# The Oldest Gurdwara in Europe & The Virdee Foundation raises almost a quarter of a million for the oxygen emergency in Covid stricken Punjab.

**Friday 21 May, 2021**

The Khalsa Jatha British Isles established in 1908 and the oldest Gurdwara in Europe has once again decided to collaborate with The Virdee Foundation, a leading organisation in education, female empowerment, and global projects, to launch an appeal for delivering desperately needed Oxygen Concentrators into Punjab, India due to the devastating second wave of COVID-19.

Hundreds of thousands of new cases are being reported every day and both organisations are deeply committed to delivering oxygen to communities in India during this hour of need.

To kick start the initiative ‘Oxygen for Punjab’, it was absolutely vital to procure the machines at this critical time. Pre-financing was the only option and The Virdee Foundation agreed to this which has allowed both organisations to go out and raise funds. Furthermore, The Virdee Foundation has donated 200 machines to this initiative.

In less than 24 hours of launching the appeal, funds to secure 100 machines were raised, giving the project a total of 300 10L and 5L Oxygen Concentrator clinical-grade machines ready to ship. The organisation was then approached by the Punjabi Chamber of Commerce, who through their crowdfunding had raised funds for 81 machines and required assistance in Punjab. Through our network, we assisted in delivering these machines.

The project team has coordinated with the Chief Minister of Punjab, Capt. Amarinder Singh, who immediately set up a task force to assist with getting the aid into Punjab. The task force, comprised of personnel from Punjab Agro Industries Corporation Limited and the Government of Punjab, are facilitating airfreight, customs, and clearance and distribution on the ground for the desperately needed oxygen concentrators with the first batches reaching hospitals on Wednesday 19th May 2021. We’d further like to thank S Rahul Kumar (IAS), S Ravneet Singh Khurana (IRS C&IT), S Ranbir Singh (GM PAGEREXCO).

The concentrators have been targeted for deployment in teaching and charitable hospitals which are providing care to COVID-19 patients free of charge. These include Government Medical College Amritsar, Government Medical College Patiala, Guru Gobind Singh Medical College Faridkot, and Civil hospital Jalandhar for the first batch of concentrators delivered.

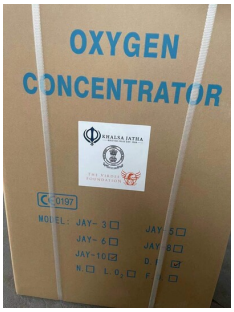
Professor Peter Virdee of The Virdee Foundation said “I’d like to thank Capt. Amarinder Singh, the Government of Punjab and Punjab Agro Industries Corporation Limited for putting in place a task force to deal with the airfreight, customs clearance, and on the ground transportation. This was all done speedily within 8 hours of our approach. We are monitoring the situation on the ground daily and are investigating the possibility of increasing the scale of support.”

Gurpreet Singh Anand from The Khalsa Jatha British Isles said “We have a long history with Punjab since our inception by the then Maharaja of Patiala in 1908. The scale of loss due to the COVID-19 second wave in Punjab has impacted many members of the Gurdwara. The response from our management team was to immediately start the “Oxygen for Punjab” project with The Virdee Foundation. We hope this initiative will allow Punjab to turn the corner in treating COVID-19 patients and reduce the loss of life. We are ready to assist other organisations in their relief efforts so the resources and facilities put in place to support this project can be scaled to assist them too.”

Details on the appeal can be found at www.oxygenforpunjab.co.uk.

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