



Members of the Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan launching the street light-up at Geylang Lorong 29. PHOTO: PKDD

Marking Vaisakhi with EnKaur

As Singapore looks at ways to increase gender equality, the Sikh community has come up with its own women's initiative.

The Sikh Advisory Board (SAB) launched EnKaur (pronounced encore) this week to study how female representation can be increased in the Sikh community.

Made up of 21 Sikh women from diverse backgrounds, the EnKaur Working Committee will study the factors that have prevented a higher representation of women in Sikh organisations and initiatives, including at the leadership levels.

"Historically, Vaisakhi, which marks the creation of the Khalsa, was meant to create a community of equals – regardless of caste, creed, class or gender," said SAB chairman Malminderjit Singh.

"The Sikh Advisory Board is pleased to kick-start the EnKaur initiative during Vaisakhi (festival celebrations) this year to ensure Sikh women in Singapore have greater opportunities to play leadership roles."

The EnKaur project is one of a series of month-long initiatives the 12,500-strong Sikh community will

organise to mark the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and celebrate Vaisakhi.

"Vaisakhi has always been a key event for the Sikh community," said former MP Inderjit Singh, who chairs the Coordinating Council of Sikh Institutions.

"We are fortunate to be able to come together this year to celebrate it in a big way again after the uncertainty the last two years brought.

"This is a big morale booster for the Sikh community."

The festivities kicked-off on April 9, when the Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan, one of the seven gurdwaras in Singapore, launched a street light-up along Geylang Lorong 29, which will last until April 20 (see report on page 10).

Yesterday, on Vaisakhi day itself, the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB) hosted Senior Minister of State for Defence Heng Chee How and inked a Memorandum of Understanding with the National University of Singapore on a Visiting Professorship in Sikh Studies.

This is the first Sikh professorship to be set up in Singapore and South-

east Asia. The CSGB said it is aiming to raise \$1.2 million for an endowment fund to support the visiting professorship. Donations will be matched dollar for dollar by the Government.

The Sikh community will also host Minister for Community, Culture and Youth Edwin Tong today when he visits the Khalsa Dharmak Sabha gurdwara to partake in langar (community kitchen) and observe Vaisakhi celebrations.

The Gurdwara Sahib Yishun will host local MP Carrie Tan today and release a coffee-table book titled *Singapore's Northern Sikhs And Their Gurdwaras: The Historic Journey Of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun*, which traces its history to 1925.

On April 30 and May 1, the Singapore Khalsa Association will host its annual Vaisakhi Mela (Fair). The event was cancelled in 2020 and was scaled down last year.

The event will bring the community together for two days of social, sporting, cultural and health-focused activities.