

# MARITIME SIKHS

JAN 2026 Edition

*A Quarterly News Magazine  
of Maritime Sikh Society, Halifax*



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## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

MOMENTS OF  
SANGAT,  
SEVA,  
AND SPIRIT

### MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF OCT - DEC 2025

#### ROOTS & WINGS: A HOLISTIC WINTER RETREAT AT SIKH SAPLING ACADEMY

At Sikh Sapling Academy, we believe that education is most powerful when it honors where a student comes from while preparing them for where they are going. Our mission is to nurture young minds through a "balanced bridge" integrating the profound wisdom of Sikh philosophy with the academic rigor required for global success.

By blending Gurmukhi and Punjabi language, Kirtan, and Gatka with support in core global subjects, we help our students navigate differing study patterns and excel in their new academic environments without losing their cultural identity.

#### THE WINTER CAMP: BUILDING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

From December 26 to 30, the Academy hosted a transformative 5-day immersive camp focused on "Life Readiness." With 54 students and 8 dedicated volunteer teachers, the atmosphere was one of high energy, curiosity, and community.

The curriculum was designed around three pillars of health:

- **Physical Fitness:** Developing discipline and strength through active movement.
- **Mental Fitness:** Cultivating focus, resilience, and academic confidence.
- **Social Fitness:** Building the teamwork and communication skills essential for modern life.

#### WISDOM FROM THE FIELD

We were honored to host a distinguished panel of guest speakers who provided real-world insights to both students and parents. Our deep gratitude goes to Dr. S. Sodhi, Kanwal Sidhu, Balbir Singh, Pavna Sodhi and others.

These experts shared invaluable guidance on navigating future career paths and maintaining personal well-being in an ever-changing world.



## MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF OCT - DEC 2025

### A CELEBRATION OF SPIRIT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The week culminated in a moving presentation at the Gurdwara Sahib. In the presence of the Sangat in the main Diwan Hall, our students showcased their growth through:

- **Kirtan & Poetry:** Filling the hall with soulful melodies and heartfelt verses.
- **Arts & Lectures:** Demonstrating their deep understanding of Sikh history through the medium of art and orientation.

To celebrate their hard work, every participant was honored with an Appreciation Award from the management of the Maritime Sikh Society.

"This camp was not just about learning; it was about belonging. Seeing our youth stand tall in their heritage while looking toward their future with confidence is exactly why Sikh Sapling Academy exists."

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

MOMENTS OF SANGAT, SEVA, AND SPIRIT



## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

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## NOURISHING THE MARITIMES: THE MARITIME SIKH SOCIETY'S LEGACY OF SERVICE

At the Maritime Sikh Society (MSS), the Sikh principle of Vand Chakko (sharing with others) is a lived reality. Through the Langar for Hunger program, our Gurdwara extends the spirit of the Guru's kitchen far beyond our doors, ensuring that nourishment reaches those who need it most.

### A Community Lifeline

While Gurdwara MSS remains an open sanctuary where freshly cooked langar and tea-snacks are available to everyone daily, our mission reaches deep into the heart of the Greater Halifax area. We believe that true service means meeting people where they are:

**Supporting Shelters:** Every weekend, volunteers deliver hot, nutritious meals to four local shelter homes, providing care and consistency to our neighbors in need.

**Empowering Students:** We provide fortnightly meals to international students at Dalhousie University, offering a taste of home and essential support to those studying far from their families.

**Strengthening Partners:** By supplying food items to Feed Nova Scotia (NovaFeed) and other grassroots organizations, we help fortify the province's wider support network.

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

MOMENTS OF SANGAT, SEVA, AND SPIRIT



## MARITIME SIKH SOCIETY DELIVERS MASSIVE FOOD BOOST TO FEED NOVA SCOTIA

In a powerful demonstration of community spirit and the Sikh principle of Vand Chhakko (sharing with those in need), the Maritime Sikh Society delivered over 850 kilograms of non-perishable food items to Feed Nova Scotia on February 17, 2026.

This significant contribution marks the third major donation the society has made in as many months, highlighting a consistent commitment to tackling food insecurity across the province during the winter season.

The recurring monthly donations come at a critical time as local food banks face increased pressure.



## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

MOMENTS OF SANGAT, SEVA, AND SPIRIT

## BUILDING BRIDGES: OUR FIRST POLICING CAREER FAIR IS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

The Gurdwara Sahib was charged with energy and ambition recently as the Maritime Sikh Society hosted a landmark event: our inaugural Policing Career Fair.

This initiative was more than just an information session; it was a dedicated bridge designed to connect our community's talent with the noble calling of law enforcement. We were honored to host representatives from both the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and the RCMP, who spent the day mentoring the next generation of public servants.



## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

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## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

**Roadmaps to Success:** Madeleine Goldsmith (HRP's Equity and Diversity Officer) and a team of young Sikh officers provided an "insider's look" at the recruitment process, demystifying the journey from applicant to officer.

**Personal Connections:** The Gurdwara entrance transformed into a bustling information hub. Our youth had the rare opportunity to engage in one-on-one conversations with recruiters, leaving with both recruitment packages and newfound confidence.

**Community & Conversation:** In true Maritime Sikh Society fashion, the day concluded with the warmth of tea and Langar snacks. This relaxed setting allowed for deeper networking and informal mentorship between the officers and attendees.

