



Office of the Mayor
CITY OF VANCOUVER
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Proclamation

"GURU NANAK JAHAZ (KOMAGATA MARU) DAY OF REMEMBRANCE"

WHEREAS 2025 marks the 111th Anniversary of the Guru Nanak Jahaz (Komagata Maru) incident, in which a ship carrying 376 British subjects from Punjab, including 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims and 12 Hindus arrived in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet on May 23, 1914, and with the exception of some returning passengers, was denied entry into Canada;

AND WHEREAS Passengers had valid documents and sufficient funds to pay a discriminatory head tax, and endured two months onboard in poor, unsanitary conditions, often going for days without food and water. Despite pleas for help, authorities did not respond;

AND WHEREAS The passengers, aided by the local South Asian community, engaged in a legal battle led by Gurdit Singh and their lawyer, Joseph Edward Bird. The South Asian community organized protests and fundraisers to support them;

AND WHEREAS On June 29, 1914, Vancouver City Council openly supported racist and discriminatory laws by passing a resolution stating it was "unalterably opposed to the admittance of Hindus and other Asiatic races into this country..." The resolution also claimed that these British subjects would pose a serious threat to civilization, both economically and socially. The Council conveyed this sentiment to the Premier of British Columbia via telegram;

AND WHEREAS The British Columbia Court of Appeal ruled against the passengers, leading to their forced return to India. On July 23, 1914, the Komagata Maru, renamed Guru Nanak Jahaz, was ordered to sail back to India, where those onboard were labeled as political disruptors. Tragically, 19 passengers were shot and killed by British Indian troops, many were injured, and many others were jailed for years;

AND WHEREAS Many descendants of these passengers later immigrated to Canada, settling in Vancouver, and continued to fight against discriminatory laws. This included advocating for the right to work in a profession of their choosing, holding public office, and the right to vote, which was granted in 1947;

AND WHEREAS On May 23, 2021, Vancouver City Council officially apologized for its 1914 resolution and the harms it caused. In 2023, "Komagata Maru Place" was revealed as the secondary honorary name of "Canada Place", to acknowledge the victims, their descendants, and all affected by the tragedy;

AND WHEREAS The City of Vancouver is dedicated to addressing inequities, including racial discrimination in all its forms and is committed to ongoing redress work with South Asian Canadian communities to address historical discrimination against people of South Asian Canadian descent in Vancouver:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ken Sim, Mayor of the City of Vancouver, on behalf of Vancouver City Council DO HEREBY PROCLAIM May 23rd, 2025 as

"GURU NANAK JAHAZ (KOMAGATA MARU) DAY OF REMEMBRANCE"

in the City of Vancouver.



Ken Sim
MAYOR