REPORT

Sikh Environment Day - 2016
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The celebrations for Sikh Environment Day (SED) worldwide were truly inspiring, this year, as more than 3500 Sikh bodies took part in diverse activities in this call for action on March 14 across India and all over the world. SED has been popularized by the Washington based organization EcoSikh since 2010 and this year's focus was to go organic. This day marks the New Year in the Sikh calendar and the Gurgaddi Diwas (enthronement day) of the seventh Guru, Sri Guru Har Rai Ji, who is remembered in Sikh history for his deep sensitivity to nature, its preservation and the well-being of animals. He maintained an extensive herbal garden for medicinal purposes in Kiratpur Sahib in Punjab.

The support given by the Sikh religious bodies, prominent Gurdwaras, non-profit organizations and academic institutions to make the celebrations happen was commendable. Around three thousand and five hundred trees were planted by a single institute and many more by others, rallies carried out by youth, and much more grassroots work done by individuals and families for protection of our environment. EcoSikh’s vision has come live from the response to the drive in context with the statement of Gurbani “Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharth Mahat” and creating awareness at an individual level as a moral duty. The Sikh community this year was more acknowledging, more reflective and more engaging!

The event "Sikh Environment Day" aims to sensitize Students of all age, social, religious and academic institutions and organisations and the Sikh community in general about the importance of the care and preservation of environment from an intercultural perspective and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity between human beings and nature.

Glance of achievements on Sikh Environment Day-2016:

- 860 schools from Guru Nanak Multiversity campaigned for use of pattal vs Styrofoam
- Satnam Sarab Kalyan Trust with their schools planted 3500 trees
• Golden Temple feeds over 80,000 pilgrims with organic food daily
• Green and Organic Langar was served at five different places such as Ludhiana, Mohalli, Madhya Pradesh, Sweden and UK
• Many TV Channels in India and Europe broadcasted the celebrations live.
• Leadership Training with 1970 students from 11 number of educational institutions
• Organic Food stalls initiative taken at three spots in Mohali, Amritsar and Ferozepur
• SGPC planted trees at Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar and ornamental trees in the SGPC offices in the state
• Many Gurdwaras and educational institutions in India and other parts of the world took part in the celebrations

Spearheaded by EcoSikh, the move to switch to organic food got an enthusiastic response from the Sikh community spread across the world. Golden Temple in Amritsar, center of Sikhism, gave a huge nudge to this step by switching to organic langar (free food and community meal) being served to 100,000 people every day. A special prayer and service was organized by SGPC at the Golden Temple.

EcoSikh also released a video appeal to go organic - Video which went viral on social media viewed and liked by around 35K viewers just on our FaceBook and thousands of viewers of UK based, Sikh Channel in Europe and England.

This year’s appeal reached over 1 million Sikhs across the world. There were over 45,000 engagements since the campaign took off till March 14, on EcoSikh’s Facebook account and hundreds of Sikh groups across the world shared this idea which inspired green action in many places. EcoSikh staff, partners and volunteers in Ludhiana, Amritsar, Mohali, Norway, Hong Kong and Washington had coordinated this largest environmental direct action by Sikhs across the globe.

Additionally, a Press Conference on “Organic Food” was organized at Press Club, Chandigarh presided over by President of EcoSikh, Dr. Rajwant Singh, Suneet Tuli of Datawind, Project Manager Ravneet Singh of EcoSikh -South Asia, Organic Farmer Jasbir Singh Ghulal, Sidakpal Singh from Ludhiana were among other prominent speakers. The conference aimed at discussing and connecting the gurdwaras to the organic farmers and drawing inspiration from Guru Nanak’s kheti. In a new campaign, EcoSikh has appealed to Gurdwaras to develop a plan
to introduce organic ingredients into langar meals. The Sikh Environment Day (SED) is an international day of environment action for Sikhs around the world.

EcoSikh also organized eleven workshops in Punjab engaging 1970 youngsters in Ludhiana, Patiala, Amritsar, Moga, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ropar and Ferozepur. As a part of our global visions these workshops aimed to empower the emerging environmental leaders of Punjab in tracking the issues, team building and planning action for environmental preservation in the light of upcoming UN Paris summit on Climate Change in December 2015.

EcoSikh used its resources effectively, developed focused strategies and took the movement this year to new heights with its achievements for a healthy environment for future generations. EcoSikh conveys its sincerest and heartfelt thanks to all the Gurdwaras, organizations, and academic institutions that participated this year and showed a greater commitment and leadership to work towards preservation and protection of the Earth!
INTRODUCTION

The seventh Guru of Sikhs, Sri Har Rai Sahib Ji, was a great lover of nature. He had deep concern towards nature, birds and animals and also admired the creation of the God. This concern only led him to create herbal garden, where he grew medicinal plants, as well as planted trees bearing fruit and flowers. He created 52 gardens and herbal parks also built herbal medicine centres for poor people in Kiratpur Sahib in India. As a tribute to the Guru, his Enthronement Day (Gurgaddi Diwas) is celebrated world-wide as Sikh Environment Day on March 14.

