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Premium

# Waris Punjab De: What is the mission of this outfit, floated by Deep Sidhu and now led by Amritpal Singh?

Waris Punjab De, which translates to 'the heirs of Punjab', is an organisation floated by lawyer-actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu in 2021. It is now headed by Amritpal Singh, a self-proclaimed follower of pro-Khalistan slain militant Bhindranwale.

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 **NewsGuard**



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'Waris Punab De' leader Amritpal Singh enters a police station, demanding the release of his supporters in Ajnala near Amritsar on Thursday (February 23). (Express Photo by Rana Simranjit Singh)

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07:50 1x 1.5x 1.8x

Hundreds of followers of radical leader Amritpal Singh Thursday (February 23) **clashed with the police** outside Ajnala police station near Amritsar, Punjab. Waving swords and even guns, they demanded the release of one of their members from police custody in an alleged kidnapping case.

(This individual, an aide of Amritpal Singh named **Lovepreet Singh 'Toofan'**, was **released** from Amritsar Central Jail on Friday (February 24) after a court in Ajnala issued orders to discharge him based on an application by the police.)

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**Amritpal Singh**, 29, is a follower of **pro-Khalistan** slain militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. In fact, he is being dubbed 'Bhindranwale 2.0' in Punjab these days.

Amritpal returned from Dubai last year to take the reins of the 'Waris Punjab De' organisation following the death of its founder, actor-activist Deep Sidhu. 'Waris Punjab De' works to help the youth of the state "follow the tenets of Sikhism" and "establish Khalsa Raj".

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*The Indian Express* explains the origin of 'Waris Punjab De' and how Amritpal Singh took over as its head.

### What is 'Waris Punjab De'?

'Waris Punjab De', translating to their 'heirs of Punjab', was floated by lawyer-actor-turned-activist Sandeep Singh alias Deep Sidhu on September 30, 2021, ahead of the Punjab Assembly elections. The "social organisation" was originally floated by Sidhu as "a pressure group to protect and fight for rights of Punjab and raise social issues".

Sidhu first made headlines during the farmers' protest in 2020. He was also booked by the Delhi Police for his alleged role in the violence on Republic Day; he was accused of hoisting the Sikh flag at Red Fort during the farmers' protest march on January 26, 2021.





Deep Sidhu (left) headed 'Waris Punjab De' before Amritpal Singh.

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Eight months later in September, Sidhu launched 'Waris Punjab De'. During the launch event in Chandigarh, he described it as an organisation that would “fight for the rights of Punjab against the Centre and raise voice whenever there will be any attack on the culture, language, social fabric and rights of Punjab.”

“It is a platform for those who are not satisfied with the social reality of Punjab in the current scenario. It is a social platform. We take everything to elections but I want to clarify that it is a social platform. It is not a poll gimmick. We are not supporting any political party. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, it is for all those who will fight with us for the rights of Punjab. Before 1947, we lived together in harmony, but the British snatched that brotherhood from us. Our Gurus fought against casteism,” Sidhu had said at the launch.

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He further stated, “Even after 1947, nothing changed for Punjab and our cultural space was never given back to us by Delhi. This organisation is not about Deep Sidhu, but the rights of Punjab. The fight is against the state... The psychological genocide of Punjabis is still on. From making education and health affordable for people to protecting the language, culture, and rights of Punjab and restoring respect for Sri Guru Granth Sahib... We will fight for everything.”

Sidhu also added that his front would only support the party which talks of Punjab and its rights.

Eventually, Sidhu supported the radical pro-Khalistan party SAD (Amritsar) of Simranjit Singh Mann and also campaigned for them ahead of Punjab polls.

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However, Sidhu died in a car crash on February 15, 2022, five days before the state elections. The incident took place when he was on his way to Punjab to campaign for Mann.

Although Mann lost his Amargarh Assembly seat, he eventually won the Sangrur [Lok Sabha](#) by-poll in a major setback to the [Aam Aadmi Party](#), as the by-poll was necessitated after Bhagwant Mann became the state's Chief Minister.

