

Badal reminds PM of 'mother Punjab' to seek bailout

'Will Not Allow Any 'Injustice' At The Hands Of Centre'

Phulo Khari (Bathinda): Faced with the deteriorating financial health of Punjab, chief minister Parkash Badal on Saturday invoked the Sikh identity of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to seek bailout for the state reeling under a debt of Rs 75,000 crore. His address was peppered with references to "mother Punjab" and several Sikh verses. Badal may have launched an offensive against the Centre over NCTC and his swearing-in ceremony may have become virtually the fulcrum for votaries of the third front last month, but on Saturday the spirit of bonhomie pervaded Bathinda. He asked the PM to rescue the farmers of Punjab and relieve them of the debt of Rs 30,000 crore. "Main gurbani toh kuch panktala kehna channa hai (I want to quote from the gurbani). Pawan guru paani pita mata dharat mahat (Air is the guru, water is the father, and earth is the great mother of all)...We have exhausted the power of Punjab's earth, water and environment. I urge the PM to save the state he belongs to and save the farmers who feed the entire nation with their crops," said Badal. The CM had earlier begun his address at the Guru Gobind Singh refinery inauguration, referring to the PM as "Sardar Dr Manmohan Singh", while quoting amply from the Sikh scriptures. "Main pradhan mantri Sardar Dr Manmohan Singh noo dasna channa hai ki tusi wi Punjab di dharti maa da



NEW START: Guru Gobind Singh refinery was inaugurated on Saturday

dudh pitta hai. Tusi wi aithe samakadya hai ainna to hun tuwaano aids dhyaan rakhna hai (I want to remind Sardar Dr Manmohan Singh that he has in Punjab and has spent time here)" the CM said. Badal had recently written a missive to the PM, demanding a waiver of outstanding small savings loan of Rs 22,000 crore. In an impassioned speech lasting 35 minutes - the longest among all dignitaries gathered - the CM also put a list of demands before the PM, ranging from a civil airport in Bathinda to setting up a central government aided cancer hospital in the state. A concession for various industries and opening of an ICP (Integrated Check Post) at

Hussainiwala was also sought by him to facilitate the trade between India and Pakistan. "At the new Wagah ICPS, we have too few items being exported from Punjab. We need to explore more opportunities to export items from this state in order to bring prosperity to small industries. Hussainiwala should be accorded a similar status" he demanded. Pouring out his anger at the centre and PM, the CM said that he would not allow any "injustice" to his state. "Hun Punjab naal dhakka ni hona chahida," Badal concluded his speech.

Oil import breached \$100bn mark: Reddy
 Union petroleum minister S Jaipal Reddy said India's energy needs are increasing at rapid rate. He said that the country's oil import bill has already breached the \$100 billion mark in 2010-11. The demand for POL products in India has increased from 129 MMT in 2007-08 to 147 MMT in 2011-12 at an annual growth rate of 4.2%. The PM, however in his address later launched a veiled attack on the ruling Akali Dal-led government, saying that Punjab had lost its leadership role in many areas of industry.

Has potential to boost India-Pak trade: Mittal

Phulo Khari (Bathinda): Billionaire steel tycoon Lakshmi Niwas Mittal, buoyed by the success of his newly commissioned joint oil production venture in Bathinda, has said that the 9 MMTPA capacity oil refinery has opportunities on offer for a potential India-Pakistan trade. Mittal, who was in the district for the inauguration of the refinery, said that it was very important to see what happens with trade from this refinery. "We have just commissioned the refinery. We have to start seeing the returns on the distribution and trade between two neighbors. The refinery offers a lot of opportunities because of its strategic location," Mittal told reporters. The Rs 21,500-crore refinery at Bathinda is located just about 100 kilometers from the nearest Pakistani town of Kasur that shares its border with Indian Punjab's Ferozepur district. Mittal also announced that he had plans to double the capacity of the refinery to 36,000 barrels per day from the current 18,000. Later, the Hindustan Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL) officials also confirmed that export of petroleum products from the refinery to Pakis-



Sukhbir Badal with Lakshmi Niwas Mittal

tan was being mooted at the government level. "A delegation from Pakistan had held discussions on the export issue. These were just government-to-government talks. However, no final decision has been taken. We will go by the government policy," said S Roy Choudhry, chairman, HMEL. Earlier, PM Manmohan Singh and oil minister S Jaipal Reddy, both of whom were present at the inauguration ceremony, said that oil industry in India had made great strides and expanded its activities to foreign lands.

PM dedicates Guru Gobind Singh refinery to nation

Phulo Khari (Bathinda): Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday emphasized the need for industrialization in Punjab as it would not only contribute to economic growth of the state but also create new employment opportunities for its youth.

The PM said that "Refineries act as catalysts for industrial growth and development in areas in which they operate. I am sure this refinery will provide the impetus for setting up of a number of major industries and ancillary units and will lead to sustained growth and development in and around Bathinda".

After dedicating the Guru Gobind Singh Refinery to the nation, the PM said that the Rs 21,500-crore refinery with a refining capacity of 9 MMTPA was a unique example of partnership between public and private sectors and complimented Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Mittal Energy Ltd. TNN

Naming of Bathinda refinery after Guru Gobind Singh would boost the fortunes of Punjab



Manmohan Singh | PM