

BLACKBURN GURUDWARA SUNDAY 17 January 2010

Friends,

SAT SRI AKAL

I am glad to be here with you today in Melbourne.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share in your prayers, to talk to the Sangat and to meet you all.

I have been to Melbourne many times in the two years that I have been here and I have had the occasion to meet many people in the community here, to talk to them and hear from them how they are doing, how their families are doing, and the future that they are building for themselves and their children, here in Australia.

So many of you have come to Australia, years ago, and made it your home. Many of you have told me how Australia welcomed you when you came and how you have made a future for yourself and your children here; that you have had the opportunity and the environment to do well and to contribute in turn, to the economy and the future, not just of the country of your birth, but to the country that you are now citizens of.

India and Australia are two countries whose bilateral relationship rests on the firm foundation of shared values and traditions. We are both vibrant democracies with long and time honoured traditions of democratic political processes, a free press and a strong and independent judiciary; We are both multicultural, multi-ethnic countries who celebrate our pluralism and the diversity of the various communities that form the rich and varied fabric of our respective societies.

The incidents that have taken place in recent times here have troubled us all, Indians and Australians alike. They have been condemned in the strongest possible terms by all right thinking persons.

The Government of India is monitoring the situation very closely. You are aware that there have been several high level interactions on the safety and well being of the Indian community in Australia. Both the Consul General and I are in constant touch with the concerned authorities, both at Canberra as well as Melbourne. You will also be aware that the CG and I met the Acting Premier, Rob Hulls and Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe, last week.

The incident of arson at the Annexe of the Cranbourne Gurudwara , which was under construction is receiving the full attention of the concerned authorities. In fact, I visited the Cranbourne Gurudwara earlier this morning and saw for myself where the fire was. I talked to the Gurudwara authorities; they are receiving full co-operation from the Victorian authorities and we agreed that it would be useful to increase lighting and surveillance around the compound.

I would like to assure you that both Governments are united in their desire to see speedy progress in bringing the perpetrators of these incidents to justice, in bringing these incidents to a complete stop, and in ensuring that they do not happen again. I request you to keep faith and let the law take its course.

It should be our attempt in the days to come, not to allow these incidents, or a few bad elements, to vitiate the atmosphere, or the friendship that exists between the people of our two countries, the warmth and the good feeling.

I will conclude by recalling, on this solemn occasion, the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji, as I request you to join me in praying:

Aukhi Ghari na dekhani dei apna birad samale

Hath de rakhae apne ko saas saas pritpale

He does not let His devotees see the difficult times; this is His innate nature.

Giving His hand, He protects His devotee; with each and every breath, He cherishes him.

My best wishes to each and every one of you.

SAT SRI AKAL.