The highest temporal authority of Sikhs, Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, dedicated March 14 as Sikh Environment Day in the year 2011. See link. On behalf of, EcoSikh, a faith-based non-profit organization, it appealed Sikh communities worldwide for celebrating this day. Sikh Gurdwaras schools, Media organizations, and academic institutions across the world were directed to celebrate this day by participating in environmental activities and by planting trees in particular.

With rapid increase in industrialization and urbanization, there is an increase in depletion of natural resources, thereby causing many environmental, health, and social disorders in our society. The major concern these days is the increased rate of pesticides and chemicals in our food chain. This is creating disasters in our health and posing a huge threat for the coming generations.

Deforestation, overuse of water and continuous increase in agro-chemical use has led to dire consequences not only in the state of Punjab, but many other states throughout India. Droughts, famines are directly related to reduction in rainfall caused due to deforestation. This will further result in difficult living conditions for the birds and animals or even become a cause of their extinction. Punjab, land of rivers, is endangered to turn into a desert in this situation as calculated by the scientists and climatologists.

And most serious of all, increased use of pesticides and chemicals has increased the cost of farming, natural soil organisms like bacteria and fungi to deplete, and rate of cancer, infertility and mental health problems to increase in the state of
Punjab. As part of Sikh Environment Day, Sikhs have been contributing and learning to help protect and preserve our Mother Nature by planting trees, recycling and reusing as much as possible, initiating kitchen gardening, reducing plastic and polystyrene usage, carefully using water, gasoline and other resources, properly disposing of household and bio-waste, reducing chemical use, using biodegradable domestic cleaning products, and increasing the use of solar energy and bio-gas in Gurdwaras and in their individual households and sharing the low carbon lifestyle with each other.

Since the birth of Khalsa and even before that, Sikhs have always stood up for the protection of the vulnerable. As per Sikhism, our surroundings are just a reflection of our inner state, and thus the increasing barrenness of the earth reflects a spiritual emptiness within humans. Celebrating Sikh Environment Day, being kind to Mother Nature, and respecting and preserving the wonderful creation on this planet, is a step towards making it a better and more harmonious world, both inside and outside.
Sikh Environment Day, an initiative by EcoSikh, started in 2011 (its first year), had participation from 450 institutions all over the world. For the second year, a target of 750 Sikh bodies was set, but the response from more than 1000 Sikh bodies again exceeded the expectations and so on. This year, an ambitious target of reaching out to maximum number of Sikh bodies was dually achieved with huge participation from more than 3500 Sikh Gurdwaras, organizations, and academic institutions taking part in celebrations worldwide. Goal setting has been vital to the success of EcoSikh’s programs. Giving the much needed focus, it helped us the organization strategize and work effectively from grassroots levels to their involvement with recognized global Sikh bodies at the highest levels. EcoSikh approached the two Takhats namely Akal Takhat and Sri Hazur Sahib, and requested them to issue empowering messages to the Sikh community to encourage participation on Sikh Environment Day. The efforts bore fruits as Jathedar Avtar Singh makkar of Takhat Sri Akal Takhat issued a powerful statement reinstating the message of Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharth Mahat and appealed Sikh Sangat to celebrate Sikh Environment Day on 14th March, 2016. He called for action by humbly requesting the Sikh Sangat to plant at least one tree individually and work towards preservation of the beautiful biodiversity drawing inspiration from Guru Har Rai Saheb. EcoSikh shared this colossal statement and other statements from these Takhats through press releases to the major newspapers, via social media such as Facebook and Twitter, EcoSikh’s website, and other major online Sikh news platform.
Living Successfully Foundation, Tavleen Foundation, Satnam Sarab Kalyan Trust, Chief Khalsa Diwan Sukrit Trust, Akal Purakh Ki Fauj, Kalgidhar Sewak Jatha (Mohali), Gurmat Gian Missionary College, Khalsa Multiversity Educate Punjab Project, Doraha Group of Institutes and Environment Society Mansa were helpful in engaging a lot of Sikh families and Gurdwaras across Punjab in India.

OUTREACH: TRADITIONAL & TECHNOLOGICAL

Outreach was vital in this action-oriented movement. Many organizations were approached personally. For example, this year we partnered with Satnam Sarab Kalyan Trust in Chandigarh, India which works with public and encourages social responsibility. The EcoSikh team planned an extensive plantation drive with them by getting tags for each tree that were planted by students. Other partnerships included Gurmat Gian Missionary College, Chief Khalsa Diwan and Guru Nanak Khalsa Multiversity Educate Punjab Project which helped to reach out to over hundreds of schools all over Punjab. EcoSikh also organized a special meeting with Guru Nanak Khalsa Multiversity in February to educate people regarding the harmful effects of Styrofoam and stop its use further, which flashed in various newspapers and Sikh websites. This turned out to be a major contribution in spreading the word out.

