

PRESS NOTE

The National Commission for Minorities

Maharashtra Government Issues SOPs Following National Commission for Minorities' Request on Sikh Religious Sensitivities

New Delhi, February 19, 2025: The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) had formally requested the state governments to issue comprehensive guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that plays, dramas, and acts based on the lives of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and his family members are conducted with due respect and sensitivity to Sikh religious sentiments. In response, the Maharashtra government has followed through and officially issued the SOPs.

According to the tenets of the Sikh religion and the "**Sikh Rehat Maryada**" (Code of Conduct) as dictated by Shri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji and the sacred guidance of Shri Guru Granth Sahib, no individual is permitted to portray or represent any of the Sikh Gurus or their family members in theatrical performances. It was brought to the Commission's notice that some schools across India had staged performances where children acted as the younger Sahibzadas, depicting the tragic event of their martyrdom, including the act of being bricked alive. Such representations are deeply sensitive and are not in alignment with Sikh religious principles.

The NCM, in consultation with Sikh religious authorities and cultural experts, had urged the Maharashtra government to formulate these SOPs to prevent any misrepresentation or disrespect in stage plays, dramas, or other similar performances. In compliance with this request, the Maharashtra government has now issued the necessary SOPs, which will apply to all educational institutions, cultural organizations, and event organizers to ensure compliance with Sikh traditions and sentiments.

The key aspects of the SOPs include:

- Strict prohibition on individuals portraying Guru Gobind Singh Ji, his family members, and the Sahibzadas in any form.
- Encouragement of alternative storytelling methods such as narration, animation, or symbolic representation to depict historical events.
- Sensitization programs for schools and cultural organizations to educate them on Sikh religious protocols.
- Necessary approvals from concerned authorities before staging any play or performance involving Sikh history.

The National Commission for Minorities remains committed to upholding the values of cultural sensitivity and religious harmony. These measures have been put in place to ensure that Sikh sentiments are respected while preserving the historical significance of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and his sacrifices.