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Female prison officer in Hong Kong becomes the first to wear a turban at work

History-making 20-year-old feels 'so proud smashing the glass ceiling' and hopes her background can give her an edge in rehabilitating prisoners

Correctional Services Department provides four of the head coverings as part of her uniform

Ethnic minorities in Hong Kong

Victor Ting

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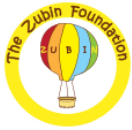


Sukhdeep Kaur, the first Sikh female prison officer to wear a turban in Hong Kong, at the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department in Stanley. 12DEC19 SCMP / David Wong

Marching in lockstep with her three-column squad across a parade ground near Stanley prison, Sukhdeep Kaur is the only graduating officer donning a blue turban to match her navy blue uniform.

At the ceremony earlier this month, the 20-year-old made history by becoming Hong Kong's first female Sikh prison officer wearing a turban, in a Correctional Services Department (CSD) which has more than 6,500 officers but only 46 who are not Chinese. To Kaur, an Indian Hongkonger and one of the city's approximately 12,000 Sikhs, the religious garment has always been at the heart of her identity.

"Hair is sacred in Sikhism, because it symbolises naturality and how God made us.



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We don't cut our hair and we wrap it inside the turban to keep it clean from dust," Kaur said. "I was baptised at 12 and after the ceremony I was fully integrated into Sikhism. To me, the turban represents my religion and culture, and it's also easy for Sikh people to recognise and give solidarity to one another."