Mass emailing, calling and telephone messages constituted the bulk form of outreach. Part of the reason for this was to minimize our own ecological footprint and be more eco-friendly in our work. Social media like Face Book, Twitter and Whatsapp on smart phones were widely used in contacting community on various focused issues and ideas on Sikh Environment Day. EcoSikh demonstrated amazing ways to celebrate and advance their self-approach to engage many others to join in this global celebration.
TOOLKIT RESOURCES

EcoSikh created an entirely different toolkit with additional resources to continuously improve our work. Catering to the needs of the wider Sikh community, resources were drafted in both Punjabi and English. Toolkit included materials for Gurdwaras, organizations, academic institutions, families and individuals. Toolkit resources were sent via email with links available for download on the EcoSikh website. Additionally, 7 steps to celebrate SED and coloring sheets for students were distributed to many schools in Punjab and rest of India. For continued commitment from the community to engage in grassroots work in their communities, villages and cities, “Sikh Environment Day Pledge Forms” were made available.

The toolkit resources this year included:

- **Info Poster** in Punjabi about Guru Har Rai and Sikh Environment Day.
- **Poster In English** to share with sangat at gurdwaras.
- Sikh Environment Day 2016 **Poster**.
- Ten Minute Eco-Assembly (English and Punjabi) programme for schools.
- A **pledge form** for signature campaigns.
- **Gurbani on Environment**: a booklet, "Eak Bageecha" with over 30 gurbani shabads on nature theme.
- A **short movie** about Sikh Vision on Organic langar, show at your nearest Gurdwara and inspire sangat
- Coloring Pages for Children: [Page 1](#) and [Page 2](#)
- Five Simple Ways Sikhs Can Help the Planet [Infographic](#).
- EcoSikh [Standee](#) for Sikh Environment Day, EcoAmritsar and Green Gurdwaras
- [Backdrop](#) for Celebrations.
- Say No to plastic and disposables ([Punjabi](#) and [English](#)) 3MB.
- 10 Eco-Tips ([Punjabi](#) and [English](#)) for notice boards and distribution.
- [Brochure](#) about EcoSikh's Projects.
The ambitious goal of reaching out to 3500 Sikh institutions would not have been possible without the help of our many volunteers. EcoSikh drafted content to invite dedicated, hard-working and enthusiastic environmental activists to volunteer their time. This opportunity provided many individuals prospect to develop leadership skills, and provided great exposure for networking opportunities with individuals and communities locally and nationally. Volunteers provided much needed service (sewa) in designing and distribution of materials, outreach work, and taking charge of celebrations in their local communities. EcoSikh welcomes passionate individuals to volunteer with the organization on future projects as well. EcoSikh team conveys their sincerest gratitude to all the volunteers this year.

PRESS, BLOGS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Press conference in Chandigarh by EcoSikh for the launch of organic Langar was covered by many newspapers and an appeal by Dr. Rajwant Singh was telecasted on TV channels as well in India.

EcoSikh had a series of press releases in various newspapers even after Sikh Environment Day.


The first time the idea of Sikh Environment Day was sparked in 2010. More than 400 gurdwaras, schools, business, and communities marked the occasion. And today, after six years the participation figures have reached about 3500 in which Sikhism's largest organizations SGPC, Khalsa College institutions, 960 schools of Guru Nanak Multiversity, 419 schools under Punjab School Education Board, Guru Nanak Engineering College in Ludhiana, 269 schools of Satnam Sarab Kalyan Trust, all joined to mark this day. EcoSikh had organization in USA, Norway, Australia, Canada, China, Sweden, Switzerland, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Argentina, Peru, Kenya and UK celebrating this day.
Major views and stories related to Sikh Environment Day are as following:

Dr. Rajwant Singh, President of EcoSikh, said, “Focusing to go organic received an enthusiastic response from the Sikh masses particularly from the farming community in Punjab, which has seen economic hardships recently. Hundreds of gurdwaras and Sikh households made a commitment to go organic and it seems that this is the best tribute to Guru Har Rai, who had inspired Sikhs to live their lives sling minimum harm to their surroundings. It is heartening to see that Sikh individuals have led efforts at the local levels in India and all across the globe to take meaningful green actions dedicated to this day.”

Message by Dr. Rajwant Singh Ji: To see video, click here.

EcoSikh South Asia Project Manager said, “Organic food is necessary to revive the true spirit of langar, which is sharing healthy food with the humanity. The campaign aims to convert pesticide-free food served at over 50,000 Gurdwaras where nearly 5,000,000 people partake in Guru’s kitchen, world-wide. And this is definitely going to impact the demand of organic food, support organic farmers and boost the health of all life on the planet.”

Suneet Tuli, EcoSikh board member and CEO of Datawind, said, “It is imperative that the spiritual centres of all religions, including gurdwaras, commit to stopping the damage to Mother Earth for the future generations. Our message is simple - Eat Organic, Buy Organic, Grow Organic and be Organic!” Datawind organized a farmer’s meet to give them tips on the given topic.

