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## VARINDER WALIA WRITES PIGEONS' ISSUE FROM AMRITSAR

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The case of disappearance of "pigeons" (the term used for persons who go to foreign countries on ministerial visas) from Canada will be taken up by Dr Gurbachan Singh Bachan, Secretary, SGPC, with the Jathedar of Akal Takht and Mr Jagdev Singh Talwandi, President, SGPC.

Dr Bachan said the credibility of the SGPC had been eroded as Mr Tarlochan Singh Dupalpur, an SGPC member from Nawanshahr, had 'forced' him to issue a recommendation letter for a visit to Canada. He said he would urge Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, Jathedar Akal Takht, to initiate action against Mr Dupalpur for 'misguiding' the SGPC.

He said it was a matter of concern that three persons who had accompanied the *jatha* had disappeared after the Baisakhi celebrations. He said as Secretary to the SGPC he could not refuse letters to SGPC members who were trustees and Jathedars of various Takhts for their foreign tours for religious purpose.

Dr Bachan said the SGPC had received an e-mail from Mr R.S. Bains expressing concern regarding 'human smuggling'. Mr Bains had said the incident had put all Canadian Sikhs to shame. "This is a sad story that our so-called religious and political leaders who visited Canada in connection with the Baisakhi celebrations

were responsible for the scam. The Sikh community in Canada will have to pay a heavy price for this for a long time to come".

"Mr Harbans Singh Dhaliwal, Federal Minister of Canada, will face punishment for no fault of his. He (Mr Dhaliwal) will be debarred for a year to recommend visas, to Sikhs especially".

Mr Bains had also explained that Mr Dhaliwal had never demanded money for recommending visas to the team bringing 'shastras' from India. "Were those shastras (weapons) genuine or not, the SGPC and Akal Takht should know. If somebody played mischief it could either be the Gurdwara committee or mediating agents".

He had claimed that the Chief Khalsa Dewan executive committee had expelled one of its members instrumental in this scam. Nobody knew for certain as to who else was involved in the immigration trade to Canada. It was rumored that the ministers who visited Canada during the celebrations were not free from blame.

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