

Day after flip-flop over Beas dera head, Dhillon and Gill share stage

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A day after a 'clarification' over the occupant of 'Sant Satguru' (spiritual head) seat of Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB), 'Babaji' Gurinder Singh Dhillon and his successor, the newly appointed patron 'Huzur' Jasdeep Singh Gill, shared the stage in the presence of a large number of dera followers, who converged at its main centre located 45 km from here.

Gill (45), a distant relative of Dhillon, has been appointed the patron of all RSSB Societies with effect from September 2 as part of the succession plan. On the official website of RSSB, the title 'Huzur' has been prefixed with his name and a photograph showing Dhillon with Gill has also been uploaded.

It is learnt that confusion ensued among the followers about the sudden development and they started pouring in last evening when the announcement of Gill as successor was made.

For a change, two 'gaddis' (chairs) were set up on the stage

today. The one occupied by Gill was placed a few steps behind Dhillon's. The occasion appeared to be conveying a dual message — one, Gill's first appearance as the patron officially; and second, that Dhillon was in sound health and will continue to hold the position of 'Sant Satguru' and bestow initiation (Naam Daan).

Over one lakh followers, not only from Punjab but from Haryana, Himachal and UP, were present on the occasion, during which a satsang was organised. As the curtains were raised, revealing their religious leaders, the devotees got emotional on seeing Dhillon sitting on the 'gaddi', and they seemed bewildered to find another 'gaddi' placed next to it. Soon after, Gill joined Dhillon and sat beside him after getting his blessings.

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Dhillon did not address the gathering, yet he answered their query through hand gestures only, to convey to them that he was there, and asking them to acknowledge Gill as his successor.

An earlier communiqué issued yesterday on behalf of Dhillon read: "He has received full support and love of Sangat. He has wished and requested same love and affection be given to Jasdeep Singh Gill as patron as well as Sant Satguru".

Following this, the followers gathered at the dera, apparently upset at the impending exit of Dhillon. They seemed to be pacified only after the RSSB issued a 'clarification' late last evening, stating that Dhillon would continue to lead as 'Sant Satguru'.

Devender Kumar Sikri, secretary of the RSSB, said Gill would eventually be the the Sant Satguru and will then have the authority of bestowing 'Naam Daan'. "Till then, he will remain in attendance with Babaji (Dhillon) for the scheduled satsangs," he said.