Harveen Kaur, youth volunteer with EcoSikh in Norway, said, “This is the best way to practice Sikhism’s compassionate teachings which is to help everyone in every way.”

A special interfaith organic langar was organized by EcoSikh in Ludhiana which was attended by various religious leaders. An Organic farmer, JS Ghulal, who provided all the ingredients for the langar, stated, “I have dedicated my life to providing nourishment and health through my food. I appeal to all the Gurdwaras to join the campaign and provide healthy food to their communities.”

Deputy Shahi Imam, Usman Ludhianvi ji said, “It is necessary to protect the purity of our food to secure the future of your generations. Sikh Environment day is a huge initiative that can save Punjab and its farming traditions.”
Farmer family hailing from Chandigarh, Malvinder Kaur and Darshan Singh Rudel who attended an organic farmer fair at Mohali Phase IV, expressed, “the revolution was underway in Sikhism and the spring is round the corner.”

Jugraj Singh, founder of Basics of Sikhi, a popular online teaching forum with a large following, issued a special video on SED exhorting Sikhs to take green action and this video went viral all across. Punjabi and Sikh media serving a large Sikh Diaspora in all continents helped spread the message globally.

Gurpreet Kaur, EcoSikh’s special program coordinator, said, “Scores of young people are excited about this effort since it gives them the opportunity to relate to their faith in a unique way.

Also, EcoSikh had conducted a one-day workshop on Organic Farming (Kudrati-Kheti) where Over 120 farmers attended the workshop at Village Lalchian, Guru Harsahai, Ferozpur. The workshop funded by Datawind, aimed to promote organic farming in Punjab and create demand and marketing opportunity for organic food products that will support farmer community and ultimately benefit the health of Punjab’s population, it’s rivers and soils. The workshop was conducted by Master Rajbir Singh of renowned Pingalwara Charitable Trust of Amritsar.

Master Rajbir Singh delivered step by step information on the package and practices of natural farming and answered all the queries that the farmers had for shifting from chemical based farming to natural farming. He stated, “Bhagat Puran Singh has shown us a great way towards conservation of planet and Pingalwara Trust is working day and night to educate farmers of Punjab to cultivate their lands in Guru Nanak’s way.”

Words shared by Master Rajbir Singh related to organic food and its farming-To watch video- [Click here](#).

Datawind Corporation team presented an empowering and interactive visual presentation on web browsing application and shared their super low cost plans which includes one-year free high speed internet to increase farmers’ connectivity with the outer world.

Suneet Singh Tuli, EcoSikh board member and Founder Chairman of Datawind said, “With the increase in online consumer in India the scope of
online marketing has increased. The Punjab farmer needs exposure and internet tools to support them to learn innovations in natural farming and plan their marketing strategy. Our message is simple - Eat Organic, Buy Organic, Grow Organic and be Organic.” [Click here to view].

**Our Stars**

Many organizations, schools, institutions and gurdwaras take part in the celebrations of Sikh Environment Day. It feels great to add many more every year.
CELEBRATIONS IN INDIA

PUNJAB

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and Sri Akal Takhat announced and appealed Sikhs to celebrate Sikh Environment Day on March 14 as Gurugaddi Diwas of Guru Har Rai Ji. Sikhs, apart from planting trees on March 14 should also clean up their surroundings, homes, streets and villages, as a tribute to Guru Har Rai Sahib.

SGPC appealed Sikhs to celebrate Sikh Environment Day on March 14

Amritsar

This year, Sikh community welcomed their New Year by offering prayers at the Golden Temple. Later in the day, the ‘Gurta Gaddi Diwas’ (enthronement) of seventh guru, Guru Har Rai was celebrated as ‘Sikh Environment
Day’. The Guru was a great lover of nature and ordained his followers to plant trees and keep their surroundings neat and clean. On this occasion, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) distributed saplings of various varieties as ‘parsad’ at the Golden Temple that were planted outside the offices, in the lawns and around the shrine complex of the Gurdwara.
SGPC additional secretary Daljit Singh Bedi said saplings were also planted in all and at its ‘sarais’ (resting place for pilgrims). A special cleanliness drive was launched in SGPC residential colonies.

**Organic Langar at Golden Temple**

“Guru Ramdas Langar Hall at Sri Harmandir Sahib (popularly known as the Golden Temple) – one of the world’s largest community kitchens, will soon be serving organic food.”

This year, EcoSikh gave a call for the introduction of organically grown ingredients in meals served in the ‘langars’ (community kitchens) of gurdwaras. The SGPC has already made a beginning in this direction by starting organic farming of food items particularly wheat and vegetables, on a portion of the agricultural land owned by the religious body.

**Tweet by Harsimrat Kaur Badal**

Appreciation was dent by HArsmirat Kaur Badal for environment preservation and celebrations regarding Sikh Environment Week. The statement is as follows:
Kudos to @ecosikh for their environment conservation initiative “Sikh Environment Week”.

