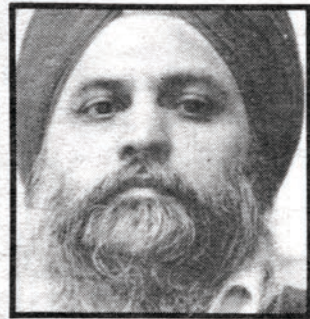


## PUNJAB DECLARED INDEPENDENT STATE

# Sikhs form gov't-in-exile

SikhMuseum.com



**KULDIP SINGH**  
Consular-general

By CINDY KLEIMAN  
Staff Writer

Sikh protesters yesterday declared the Indian province of Punjab to be the independent state of Khalistan and announced the establishment of a government-in-exile.

Kuldip Singh, of Bowmanville, who says he is the consular-general of the new state, said the president-in-exile is Dr. Jaggit Singh Chauhan, a former finance minister for Punjab. Chauhan lives in London, England.

"We consider ourselves at war with the Indian government," said Amrit Singh, an organizer of yesterday's press conference at the Sikh temple on Old Weston Rd.

He also was interpreter for a man who said he

sneaked out of Punjab four days ago. The man, who wished to remain anonymous, said people in Punjab are prepared to continue to fight the Indian government until they achieve independence.

The five representatives of the government-in-exile called on Western nations to recognize their new state and to cut off economic aid to India. They said no government has yet recognized them.

They also requested world pressure be exerted on India to allow the Western press into Punjab.

Foreign media are currently barred from the strife-torn province.

"They (the Indian government) exhibit the

facts they wish to show," said Amrit Singh, adding that India only allows news reports out of the country that make the Sikhs out to be "thieves and criminals."

He said 15,000 Sikhs have been killed in the violence of the last few weeks.

Indian authorities have not issued a statement on the exact number of casualties.

Pritam Singh, another representative of the government-in-exile, said India's Sikh president, Zail Singh, "is a puppet."

He said the new government has representatives in Germany, England and Canada, although no embassies have yet been established.