh. Investment in real estate, which had spiralled in the post-terrorism Punjab, has tapered off considerably. Another damper is the Foreign Exchange Management Act 2000 which has taken away the NRIs' right of acquisition of agricultural land. "We cannot have big investments unless the NRIs feel secure about their real estate assets," says Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

PARKASH KAUR returned from the UK after 10 years to claim her property at Mahilpur in Hoshiarpur. "But I'm scared of the protracted court proceedings," says the 66-year-old.

The realism notwithstanding, NRI properties continue to be prime targets for the thriving land mafia that works in cahoots with police and revenue officials and exploits the expats' compulsions: short visits to the country and inability to pursue the slow judicial proceedings. "The NRIs are at a clear disadvantage in protecting their property rights," says K.K. Sharma, managing director of the NRI Sabha, a Jalandhar-based NGO.

Take Baljit Singh Bains, a British citizen for 42 years. For the past six years he has been shuttling between London and Garh Shankar in Hoshiarpur, pursuing 35 civil and criminal cases. Taking advantage of his absence, his sister-in-law fraudulently sold off Rs 70 lakh worth

of prime ancestral land and filed a criminal complaint against him. Not fluent in Punjabi and unable to tackle corruption, Baljit is desperate: "How can I return to Britain with the legalities going on for years?" Says D.S. Bains, commissioner of the newly set up Department of NRI Affairs: "We can only lend them a shoulder to cry on. The executive cannot do anything once it is a legal dispute."

Two years ago, in the face of intense lobbying by influential expatriates who are known to fund the state polls liberally, the Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP Government amended the land laws. While Section 9 of the Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act was changed to enable NRIs have their agricultural land vacated by a tenant (only once), the East Punjab Urban Rent Restrictions Act 1949 helped them get one residential and one commercial property vacated through a summary trial provided they have been owners for the past five years. Though hailed as a pathbreaking shortcut to legal wrangles, the amendments haven't proved very effective because their ambit is limited to properties where NRIs have a clear ownership title and are in dispute only with their tenants.

THE PROBLEMS

Amendments in land laws deal only with owner-tenant disputes while most cases involve NRIs' relatives.

Tedious legalities are exploited to partition property.

Lower courts are overburdened; they also allow the contesting of cases.

THE SOLUTIONS

Set up fast-track courts to hasten proceedings in disputes not covered by amendments.
Simplify procedures for partition of property.

Appointment of expats who have returned to India as nambardars in villages to prevent manipulation of records.

More often than not it is the relatives who occupy or fraudulently sell the NRIs' share by forging the power of attorney and altering the land mutations in revenue records. "Almost 95 per cent of these disputes relate to the undivided ancestral property," says Sharma. Besides, the relatives exploit the time-consuming procedures to legally partition the property, with a contested case taking up to 20 years to decide. Which is why the Government is thinking of simplifying procedures for partition of property. It has also decided to appoint expats who have returned to India as "nambardars" in villages with over 20 NRIs to guard against manipulation of records.

In the owner-tenant disputes, though the amended law provides for a speedy trial and immediate possession of property, the cases are delayed because the lower courts are overburdened. Another reason why tenants succeed in delaying cases is that the lower courts

grant leave to contest despite a division bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court having upheld the constitutional validity of the amendments. "The lower courts are not following the letter of the law," laments Harchet Singh Bains, a London-based NRI who owns a built-up property at Garh Shankar. Though he won legal possession of his residential property within nine weeks, it has taken him two years to get one of his five shops vacated. The provision allows only one commercial and one residential property to be vacated, that too just once. This is another sore point with the NRIs. "The amendments were a half-hearted measure to placate NRIs," adds Harchet.

Despite the legal hiccups, more and more NRIs are moving courts to benefit from the amended laws: there was a five-fold rise in the number of NRIs seeking consultancy at the NRI Sabha in the past year. Parkash Kaur has returned from the UK after 10 years to claim her commercial property at Mahilpur, Hoshiarpur. "But I'm scared of the protracted court proceedings," says the 66-year-old.