See more

**Baba Bhuri Wale Senior Secondary School, Amritsar**

The school started with recitation of Shabad Kirtan followed by an exhibition on board regarding environmental issues and concluding the activities by planting trees in their school premises. Principal of the school shared thoughts on Guru Har Rai Sahib’s life, his legacy and our duty as our Guru’s Sikhs to take care of Mother Earth so future generations can reap the same benefits.

For more pictures: See here

**SUKRIT International Public School, PATTI**

Satnam Sarb Kalyan Trust & SUKRIT International Public School celebrated 14 March as Sikh Environment Day in. Director S. Amarjit Singh, Principal
Amandeep Kaur & Divinity Teacher Ravinder Kaur guided the students about importance of green trees & merits of plants in our life. They encouraged all the students for gardening and protect environment by growing more & more number of plants. The students readily took part in the event and promised to keep it as a regular practice for the future as well. (See more)

Dilbir Foundation

Sikh Environment Day was celebrated in association with the Dilbir Foundation’s efforts towards environmental causes in Amritsar on Tuesday. The focus of SED was to Conserve Energy (Go LED); shun plastic plates, glasses and carry bags, consume and produce organically produced non-toxic food; harvest and save water; plant trees and avoid polluting practices. Addressing the gathering, Gunbir Singh, chairman, Dilbir Foundation, said in this day and age of climate change, these messages are of huge import and set a direction of leadership in sensible living and naturally harmonious lifestyles.
Khalsa College of Engineering and Technology

A very interactive lecture was delivered by S. Gunbir Singh ji on Sikh Environment Day enlightening the students regarding the importance of keeping our Environment healthy and marking the celebration at Khalsa College of Engineering and Technology.

Khalsa College of Law, Amritsar

The college staff and students at Khalsa College of Law planted over 200 plants in the campus. The students pledged to save the nature and also took responsibility to take care of the newly planted trees.
Students and staff planting a ceremonial tree at their campus

Khalsa College Senior Secondary School, Amritsar

The institute planted a ceremonial tree at their school ground and had special prayers for contemplation on environment in the morning assembly.

(For pictures: Click here)

Chief Khalsa Diwan Charitable Society

The organization involved nearly 40 of their Khalsa Schools for environment day celebrations via 10 minute eco-assembly and environmental pledges.

Gurudwara Taph Asthan baba Budhaa ji , Ramdas (video)

Sikh Environment Day celebration at Gurudwara Taph Asthan baba Budhaa ji , Ramdas was marked by planting trees of medicinal importance like reetha, aamla, etc. by PANJ PYARAS in presence of sangat. Gurjit Singh, Project Administrator, Eco-Amritsar shared the importance of trees and their medicinal values with holy congregation. See more.
G G Senior Secondary School, BUTALA (GGSSS)

Students and staff conducted a special eco-assembly and took pledge to save environment following which the students under supervision of the teachers planted trees in the school premises. (For pictures: Click here)

Government High School, Meharbanpura Amritsar

A 10 minute eco-assembly was conducted by the school staff for the students and few points were discussed in order to preserve our environment. (For pictures: Click here)

Government High School, Quilla Jiwan Singh

The school inspired and educated the students, teachers and staff through seminar and hands on tree planting activities. Staff conducted a special eco-assembly and took pledge to save environment.

(For pictures: Click here)
Khalsa College Public School Heir

The institute celebrated Sikh Environment Day with great zeal and enthusiasm with students and staff. The school organized an eco-assembly followed by which students planted trees in the school premises and showed their love and care for the Earth and Environment. (For pictures: Click here)

Government High School Ibban Kalan

The school organized an eco-assembly for the students in which they pledged to protect to the environment in every possible manner they can. Staff and students showed their complete participation in it.

(For pictures: Click here)
Akal Purakh Ki Fauj Public School, Tarn Taran

A wonderful and distinguished effort was made by the school of spreading the message of going green. Several points like plantation, saving water, fuel and electricity, recycling, reusing and buying locally grown and fresh foods were included and were discussed with students. The main aim was to create awareness among the students and explaining them the meaning of going green.
Khalsa College for Women, Amritsar

The students and staff had very joyous environment day celebrations at their school. They planted saplings in the college premises and signed pledge forms for future protection and preservation of the environment. (For pictures: Click here)

Voice of Amritsar

This organization in Amritsar works for the welfare of the environment. On Sunday 13th March this organization had put sign boards on sites and shifted the major garbage dumps of the city to the place far away from residential areas that were affecting the health of people residing there, thus setting a good precedent to be followed in other areas of the city gradually. Also, they got special CCTV cameras installed for surveillance.

Datawind
Datawind organization celebrated Sikh Environment Day in a different manner. They organized organic Langar for Sangat on Vaisakhi in Amritsar organization.

