

Khalsa Day & Baisakhi Parades



The Khalsa Parade in Vancouver (left) and in New York (right)

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on our province and their values of equality, justice & freedom make it a better place," Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne tweeted. She addressed the gathering as Khalistani flags fluttered and some people in the crowd held up banners calling for a 2020 referendum for a separate Sikh homeland.

The call for the referendum is being spearheaded by the activist group Sikhs For Justice.

The parade began at 10:00 pm from the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds and travelled east to Toronto City Hall. Parade dignitaries addressed the crowd until after 5:00 pm, *Langar* (or community food) was served at both the exhibition grounds and City hall.

The southbound and northbound curb lanes on University avenue were closed for the parade and dispersal areas, with the Toronto police managing the route.

The parade also had posters and floats in memory of the assassins of former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, reports said.

The federal government was represented in the Khalsa Day Parade, with cabinet minister Navdeep Bains speaking from the stage.

MP Sonia Sidhu tweeted: "Today, I am delighted to join the KHALSA Day parade in Toronto celebrating Vaisakhi, Sikh Heritage Month, and KHALSA Day. Beautiful sunny day to be with

my parliamentary colleagues and families from #BramptonSouth and across the GTA celebrating in #Toronto.

The organizers of the parade said 50 per cent of all donations received during the day would go to the families of victims of the Humboldt tragedy in Saskatch-

ewan. They said they had raised \$20,000 for the #TorontoStrong Movement.

Doug Ford was a popular marcher, who later tweeted: "*Sat Sri Akal, what a crowd at the Khalsa Day Parade! #nagarkirtans #HappyVaisakhi! Vaisakhi di lakh lakh vadhai!*"

40 Killed In Afghan Suicide Bombings

KABUL/KANDAHAR: At least 29 people, including eight journalists, were killed as two suicide bombers exploded themselves in quick succession in the Afghan capital on Monday. Hours later, another suicide attack killed 11 madrassa students in Kandahar province.

The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the Kabul bombings where French news agency AFP's chief photographer Shah Marai was among the journalists killed.

A militant on a motorbike carried out the first explosion at 8 a.m. in Kabul's Shashdarak area in Police District 9 which houses the offices of Afghanistan's intelligence service, Defence Ministry, NATO and many embassies, prompting journalists to rush to

the scene. Another bombing occurred about 20 minutes later when an attacker, posing as a cameraman, detonated explosives as journalists gathered at the site of the first blast. Eight media persons, including a woman, died in the second blast.

Forty-nine people were injured and taken to hospitals, the Interior Ministry said. Hours later, 11 students of a madrassa were killed and 17 people, including five Romanian soldiers, were injured in a suicide attack aimed at a NATO convoy in Kandahar province.

The suicide bomber detonated a vehicle full of explosives in Haji Abdullah Khan village of Daman district at about 11 a.m., killing the children at a nearby madrassa. Officials said the target were Romanian troops in the area.

Vigil For Van Attack Victims

TORONTO: Thousands of mourners attended a vigil in Toronto Sunday evening where religious leaders lit candles, sang songs and laid flowers to remember those killed and injured nearly a week earlier when a van plowed through dozens of pedestrians along a busy street.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wyn-

ne, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard and Toronto Mayor John Tory all attended the "Toronto Strong" vigil at Mel Lastman Square, near the site of last Monday's attack in the city's north end.

The square echoed with thousands of people singing O Canada as the end of the event drew to a close Sunday night.



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Trudeau Message On Baisakhi

OTTAWA:The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, issued the following statement:

"...Vaisakhi, the most important date in the Sikh faith. Vaisakhi celebrates the creation of the Khalsa – the community of baptized Sikhs – by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699. To mark this occasion, families and friends will come together in Gurdwaras, homes, and Nagar Kirtans.

"Next week, we will mark the 36th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. ...the Charter defines our country. It defends our individual rights and freedoms and, for Canadians of Sikh faith, ensures the Five Ks are protected.

"Earlier this year, I visited the holiest site in the Sikh faith, Sri Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple. I had the opportunity to do seva and prepare langar for the sangat, and was deeply moved to see these teachings in practice.

"Vaisakhi is also an opportunity to honour Canada's Sikh community – one of the largest in the world – and celebrate more than 120 years of Sikh history in Canada. Sikh Canadians have helped build our country...On behalf of our family, Sophie and I wish all those celebrating a joyful Vaisakhi.

"Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh."

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