Smithsonian Hosts 2002 Sikh Heritage Lectures
“Preserving the Material Heritage of the Sikhs”

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History will host the Sikh Heritage Lectures on Saturday, June 15. The event, which is organized by the Museum’s Sikh Heritage Project, features a morning lecture series on the theme of “Preserving the Material Heritage of the Sikhs,” and a gala dinner and celebration in the evening.

There are approximately one-quarter million Sikh Americans and the roots of the Sikh American community date back well over a century. Sikhism is the youngest of the major world religions, having been founded just over 500 years ago, and today has 22 million adherents worldwide.

The events at the Natural History Museum will bring together luminaries of Sikh academia and arts in a day-long program consisting of a series of lectures and performances. Lectures will take place in Baird Auditorium from 10 a.m. to noon and will be free and open to the public. The evening gala dinner will be in the Rotunda from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Press who are interested in attending the dinner should contact (202) 786-2950. For more information on the event, visit http://www.sikhheritage.org/galaceleb2.html.

Schedule for the morning lectures:

• 10 a.m.
  **Paul Michael Taylor**
  Director, Asian Cultural History Program, Smithsonian Institution
  Welcoming Remarks: “The Smithsonian’s Sikh Heritage Project: Goals and Strategies for Historic and Cultural Preservation”

• 10:20 a.m.
  **Jeevan Singh Deol**
  Coordinator, Sikh Heritage Program
  “Preserving Sikh Heritage: The Challenge”

• 10:35 a.m.
  **Gurmeet Rai**
  Conservation architect and Managing Trustee, Punjab Heritage Preservation Trust
  “Preserving Buildings in the Punjab”

- more -
10:55 a.m.

**Bhagwant Singh Kaillon**  
Sikh poet and historian  
“Sikh Philanthropist Dyal Singh Majithia and his Family: Their Contributions to the Punjab and Beyond”

11:15 a.m.

**Geetika Kalha**  
Secretary for Culture and Tourism, Government of the Punjab  
“Sikh Heritage and the Role of the Punjab Government, India”

11:35 a.m.

**Amandeep Singh Madra**  
Co-Author, *Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of the Sikh Military Tradition*  
“A Sikh Century in Photographs, 1848-1947”

11:55 a.m.

**Surinder Singh Bajwa**  
Sikh Heritage Foundation  
Concluding remarks

12 p.m.

Break, followed by *Warrior Saints* book signing by **Amandeep Singh Madra**

Her Excellency Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi of the Embassy of Pakistan and His Excellency Ambassador Lalit Mansingh of the Embassy of India will give remarks at the evening dinner gala.

“This Smithsonian initiative to preserve and celebrate Sikh heritage comes at a crucial time,” said Paul Taylor, director of the Sikh Heritage Project and curator of Asian, European and Middle Eastern ethnology at the Smithsonian. “Sikhism originated near what is now the border of India and Pakistan, and the Sikh religion has long flourished there alongside both Islam and Hinduism. Many Sikhs hope that their presence in these neighboring countries can contribute to the peace between them.”

The Sikh Heritage Project, which was begun in the fall of 2000 as a cooperative endeavor between the National Museum of Natural History and the American Sikh community, has three main goals: to establish an exhibition on Sikh heritage in the Natural History Museum; to work toward documenting and recording important source materials on Sikh heritage worldwide; and to assist in the preservation of endangered items of Sikh heritage in India and Pakistan. The project is already working closely with the people and the government of the state of Punjab in India to fulfill all three of these aims.

The National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W., is the most visited natural history museum in the world. The Museum is open for special summer hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day through Sept. 2. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free.

# # #

SI-293-2002