Press: Indian Express, Tribune

Ludhiana

Organic Langar at Prince Gold Farms Neelon

EcoSikh organized prayers for the planet and multi-faith Organic Langar celebrating Sikh Environment Day, hosted by an organic farmer, Jasbir Singh Ghulal at his farms near Neelon Bridge, Ludhiana. Over 60 families including Deputy Shahi Imam, Usman Ludhianvi Ji from Jama Masjid, Ludhiana attended the prayers and partook the organic langar. Press: Click here

Interfaith Organic Langar with Deputy Shahi Imam, usman Ludhianvi

Guru Nanak Khalsa Multiversity

The organization engaged over 450 schools, Gurdwaras and villages across Punjab to celebrate Sikh Environment day through environment theme focused morning assemblies in schools. The celebrations also included speeches and lectures in Gurdwaras and villages to inculcate ownership of responsibility for the natural resources and environment and highlighting the damage being created by Styrofoam and plastic in our lives. An appeal was made to shift from
Styrofoam to steel or leaf utensils. Teams from this organization went and joined most of their venues and involved school staff and students. The celebrations emphasized on caring for sacred air, land and water, keeping our surroundings clean and healthy, and our individual responsibilities to plant and nurture trees. Students were given coloring sheets based on environment. They also staged a play to spread the message of harmful effects being caused by plastic to human health and the mother Earth.

News: [Click here](#)

**Guru Nanak Engineering College**

Students along with their professors carried out a rally on Sikh Environment Day spreading the message to protect the environment. Pictures: [Click here](#)

Students carried charts, banners and posters depicting special messages like ban on plastic usage, saving water, farmer suicide in Punjab, more and more
plantation of trees, and cleanliness at our surroundings. A group of students also wore gloves and carried recyclable bags for cleaning the roads near the college.

Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Sarabha Nagar

The Gurdwara organized extraordinary programs for 7 days ranging from painting competition for area kids, a session of poems and speeches on environment flower show and plant exhibition as well as sale at Gurdwara starting 3rd March, which attracted huge gathering from all over the city. Later they inaugurated a photo gallery at Gurdwara which exhibited 12 months of the year based on Barah Mah from Gurbani. This Gurdwaras work has been very influential in protecting trees in the surrounding areas within 1 kilometers of range. The seven day program included events like Discussion on Environment issues, Essay Competition, Photography and painting competition, Tree plantation drive, Cycle Rally, ‘Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mahat’ Gurmat Samagam,Vishesh Katha Gurmat Samagam. For more pictures: Click here.
**Nadar Foundation, Rara Sahib**

Nadar Foundation distributed boota prashad amongst the sangat of gurdwara at Rara Sahib. A huge crowd of people were seen carrying medicinal plants to their homes. *Click here to see more*.

**Gurmat Gian Missionary College, Jawadi**

Two workshops were conducted by EcoSikh. One session with 60 college students and another one with parcharaks from over 62 villages of Punjab empowered to spread the message of Guru Har Rai Sahib and ensure that their respective zones receive information to start saving water and energy and adopt at least 5 ways to help mother earth.

**Flower Enclave Gurdwara**

Sarabjit Singh and other management committee of the gurdwara organized katha and kirtan in the evening diwaan. *Words were shared with sangat by*
Ravneet Singh, EcoSikh Project Manager on Low Carbon Lifestyle. A special organic Langar was made for the sangat and was served in leaf plates showcasing an acceptance for them and a strong resistance to Styrofoam plates.

**Doraha Group of Institutes**

The students of the college created banners and posters related to the environment protection. They shared the message through their sketches and art focusing mainly on the harmful effects being caused by plastic to human health and the mother Earth.
Doraha Public School

Day long celebrations were organized at Doraha Public school. Students were beautifully dressed as various plants, flowers and trees, animals and birds those who live on the trees and carried out a rally in the town carrying banners and posters for giving the message of saving the environment to the public.

Click here to see more pictures.

Gurdwara Chhevin Patshahi

The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day with the help of resources from EcoSikh. There was Kirtan and Katha on these of nature, environment and how to take care of them. Notices were displayed with information to educate and create awareness among the Sangat.

Malerkotla

Sewa Sambhal Foundation
This organization celebrated the Sikh Environment Day by educating the students at schools and distributed literature. Er. Inder Amar Singh also organized Quiz contest related to environment for the students of the school.

**Chandiagrhr**

**Satnam Sarab Kalyan Trust**

The organization engaged over 300 schools in plantation of "3557 plants" on Sikh Environment Day 2016. An amazing effort has been done by the organization along with supervisors, students and teachers in different zones of Punjab. Students tied name tags around the plant showing their responsibility towards the plant. The schools also organized a 10 minute Eco-Prayer as part of Sikh Environment Day celebrations. The organization provides curriculum in religious studies to the schools under its umbrella. (For pictures: Click here)

![Image of students holding plants](image)

**Gurdwara Phase-4 Mohalli**

The Celebrations for Sikh Environment Day at Gurdwara Sahib were tremendous. The event here included katha, kirtan and exhibition of organic products. A huge gathering was witnessed and people were distributed boota prashad as well.
Kalgidhar Sewak Jatha