Desperate to gain the confidence of such NRIs, the state Government has decided to approach the chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to have some district courts double as "fast-track courts". These will not only bring uniformity in the implementation of the amended laws but also speed up proceedings in disputes not covered by the amendments. But until that happens, homecoming will continue to be a misnomer for many NRIs.

UNHCR UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Win-Win situation for anyone who has Insider Connection and can grease or Buck The System. An applicant must not be a victim or persecuted in his/her home country.

UNHCR believes in giving Benefit of the Doubt, in a 50-50 situation to the Applicant seeking refuge from persecution in his/her country of origin-home country.

This benefit means UNHCR would seek that the Applicant is granted Asylum and its related benefits to the claimant even when the Merits of the Applicant's case/claim are either outright invalid or questionable.

It was quite common, that many so called made multiple claims for social-benefits in the same country by forgery of identification papers/cards.

They at the sametime engaged in un-declared work.

If a Claim for Refugee Status is denied, shouldn't then the Applicant be deported to his/her home country ?

Where are the Details of the follow-up ?

Who harbored them ?

To what end ?

And for what purpose, to serve whom ?

An applicant could have been a fugitive from his/her home country and trying to buy time ?*

Majority of such claimants are smuggled by organized gangs to their Custom Designed desti/nations which offer the highest social benefits for refugee claimants.

Has this procedure to seek asylum not been used to acquire a New Identity, if the applicant used someone else's passport etc. etc. ?

So an applicant knows, well before leaving his/her home country that if s/he can bribe the system, s/he has less than 25% chance being deported and the Applicant must not be really persecuted in his home country and must not fear any punishments for making false-baseless claims.

Where can one access all the records/files which show the complete list of the Applicants whose Demand for Asylum was refused and Details from local authorities regarding Deportation of that person who unlawfully demanded asylum ?

Anyone whose Claim has been denied does not necessarily leave the host country. S/he goes underground-off the radar and/or harbored by his/her masters whose commands s/he agrees to follow.

The ex-claimant who presented him/herself as victim of persecution just dis-appears. Mercenary, for money hire-a-hoodlum.

Once claiming political persecution now engages in soft crime, as well as Not-so-hard crime. Extortion, Hard crimes like gang-war and using terror to extract whatever s/he can are her/his newly adopted cover/facade a step after from asylum onwards.

Routine crimes are assault/battery crimes, sometimes capital crimes are also committed by the same.

Then these act as agents for Asylum Business, Forged Documents, acquiring New Identity. It is very likely that he now works in collusion with the smuggling-ring who first brought him to the host country.*

In case the victims (in his/her home country) survive and the police happened to be near by, the ex-Asylum Claimant produces a Terrorists-refugee-The host, and spends may be a few months in prison for inflicting serious bodily injury and back on street again.

Rites of passage = Fingers soaked in blood.

It is 100 % safe for someone living in one's home planning an assault on the host country/society and parasite on the host.

Is there a way/mechanism to control and check that the recipient of UN's Asylum Travel Document would not sell his/her newly acquired Privilege ?

The going price is about \$5000 and upwards, because the same smuggling-ring would use such a Document to smuggle someone seeking ways to US and Canada.

Also this is another way, how the person who in his home country sought to parasite on the host would pay-off through Installment Plan-Financing which was organized by his owners/masters

and/or whom he would render his services except his personal-living expenses deducted/able ?
Pyramid Scheme.

Is there a control mechanism within the powers of UN to assure/monitor that the person/s granted Asylum would behave afterwards ?

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That the recipient of UN Travel Document did not travel to terrorists/militancy training camps ?

That the applicant didn't travel to another country with which such Terrorists training establishments had an open border/No markings/No stamps on passports ?

Can UN Refugee Travel Documents be checked, controlled to see that the holder didn't travel to countries' next to his/her home country ?

Are there any such Visa markings/stamps ? Beware, there are some countries-which also issue paper-visas, which leave No trace of holders travels. ?

Did the holder travel to his/her country of origin through clandestine means/channels ?

There is a Zero/0 % risk in undertaking an adventure to "be smuggled" to a western nation and to parasite on its society/social welfare.

