

Punjab's 'powerful' wedding has government agencies busy

The 10-day long wedding celebrations of Punjab's 'powerful' politician Bikram Singh Majithia, the brother-in-law of Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, has been keeping agencies of the Punjab government, including the state police, on its toes.

The wedding celebrations of Majithia draw to a close Wednesday with a grand reception for the creme de la creme of the region at the farmhouse of a former bureaucrat on the outskirts of this city.

Agencies of the Punjab government are keeping extremely busy as they 'unofficially' arrange for a multi-million rupee VIP wedding reception at a private farmhouse near here and ensure that the function goes off without a hitch.

Majithia's elder sister, Harsimrat Badal, the Lok Sabha MP from Bathinda, is married to Sukhbir Badal. Majithia, in his mid-30s, is the sitting Akali Dal legislator from Majitha assembly seat from Amritsar district.

Newly laid roads, specially created parking space for nearly 1,500 vehicles, hundreds of Punjab police personnel, traffic policemen and officials from different agencies under the state government will together make the private reception of Majithia a grand affair -- apparently at the cost of public money.

Officers from the Punjab police and other agencies have virtually been camping at the farmhouse, owned by the family of a controversial former bureaucrat, at village Seonk, 15 km from here.

'We have been asked to ensure security here. Some of us have been here since last week. We can only carry out orders. We will be free from here only after the wedding reception ends tomorrow evening,' a Punjab police head constable, requesting anonymity, told IANS at the road leading to the reception venue.

Nearly 60 acres of expanse around the farmhouse is being used for the high-profile reception, where the Who's Who of the region will descend Wednesday evening. The guest list includes top politicians, ministers and select bureaucrats, police officers and scribes.

'Since a lot of VIPs will be coming for the event, we have to ensure fool-proof security. Everything will go without a hitch,' Mohali district police chief Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said.

Given his powerful status in the state and his proximity to the state's first political family - the Badals, Majithia's wedding is the biggest event in recent times in prosperous Punjab.

Nearly 3,000 police personnel and officers, drawn from four districts in Punjab, will be on duty at the venue Tuesday and Wednesday.

Arrangements for the reception area and catering have been given to private parties.

Villagers are happy at the dramatic change brought to their area, thanks to the reception party.

'This place has been completely transformed in the last one week with new and tarred roads. We

wish more such VIP weddings take place here,' villager Lakh Singh said.

Majithia got married in [New Delhi](#) on Sunday to a girl from a Delhi-based family. The function was preceded by another one in Gurgaon Saturday, and before that another one at village Surian Kalan in Majitha assembly constituency near Amritsar last week.

Around 30,000 people attended the village function last week and were entertained to a lavish vegetarian feast, songs by popular singer Gurdas Mann - all under a massive shamiana (marquee) spread over nearly 13 acres. Over 1,000 Punjab police personnel and other officers were put on duty for that function.

Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and his wife Surinder Kaur, son Sukhbir Badal, Amritsar MP Navjot Singh Sidhu and others too came for the village function. The senior Badal couple, whose golden wedding anniversary fell on the same day, acknowledged greetings from people on the occasion.

Majithia is called as 'Majhe da jarnail' (the general from Majha - the area north of Beas river in Punjab comprising Amritsar and other districts).

Majithia, who belongs to a prominent business and agricultural family of Majitha area of Amritsar district, was inducted as a cabinet minister in the state government in March 2007 when the Akali Dal assumed office in Punjab.

He was given cabinet status, courtesy Sukhbir Badal, though he was a first-time legislator - ignoring the claims of many other senior Akali Dal leaders for ministerial berths in order to accommodate him.

Majitha resigned from the cabinet in January this year to make way for brother-in-law Sukhbir Badal to be inducted as deputy chief minister.

Jaideep Sarin (© IANS / India eNews)