Another celebration organized by Kalgidhar Sewak Jatha at SAS Nagar

Ropar
**Bhaddal Institutes**

The students along with the teachers at Bhaddal institutes organized a cycle rally wearing white t-shirts with logos carrying the message of “Go Green”. The students also performed a street play demonstrating the harms being caused to our planet by human actions. The play was enacted in the main market despite of bad weather conditions. *(See here)*

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**Bathinda**

**Shri Gurudwara Sahib Tittersar Maur ( Bathinda )**

Sikh Environment day was celebrated by planting trees at Gurudwara. Mr. Ashok Sapolia, the Convenor Environment Society Mansa along with Baba Angrage Singh Mukhsewadar and Jagsir Singh Block Officer Forset Dept. planted the trees. Also, the sadh sangat present there planted the trees near Gurdwara Sahib.

*(Click for pictures)*

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**Faridkot**
Punjab & Sindh Bank

Ajaib Singh Sandhu planted one banyan, one neem, one pipal in court yard of Punjab & Sindh Bank (GBC), Faridkot. It is great start to bring a trend of planting trees in Banks and offices.

Patiala

Punjabi University

Environmental Leadership Training workshop was conducted by EcoSikh on "why I care?" at Punjabi University, Patiala. Over 70 students from Department of Psychology brainstormed, strategized and presented their plan of action in caring for Punjab's environment and for Mother Earth. Students celebrated the day by planting trees in their department and auditing water taps, putting up stickers of “Save Water” on taps being used the most. Eco-friendly tips for university students were put up on the notice board. They also exhibited an example from the eco-friendly tips by not using plastic/Styrofoam glasses at their farewell party in their department.

(See pictures here)
HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dagshai Public School

The school students celebrated the Sikh Environment Day by reciting kirtan at Gurdwara sahib in the school premises. Principal of the school gave a speech to the students and discussed topics on environment degradation followed-up with a reflection on “What can be done”. Afterwards, boota prashad was distributed among the students by the Principal herself to mark this day. Students planted saplings despite severe weather conditions, which showed their dedication and commitment to this cause. They covered the major potion where there was no plantation earlier. (See here)
MADHYA PRADESH

Indore

TAVLEEN FOUNDATION

This year Tavleen Foundation organized Gurbani Kirtan and Organic Langar at Dashmesh Darshan Gurdwara, on the auspicious occasion of Sikh Environment Day dedicated to Guru Har Rai Saheb. The initiative came as a result of inspiration by Mata khivi Ji who always wanted their children to eat healthy food full of nourishment and by this we can make a contribution for a healthy and sustainable living planet.
ANDHRA PRADESH

Gurdwara Ulsoor

Bangalore Sikh Youth, from Gurdwara Ulsoor celebrated Sikh Environment Day by distributing medicinal plants to sangat as boota Prasad and discussed the importance of these plants. The utmost unique thing was the “Seed Pencil”, the pencil after being used can be sown in the soil, which will grow into a plant. These pencils were available in various varieties. Coloring sketches were also given for the children. (Click here for pictures)
MAHARASHTRA

Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded

Head Jathedar, Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib (Nanded), Giani Jyotinder Singh issued a message to celebrate the Gurgaddi Diwas of Guru Har Rai Ji by planting trees at home and Gurdwaras. The major step taken the management on Sikh Environment Day was the switching from Styrofoam to leaf plates. The religious event including Katha and Kirtan diwan was organised at the Gurdwara on March 14 and also organized a major plantation drive.
Guru Gobind Singh Foundation members and sangat’s support for celebrating Sikh Environment Day was very inspiring this year. The Sangat was in attendance in large numbers - children, adults, and Gurdwara committee members all participated very enthusiastically. The celebration included Guru and nature stories, coloring contest, PowerPoint presentation, distribution of seeds and pledge cards. The celebrations helped everyone experience build a deeper connection with nature by singing Shabads from Gurbani.

Link: Video by Guru Gobind Singh Foundation

Basics of Sikhi, UK a project by Everythings 13 and an educational charity celebrated Sikh Environment Day by spreading the message of wisdom of the Sikh Gurus on Sikh Environment Day. They have shared the story of Guru Har Rai Ji related to Environment and Dara Shikho as well. Also, they have wonderfully
elaborated the 7 steps for celebrating Sikh Environment Day. Video: Basics of Sikhi

California

Manjit Singh along with his team planted trees in California. They conducted a plantation drive on 13th March, 2016 with students as well as elders from the community. Upon conducting this drive, they expressed their love and concern for the environment and nature. They also gave handouts to the people to spread their message of “Conservation and Protection of Environment” to the society.
PERU

International Awareness event was celebrated on Sikh Environment Day from Sikh Culture in collaboration with National University of San Marcos on 14 March, 2016. More than 500 Sikh communities will be meditating and plant a tree as a strategy for environmental awareness. For more pictures: Click here
**CANADA**

**Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar (Khalsa Diwan Society New Westminster, B.C.)**

Sikh Environment Day Programs were organized and celebrated at Gurdwara Sahib. On Sunday 13th March, Gurmat School kids learnt about environment in context with sikhi and undertook a cleanup of the area around the Gurdwara Sahib. On Monday 14th March, Sikh Green Team, students from Guru Nanak Academy Surrey made power point presentations on the Environment and Kirtan to spread the message among the Sikh Sangat.