Simranjit Singh Mann also demanded a judicial probe into Sidhu's death, terming it a "conspiracy by the Centre due to Sidhu's involvement in the Republic Day violence".

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Sidhu was cremated amid pro-Khalistan slogans by those hailing Bhindranwale in his hometown, [Ludhiana](#).



Waris Punjab De followers enter Ajnala police station near Amritsar, Thursday. (Express Photo: Rana Simranjit Singh)

## How did Amritpal Singh become the head of ‘Waris Punjab De’?

The ‘Waris Punjab De’ organisation landed in controversy on September 29, 2022, after Amritpal, a Dubai returnee dressed like Bhindranwale, took over as its head and a ‘Dastaar bandi’ ceremony was held at Rode of Moga district—the ancestral village of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The ceremony was witnessed by thousands, who raised pro-Khalistan slogans.

Sidhu’s family, however, distanced themselves from Amritpal, saying they never appointed him as the chief of their son’s organisation and had no idea how a man who made a parachute landing from Dubai suddenly took over the reins of ‘Waris Punjab De’.

**Mandeep Singh** Sidhu, a Ludhiana-based advocate and brother of Deep Sidhu, told *The Indian Express*: “We never met him before. Deep too never met him. He was in touch with Deep over the phone for some time but later Deep blocked him. We do not know how he declared himself as head of my brother’s organisation. He is misusing our name to propagate anti-social activities. He somehow got access to my brother’s social media accounts and started posting on them.”

“My brother made this organisation for a social cause, to raise issues of Punjab and to provide legal aid to the needy, not to propagate Khalistan. Amritpal is talking about creating unrest in Punjab. He is befooling people using my brother’s and Khalistan’s name. My brother was not a separatist,” Mandeep added.

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Amritpal’s uncle, Harjit Singh, however, who returned to Punjab from the UK, claimed Sidhu’s supporters had made Amritpal the head of the organisation. “We do not know why Sidhu’s brother and family are not supporting it. Amritpal’s mission is to encourage youths to become Amritdhari Sikhs (baptised) and shun drugs,” he said.

According to Mandeep, there are now two parallel organisations running with the same name. “The original ‘Waris Punjab De’ which was formed by my brother is headed by Harnek Singh Uppal. The other is headed by Amritpal and we have no link with it,” he explained.

Addressing a gathering at Rode, where he was declared as the head of the organisation, Amritpal, who worked as a transporter in Dubai and is a native of Jallapur Khera village of Baba Bakala division in Amritsar district, clarified that he was not trying to “copy” Bhindranwale.

“Bhindranwale is my inspiration. I will walk the path shown by him. I want to be like him because that’s what every Sikh wants, but I am not copying him. I am not even equal to dust on his feet,” said Amritpal. According to reports, he currently dresses as Bhindranwale and is escorted by armed men.

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While speaking about Sidhu, Amritpal described him as a “*quomi shaheed*” (martyr of the Sikh community). “People like Sidhu, who is on Guru’s duty, can never die in accidents. We know how he died, who killed him,” said Amritpal, who had addressed the gathering from a stage put up near Gurdwara Sant Khalsa, built in Bhindranwale’s memory.

“We all are still slaves... We have to fight for freedom... Our waters are being looted, and our Guru is being disrespected... The youth of Punjab should be ready to give up their lives for *panth*,” he said, adding he will be moving to each village of Punjab and “bring youth back to Sikhi”.

Asking youth to guard their villages against the drug menace, he said that instead of running away abroad after clearing IELTS, they should stay in Punjab and fight the “battle for its freedom.”

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Amritpal said those who do sacrilege will not be sent to court or handed to the police. “*Ohda sodha laguga* (we will punish them). Sikhs who have fallen for drugs will be made followers of Guru again and will be given *shastra vidya*,” he said.

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