



Consulate General of Pakistan Chicago

PRESS RELEASE

Sikhism has its origin in what is now Pakistan, which is why a very large number of their holy sites are in Punjab in Pakistan, said Consul General Faisal Niaz Tirmizi who was the keynote speaker at the launching ceremony of book titled “ Lost Heritage – The Sikh Legacy of Pakistan” by Amardeep Singh on June 10, 2016.

Mr. Amardeep Singh had retraced the journey of his family from Pakistan to India. He also documented the rise and fall of the Sikh empire in Punjab (1799-1849) founded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Mr. Amardeep Singh, who is a Singaporean national, had abandoned an extremely lucrative banking career to pursue his dream and visited 36 holy/historic sites in Pakistan.

At the outset Mr. Singh expressed his gratitude to the Government and the people of Pakistan for making his stay very comfortable and for opening their hearts and homes during his spiritual journey. He said that the Pakistani expatriates, living abroad, have welcomed his book very warmly as well. He specially appreciated the talk given by Ambassador Abdul Basit in New Delhi who greatly lauded his contributions in further cementing ties of Sikhs all across the world with the birth place of their religion.

In his remarks Consul General Tirmizi said that Sikh legacy in Pakistan was not only the Sikh legacy but was also the legacy of all citizens of Pakistan. Pakistan has been the birthplace of numerous religions/spiritual movements including Hinduism, Buddhism, Gandhara, Sufiism, Sikhism and even British/Christian traditions. Mr. Tirmizi elaborated that through a very small proportion of the population, Sikh community is represented in all the walks of life in Pakistan. He further said that Government of Pakistan is already facilitating Sikh Yatrees through swift visa processing and speedy custom and immigration clearance.

On a suggestion from members of the audience to build world-class hotels around these facilities and to give more visas to Sikh Yatrees living in North America, Consul General Tirmizi said that these proposals would be conveyed to the Government of Pakistan. A few Sikh businessmen also suggested that the Sikh community could help raise funds for building world-class hotels around these facilities in a bid to attract the next generation of Sikhs from North America towards their religious sites.

Mr. Amardeep Singh also expressed his concern over the working of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and hoped that there would be more representation of Sikhs in it. He also expressed his concern over the fact that the Sikh section of the Lahore Museum has been closed down for three years. He requested the Government of Pakistan to open it.

Chicago
June 13, 2016