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PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – APRIL 14, 2015

Celebrating Vaisakhi

For centuries, the month of April has been associated with the festival of Vaisakhi in Punjab, marking the spring harvest for farmers and the beginning of a new year. However, in 1699 Vaisakhi took on a new meaning for Sikhs when their 10th Guru created the Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith, entrusting community leadership to five baptised Sikhs or the five “beloved ones”. In Sikh traditions, celebrations of Vaisakhi include “Nagar Kirtan” or Khalsa Day Parades.

For Sikhs all over the world, Vaisakhi is the time to rejoice and celebrate their heritage, their identity, and their culture. Vaisakhi is also a reminder to all Sikhs to reflect on the Guru’s vision of personal growth and community development as articulated in Sikh Scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib. They are encouraged to think about the critical issues that they face and deliberate on how to respond to these challenges, both internally and externally.

In today’s global Sikh reality, Vaisakhi is about making genuine and concerted efforts to embrace humanity and diversity. Vaisakhi is about denouncing caste-based prejudices and racism. Vaisakhi is about freedom. It is about treating women with dignity and respect, both privately and publicly. Vaisakhi is about looking out for those in need in our communities, and it is also about celebrating with our families and friends.

In Canada, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario proclaimed April as Sikh Heritage Month in 2013, recognizing the important contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to Ontario’s social, economic, political and cultural fabric. Sikh Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Sikh-Canadians and the important role that they have played and continue to play in communities across Ontario. I think the same could be said about Sikh-Canadians in British Columbia.

From our Board, Happy Vaisakhi to all our families -

Baljinder Narang

Thank you for your interest in public education.