

SIKH SIYASAT NEWS

Punjab's Sikh Electoral Politics:

Khadoor Sahib, Sangrur, Faridkot in Focus



Chandigarh: As Punjab gears up for the Indian Parliamentary elections scheduled for June 1, 2024, the spotlight is firmly fixed on three constituencies that have ignited fervent interest among the Sikh community and those interested in Sikh politics in the region.

The constituencies of Khadoor Sahib, Sangrur, and Faridkot have emerged as focal points of attention, drawing intense scrutiny and speculation from political observers and the electorate alike.

Khadoor Sahib – the Focus Point:

In the Khadoor Sahib constituency, Amritpal Singh, a detainee under the National Security Act (NSA) and president of Waris Punjab De, a group founded by the late actor-

tured-political activist Deep Sidhu, is a prominent contender.

Amritpal Singh's family members are leading his campaign.

Ground reports suggest that with a significant Sikh electorate hailing from rural areas, Amritpal Singh has positioned himself as a frontrunner in the race.

Supported by Bibi Paramjit Kaur Khalra, widow of the renowned human rights activist Shaheed Jaswant Singh Khalra, Amritpal Singh faces opponent candidates Kulvir Singh Zira of the Congress and Virsa Singh Valtoha of SAD (Badal).

AAP has thrown its weight behind Laljit Singh Bhullar, the sitting MLA from Patti Vidhan Sabha constituency.

It is learnt that there was

internal pressure on SAD (Badal) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal to vacate Khadoor Sahib seat to Amritpal Singh but he refused.

Situation is such that recently Sukhbir Badal expelled his relative and party leader Adesh Partap Singh Kairon for 'anti-party activities' as his supporters were reportedly backing Amritpal Singh.

Sangrur - The Contest of Heavyweights:

In Sangrur, three-time MP Simranjit Singh Mann, president of Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) seeks reelection.

Sukhpal Singh Khaira of the Congress, with the support of Balkaur Singh, father of the late singer Sidhu Moosewala, is Congress candidate.

Simranjit Singh Mann has

expressed disappointment over Balkaur Singh's decision to support Sukhpal Singh Khaira. Mann said that it was not fair for Balkaur Singh to support any other candidate against him as he had raised the issue of Sidhu Moosewala's killing in Indian Parliament.

Punjab Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer enters the fray as AAP's candidate, while SAD (Badal) puts forward Iqbal Singh Jhoondan.

Notably, Congress party's former Dhuri MLA Dalbir Goldy has revolted against his party after Sukhpal Singh Khaira was announced candidate from Sangrur. Disappointed over not being given the ticket for Lok Sabha, Dalbir Goldy has left Congress and joined the Aam Aadmi Party.

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Faridkot - Sudeen Response Grabs Attention:

Meanwhile, in Faridkot, Sarabjit Singh Khalsa, son of Shaheed Beant Singh, is vying for the parliamentary seat. Ground reports suggest a palpable undercurrent of support for Sarabjit Singh Khalsa, especially in the rural areas of the constituency. However, SAD (Amritsar) has fielded its own candidate, Baldev Singh Gagra, in this constituency, bypassing support to Sabarbjit Singh Khalsa. In this SC reserve constituency Sarabjit Singh Khalsa is competing against actor-comedian Karamjit Anmol of the Aam Aadmi Party and Amarjit Kaur Sahoke representing Congress, while Rajwinder Singh, grandson of former SAD (Badal) leader Gurdev Singh Badal, stands as the SAD (Badal) candidate. With the electoral landscape in Punjab simmering with anticipation and political fervor, the upcoming parliamentary elections are poised to be a crucial moment for electoral Sikh politics in the state. Notably, the counting of votes and the declaration of results are scheduled for June 4, 2024.

Bathinda - Seat that matters most for Badals:

Shiromani Akali Dal

Probable Post-Election Dynamics of Sikh electoral politics

In the post-election landscape of Punjab, it appears probable that there will be a proliferation of centers of Sikh electoral politics. The Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal), or SAD (B), is poised to further diminish its electoral sway in the region, potentially prompting dissent from various factions within the party against the leadership of Sukhbir Singh Badal. Conversely, Simranjit Singh Mann's SAD (Amritsar), or SAD (A), is anticipated to bolster its electoral foothold. Additionally, the introduction of Amritpal Singh into the electoral arena presents yet another distinctive center of influence. While SAD (A) is currently endorsing Amritpal Singh's candidacy in Khadoor Sahib, the extent to which this will translate into broader electoral collaboration remains uncertain. Consequently, it is foreseeable that the post-election landscape will witness the emergence of at least four significant power hubs within Sikh electoral politics in Punjab.

(Badal) is vying for all 13 seats in Punjab's upcoming election, but the focal point for its current leadership is Bathinda, where Sukhbir Singh Badal's wife, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, seeks re-election. SAD (B)'s electoral decline in Punjab can be traced back to the Beadbi incidents and the Behbal Kalan firing of October 2015, a blow from which it has struggled to recover over the past nine years.

Activist Lakha Sidhana, running on SAD (A) Mann's ticket, is contesting

the Bathinda seat, advocating for Punjab's concerns, especially the marginalization of Punjabi language. He gained prominence during the 2020-21 farmer's protest. Though unsuccessful in the 2022 Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections, he remains active. AAP has nominated cabinet minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian, while Jeet Mohinder Singh Sidhu, a former MLA who shifted from Congress to Akali Dal and then back to Congress, represents the party for the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

in Bathinda. The outcome of the Bathinda election is significant for Sukhbir Singh Badal's leadership position within SAD (B).

Hoshiarpur - Candidate's Origin and Narrative Grabs Media Spotlight:

A unique narrative is unfolding in the media spotlight, this time from the Hoshiarpur constituency, where Jeevan Singh Malla, a Tamil Sikh, is running for a seat in the Indian Parliament. A Supreme Court lawyer, Jeevan Singh, born into a Hindu family and raised as a Christian, says he was drawn to the Sikh community's ethos of service and their prominent role in the Farmers' protest, leading him to embrace Sikhism.

Jeevan Singh's Dravidian heritage and his articulate explanations of core Sikh concepts such as Beghampura and Halemi Raj have captured media attention. Several Sikh circles, particularly intellectuals beyond the confines of the Hoshiarpur constituency, have thrown their support behind Jeevan Singh. Jeevan Singh's Bahujan Dravida Party (BDP) seeks upliftment, equal rights and social justice for downtrodden and oppressed sections of the society.

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