

Uganda recognises Sikh Contribution.

Amazing that Kenya, Uganda and Canada recognized the contributions of Sikhs to their society and country as a whole. Sikhism being the fifth largest religion in the world .. and its tremendous sacrifices throughout its existence and the World Wars, and yet no one even knows who we are. When one drives and sees those 10 or 12 religious-symbol bumper stickers – one never sees the Khanda or Nishan Sahib or Ek Om Kar with those symbols. What a shame!

Sikh Centenary Celebrations in Uganda

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Justice Catherine Bagumiere launching the book **The Human Rights of Women in Sikhism**. Justice A.S. Choudry is on th



Members of Posta Uganda and the Sikh Community at the launch of the Postage stamps issued by Posta Uganda



UGANDA witnessed 100 years of Sikh centenary celebrations which was commemorated by the issuance of four postage stamps by Posta Uganda and a release of the book under the title “The Human Rights of Women in Sikhism” by Justice A.S. Choudry. The function was held at Resort Beach Hotel, Entebbe, on January 17.

The four stamps depicted the Sikh Gurdwara on Sikh Road Kampala, the Khanda, the Nishan Sahib and the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab (India). *The set of four stamps made history as it is the first time any country in the world has issued four triangular stamps in recognition of the contribution of the Sikh community.*

The stamps were released jointly by Posta Uganda and invited members of the Sikh community with the chief guest being High Court Judge Lady Justice Catherine Bagumeriere.

The head of Posta Uganda Emmanuel Okurt said that the triangular stamps will market Uganda further especially to Asians in the Diaspora. Justice Choudry said, “I am thrilled and humbled to see these stamps as they give us a seal of our existence in Uganda for the past 100 years in recognition of the contribution of our forefathers who were the pillars of the economic and social development of Uganda which we enjoy today.” Justice Choudry also edited the Sikh Centenary Magazine.

Pastor Bosco Odiro said that the Sikh history and contribution should be reflected in the curriculum of school history books and in reply *Lady Justice Catherine described the Sikh as meek, humble and peaceful community that has existed alongside Ugandans without any conflict. She added that their character should be emulated by all foreigners in Uganda.* She assured the audience that she will present the concern raised by Pastor Bosco to the Ministry of Education for study of the Sikhs in the schools.

The Sikhs came to East Africa in the 1880s as soldiers who offered their skilled and semi-skilled labour at a time when East Africa had no infrastructure and had curbed Kabaka’s mutiny in 1899.

About 40 names of recipients of the Sikh Centenary Gold medals were announced. The medals will be awarded at gala function at the end of the year.

The participants at the function included Gurmel Singh, Secretary General of Sikh Council UK, and Baldev Singh Bains, a member of Sikh Council.

Gold Medal Recipients:

Businessmen

- * Inder Singh Gill, an industrialist
- * SS Gupta, a businessman in *Mbarara*
- * Makhan Singh, the lion hunter and a pioneer Asian in Mbarara for his services to the government as a transporter
- * Prehad Singh Grewal, a saw miller whose timber was used to build towns in Uganda
- * Daljit Singh Mangat, a wholesale businessman and long haul transporter
- * Bakshish Singh Atwal – Atwal Road Gulu – a pioneer businessman in Gulu
- * Hazara Singh, a pioneer businessman in Kabale

Politicians

- * Gurdial Singh, an advocate, a think tank of the UPC and Uganda's former High Commissioner to India
- * Pritam Singh, former Mayor of Mbale
- * Parminder Singh Katongole, the first Sikh MP albeit for short period

Civil Servants

- * TS Chowdhary, former Senior Superintendent of Works with the Ministry of Works, recipient of Uganda's independence medal and recipient of Uganda's 50 years' Independence Gold medal for his services to the country
- * Kishan Singh Basson, Superintendent of Works with the Ministry of Works and recipient of British Empire Medal for his services to Uganda
- * Gurbachan Singh Sandhu, a senior Accountant with the Ministry of Works
- * Gurbachan Singh, former Deputy Auditor General of Uganda

Judiciary

- * Joginder Singh Mangat, a former civil servant and Registrar and Chief Cashier of High Court Uganda

Doctors

- * Dr. Barkat Singh Bakshi of Mbarara, and one of the oldest doctors in Uganda
- * Dr. HS Gupta, for his free service to poor patients in Mbarara
- * Dr. Swaran Singh Basson, a gynaecologist at Mulago Hospital

Police

- * Manohar Singh Sandhu, recipient of Queen's police medal, Uganda's Independence medal and one of the most senior police officers in Uganda in the 1970s
- * Ajmer Singh Matharu, Assistant Superintendent of Police for being a versatile police officer, an international hockey coach and umpire and former Uganda's Olympic hockey player.

Academic

- * Justice Anup Singh Choudry, a scientist, lawyer, a judge, an International auditor in quality control, an International auditor in Environment and a writer of several books as well as the Editor of the Sikh Centenary Celebrations magazine

Post and telecommunications

- * Sarabjit Singh Ahluwalia, Senior Assistant Post office Controller for East Africa

Contractors who build Uganda

Bawa Singh Bharaj

- * Kehar Singh Kalsi
- * Didar Singh Sondh
- * Charan Singh Lotay
- * Karam Singh Bharaj

Engineers

- * Pyara Singh Hunjan
- * Ram Singh
- * Avtar Singh Marwah

Headmaster

- * J J Singh of Soroti Primary School

Artist

- * Ranjit Kaur Dogra

Sports

- * Harjit Kaur Sandhu, Captain of Uganda and East African hockey team that won Asian Hockey Tournament in the 1960s
- * Dr. Ranjit Singh of Masaka, a doctor and an accomplished golfer
- * Amarjit Singh Sandhu, youngest Olympic hockey player
- * Rajinder Singh Sandhu, captain Uganda Olympic hockey team
- * Malkit Singh Sondh, Uganda Olympic hockey player
- * Hardev Singh Sandhu, Uganda Olympic hockey player
- * Jasbir Singh Sandhu, Uganda's Olympic hockey player.
- * Ajaib Singh Matharu, Uganda's Olympic hockey player