Given the secret alliances of organized crime and Transnational crime Groups, which Superspies like Human Rights and AI are quite well aware of, in case the smuggling plan fails, there is always a Human Rights Campaign to be roll out.

Superspies survive and can afford to pay their employees from resources which are secret Donors (underground ?) and their assets are Confidential Routes/Intelligence/Information.

How can one deny that Organized crime syndicates are also Humanists ?**

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Pyramid Scheme_AI Reports_Asylum Business

Report Says Terrorists Exploit Canada's Immigration System

Police search an apartment in the east end of Montreal on Dec. 21. The home is believed to be connected with Ahmed Rassam, an Algerian man who was arrested on charges of trying to enter the United States with bomb-making materials.

Jan. 14 - International terrorist groups are exploiting Canada's immigration system, using the country as a safe haven and a base to raise money for activities abroad, according to a confidential report by the country's intelligence service.

"Canada's immigration system, because it is both open and accessible, is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse," says the Canadian Security Intelligence Service report, which was written in July 1999 and obtained by ABCNEWS.com via a freedom of information request. "This is of chief concern for Canada's national security."

Among the more than 50 terrorist groups believed to be operating in Canada are the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Tamil Tigers, Sikh extremists, the Kurdistan Workers Party, Hezbollah and extremist Irish groups, according to the report.

Terrorists Are 'Free and Easy'

Canada is well-known among terrorists around the world as one of the easiest countries to enter undetected, says Alan Bell, president of Globe Risk Holdings, an international security consulting firm based in Toronto.

The Immigration Department is understaffed and thus unable to thoroughly background every potential immigrant and refugee, Bell says. Moreover, the naturalization process is so long that it often takes years to complete.

During that time, Bell said, terrorists simply stop reporting to immigration officials and disappear.

"Then they're free and easy, they're in Canada, and they can do what the hell they like," Bell says. "Once a bad guy has dropped out of the immigration system or the refugee system, the chances of picking this guy up are very slim, unless they do something very stupid or wrong.

"So you've effectively got someone who's in the country, who's not being monitored, and after a year or two he starts doing what he was originally sent here to do in the first place, which is either collect financing for a terrorist organization in his home country; act as a halfway house; do training and operational planning; or become a mule for terrorist groups to move equipment and weapons and manpower in and out of the U.S."

Asylum Business abuse UNHCR

How Zero becomes 100 ?

Breeding Document is the starting point.

UNHCR.

perthuis@unhcr.ch

Dear Sir/Madam,

Once the Request for Asylum from an applicant is processed but such grant is refused; what happens then ?

where to locate the applicant ?

And who-which authority knows his/her whereabouts ?

Could you please describe such authorities in Europe, Canada and USA.

Over the last 20 some years, how can UNHCR be sure/assure that the Grant of Asylum procedure in those countries has not provided A New Identity to asylum seeker/s ?

What control mechanisms are used by UNHCR to make sure that a fugitive from law abroad does not get a Asylum Permit in host country ?

If it is the responsibility of UNHCR, how does UNHCR exercise its authority ?

Once a Request for Asylum is approved, the applicant/recipient is issued a Asylum/Asylant World Travel Document-then;

The holder of this Travel Document is not supposed to travel to his/her home country OR to a country based upon which he/she was granted asylum.

The holder of this Travel Document is not supposed to engage in clandestine business, e.g. Marketing/Renting and/or selling of this Document for abuse through alterations-forgery.

The holder is not supposed to engage in training in militancy and/or activities which would further violate the Human Rights of innocent others and Naturally produce more victims-asylum seekers.

The holder is not supposed to lend him/herself to activities-be an instrument which violate the Spirit of Charter of Human Rights,e.g. the applicant presented him/herself to UNHCR and claimed that his/her Human Rights were violated (He/she understood the Charter ?) and the Documents presented for the Claim are not forged.

Seeking Asylum for the Applicant is actually not a transitory stop in applicant's grande/master

plan to do something else.

Are there mechanisms within UNHCR to implement follow-up controls/supervision in context of the above ?

Which authority/who keeps track/records of such implementations ?

Your response to these relevant issues would be highly appreciated.

Thank you very much.

dharminderk2000_23032003

The following text was not sent.

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