Video Links: [Link1](#) and [Link2](#)

**Calgary**

This year Khalsa School Calgary celebrated Sikh Environment Day for the first time, as a tribute to Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji. The Khalsa School helded a school yard clean-up and an art contest (students were requested to submit their work by March 10th, including a short explanation of what their picture represents and how it is connected to environmentalism).

Later on in the year, they will also be planting trees and shrubs around the school, creating a more inviting area for students to spend their time, as well as beautifying the school.

**MALAYSIA**

Sikh Environment Day was celebrated by PEC institute on 12th March, 2016 in which the students of Nursery, KG1 and KG2 took part in drawing and color competition on theme “PLANTS” in the Langar Hall from 5-6 pm. The students participated with great zeal and enthusiasm and came out with very distinguished ideas.
EUROPE

SWEDEN

Gurdwara Sahib Tullinge, Stockholm

The sangat at Gurdwara Sahib celebrated Sikh Environment Day with great efforts and interest. To begin with, a ceremonial tree was planted by panj pyaaras. The Sangat and management took a huge environmental initiative by creating awareness about organic and eco friendly products and the information was shared by Anna Norberg, Svanen. They also worked out for their local certification process. A presentation regarding EcoSikh efforts was shown to the sangat present there. Kids also participated in the celebrations. There was a quiz competition for the children based on the topic “Environment”.
NORWAY

Harveen Kaur Ji from Norway had a motivational talk regarding “Why we celebrate the Sikh environment day?” in the sangat, following which the seeds of different vegetables were distributed amongst the sangat to encourage them to grow and eat organic food.

CHINA

HongKong sangat Khalsa Diwan

This organization celebrated Sikh Environment day on March 14. The sangat brought plants as an offering to Gurdwara Sahib. They also took part in greenification of Earth by planting about 100 trees in Hong Kong.

UNITED KINGDOM

Khalsa School

This year, UK Sikh environment strategy, focussed on resource management, recycling, energy management (efficiency of lighting and kitchen appliances),
water management and monitoring of gurdwaras in UK keeping in mind that a simple audit could save so much money.

**DUBAI**

**Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple – Dubai**

An exhibition for sangat was organized by this Sikh temple in Dubai. Posters and banners were showcased to enlighten people about Environment to create a feeling of belongingness in them towards the environment and surroundings.
CONCLUSION

With advancing ill-health of people, EcoSikh came up with the idea of Organic Langar that help people to connect to organic food soon. Due to overuse of pesticides and other chemicals, it has become crucial for the Sikh community to come together, take a stand against the ongoing environmental injustice and engage in collective work in stopping the extensive use of harmful products in

*Note: To view more pictures from Sikh Environment Day celebrations from this year, please visit our Flickr page or follow our face book page.*
food. This revolution will be a positive impact on the health of the generations to come as well.

Along with this, other issues like overuse of water and wastefulness are still a big challenge and a cause of exploitation of natural resources leading to destruction and chaos everywhere. Keeping in mind the environmental vision of our Guru’s, it becomes our moral duty and responsibility to come together and promote a healthy and sustainable environment.

The God had created a balanced environment for the benefit of both the beast and humans so that biodiversity remains vibrant and all the creations coexist in harmony. But due to the pressures of population and technology, the biophysical environment is being degraded, sometimes permanently. This has been recognized, and EcoSikh has tried to put its best efforts convey the message of preservation to the masses by organizing the workshops to bring together people and involve them in this noble cause.

Our survival is possible with the survival of the planet and that can be done only when we work continuously to improve our environmental performance by setting and working towards quantifiable goals that reduce the environmental impact of our activities. This will eventually enhance quality of living on the Mother Earth.

In conclusion, the Sikh Environment Day creates a platform for the Sikh community to come together for protection and preservation of Mother Earth. This year also, Sikhs worldwide celebrated this day and took tangible actions for introducing organic Langar and leaf plates, stopping the use of food containing pesticides and chemicals, banning Styrofoam from their routine, planning long-term sustainability projects like composting and solar panels, and creating awareness about water and soil conservation among the farming community.

EcoSikh ensures to serve the communities by improving its work by taking every possible action required and thus trying to fulfill the organization’s mission. In coming years, Sikh Environment Day celebrations, will engage even more number of Gurdwaras, organizations, academic institutions and other members of the Sikh community by outreaching more people via events and workshops. EcoSikh hopes to integrate grassroots programs and education of children, who
will be leaders in the near future, to guide the Sikh community towards a sustainable living!
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