



Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds

Sikh Federation (UK) welcomes first steps in asserting the authority of the Akal Takht, but public pronouncements need to be followed with actions so all those declared guilty are permanently removed from public and political life

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The leadership of the Sikh Federation (UK), its 7-member Strategy Board and 15-member National Executive Team applaud the public pronouncements at the Akal Takht by the Singh Sahiban on Monday.

The manner in which the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leadership was publicly exposed for their serious mistakes and blunders before the Akal Takht was a historic moment and the first steps to restoring the sovereignty and supremacy of the Akal Takht.

The decision to remove posthumously the "Fakhr-e-Qaum" (Pride of the nation), conferred in 2011 upon former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal for his total betrayal of the Panth was a significant move. This now leaves a permanent blot on his 50-year political record since he first became Chief Minister in 1970.

SAD under the Badal's leadership was accused of failing to serve the community's interests and the Panth. They were criticised for their inability to secure justice for the victims of post-1984 atrocities and protect the Sikh community from the growing influence of 'Deravad'.

Those gathered were told the SAD leadership had undermined the integrity of Sikh institutions, including the Akal Takht, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandakh Committee (SGPC), and the SAD itself.

The religious punishments handed down to Sukhbir Badal and other Akali leaders are simply a slap on the wrist and need to be followed with robust actions to permanently remove them from public and political life as they have been declared guilty at the Akal Takht of failing the Panth on a wide range of significant matters over the last three decades.

The current leadership of SAD were told they had lost the moral authority to politically lead the Sikh Panth due to their actions. Although the SAD working committee has been instructed to accept Sukhbir Badal's resignation within three days the crimes he and the Akali leadership have committed require much tougher action.

The five Singh Sahibans have constituted the working committee to oversee the reorganisation of SAD. The 6-member working committee are working with Harjinder Singh Dhami, the President of the SGPC who individually and collectively have the background and credentials to restore SAD to its former glories.

This committee must however show the courage and strength to take this matter further and ensure there is no place for Sukhbir Badal and the failed Akali leadership if the SAD is to survive and restore its credibility. The committee can and should put the final nail in the coffin of Sukhbir Badal and the failed Akali leadership.

It was acknowledged that central agencies had interfered with the Akal Takht's operations and the actions of former Akal Takht Jathedar, Giani Gurbachan Singh were unethical. He was held guilty of misleading the supreme Sikh temporal seat during his 10-year tenure. He was criticised for his role in the controversial 2015 pardon granted to Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim. He was also the Jathedar in 2011 when Parkash Singh Badal was controversially awarded the Fakh-e-Qaum.

The Jathedars have directed rival SAD factions to dismantle parallel structures and work towards uniting the party. A previous attempt to unite SAD in 1986 failed because of the resistance of Surjit Singh Barnala who was excommunicated in 1987. In 1994 Parkash Singh Badal resisted the Akal Takht's directives and derailed unity efforts. This is another reason why the working committee must learn from history and ensure Sukhbir Badal and the existing failed Akali leadership are permanently thrown on the scrapheap.

ENDS

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