

Dera chief at Mysore ashram under tight security

Dera Sacha Sauda head Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, facing a threat to life, was staying in his sect's newly built ashram at Siddhalingapura on the outskirts of Mysore under tight security, a top Karnataka police official said late Sunday.

'The Dera chief has been provided Z-plus security under a directive from the union home ministry. In addition to his own bodyguards inside, we have posted a platoon of policemen around the sect's ashram christened Prathana Mandir (prayer temple),' Mysore police superintendent P. Ravindranath told IANS.

To prevent protests or untoward incidents, public was not allowed to enter the ashram. Some devotees were, however, let in after screening and clearance from the ashram in-charge.

'Unlike in Bangalore, there was no protest or demonstration by local Sikhs against the Dera chief at the ashram. There is no problem. The situation is peaceful,' Ravindranath said.

The prayer temple is built on a 2.5-acre land on the Mysore-Bangalore state highway and located opposite the popular Subramanya temple, where hundreds of devotees throng daily.

The ashram is well-enclosed by an eight-foot wall with one entrance. The huge prayer hall in the centre is a tall structure and visible from the highway.

The Karnataka police escorted the Dera chief and an accompanying group of 50 followers to Mysore late Saturday from [Bangalore](#) by road after he landed at the new international airport from Pune, fearing threat to his life from a section of Sikh groups opposed to his sect.

The sect's head was advised by the Bangalore police not to proceed to [New Delhi](#) as they apprehended a threat to his life on the basis of intelligence reports. For his safety, the state police had decided to bring him to Mysore.

The head of the Haryana-based sect, who earned the wrath of the Sikh clergy, got into a fresh row after a youth was killed and two others were injured Friday when his bodyguard opened fire on Sikh protesters in [Mumbai](#) at a shopping mall.

In a related development in Bangalore, about 150 km away, a section of the Sikh community staged a demonstration at a gurdwara, protesting against the presence of the Dera chief in Karnataka. Besides burning his effigy, they raised slogans against him, flashing swords and kirpans.

(© IANS / India eNews)