A Future Full of Promise

The turnout was truly inspiring, with nearly 50 motivated men and women from our community in attendance. Seeing such a diverse group eager to serve and protect the broader Maritime community reminds us why these events are so vital.

"It was inspiring to see so many young people eager to explore how they can serve and protect their broader community."

By opening these doors, we ensure that our community's voices, values, and dedication are represented in the heart of public service. Thank you to everyone who made this day a success!

## TIME CAPSULES

HISTORICAL  
PERSPECTIVES



## THE LION AND THE MAPLE LEAF: A GLOBAL LEGACY OF VALOR

(BY BALBIR SINGH JI)

History is often written in the ink of treaties and maps, but it is forged in the character of its people. For the global Sikh Diaspora, the history in the West is often framed by the challenges of migration. However, a remarkable footnote from 1867 reveals that the Sikh martial reputation was a cornerstone of Western strategic thinking long before Sikh ancestors ever set foot on North American soil.

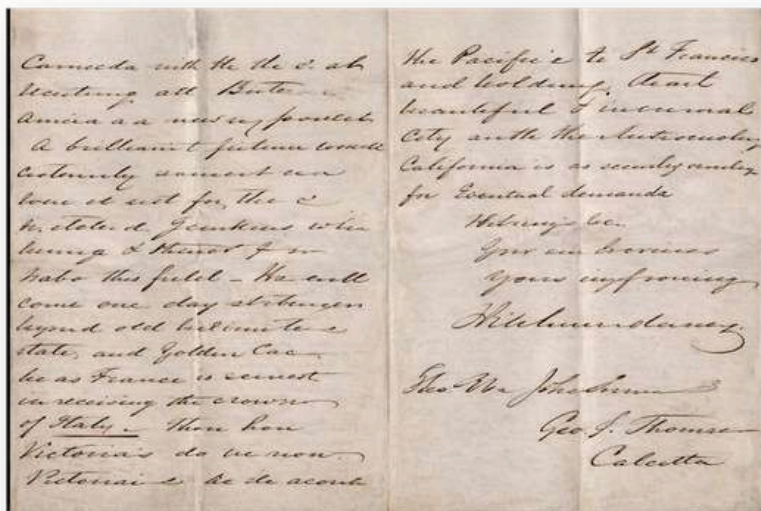
### A Vision from the Father of Confederation

In 1867, Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, found himself in a geopolitical bind. With the American Civil War concluded, fears of a U.S. invasion of Canada were at an all-time high. In a private letter to Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Macdonald proposed a strategy that reflected the high stakes of 19th-century diplomacy.

- He suggested the possibility of an "Army of Sikhs" being sent across the Pacific to seize San Francisco and hold California as security for Canada's safety. Macdonald's rationale was clear: he recognized the Sikh soldier as a peerless warrior, capable of altering the fate of empires. While the plan remained a bold musing of a stressed statesman, it serves as a powerful testament to the global respect for the Sikh identity.

## TIME CAPSULES

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES



## FROM STRATEGY TO SACRIFICE: THE WORLD WARS

The transition from Macdonald's strategic concept to reality was a grueling test of faith and loyalty. In Canada, the UK, and the US, Sikhs faced a "Great Contradiction": they were admired for their bravery in the British Indian Army, yet faced systemic exclusion as immigrants.

**Despite this, the Sikh spirit of Chardi Kala (eternal optimism) prevailed.**

**In Canada:** Pioneers like Private Buckam Singh, one of only nine Sikhs known to have served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in WWI fought in the trenches of Flanders while his community back home was still denied the right to vote.

**In the UK:** The British Indian Army, predominantly Sikh, became the backbone of the Imperial war effort, suffering staggering losses at Gallipoli and the Somme.

**In the US:** Though smaller in number, Sikh immigrants in the early 20th century sought to prove their loyalty to their adopted home, laying the groundwork for the diverse American military of today.

**"They were the theoretical heroes of politicians in 1867, but by 1914, they were the literal saviors of the frontlines."**

## TIME CAPSULES

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

### BREAKING THE "GLASS CEILING" OF THE UNIFORM

For decades, the most visible battle for Sikhs in Western militaries was the right to serve without religious practices. The struggle for the Dastar (turban) and the 5 Ks (the articles of faith) was not just about clothing; it was about the right to be a "Whole Sikh" while being a "Full Citizen."

Today, the landscape has been transformed. From Harjit Sajjan serving as Canada's Minister of National Defence to the landmark rulings in the case of Harkiran Kaur, the first turbaned women in Canadian navy to personal in US Army and Air Force allowing turbans and beards, the "Army of Sikhs" is no longer a foreign concept. It is a homegrown reality.



## THE "KAUR SISTERS": NOVA SCOTIA'S DEFENSIVE POWERHOUSE

Field Hockey Nova Scotia's U18 team brought a unique edge to the recent National Championships in Toronto: a defensive line built on family bonds. Harnoor Kaur (17) and Sehajleen Kaur (14), fondly known by teammates as the "Kaur Sisters," stood tall together to protect the Nova Scotia net.

The sisters have had a sensational 2024-2025 season. Beyond their provincial success, they played a pivotal role in leading their school team to an Inter-School Championship victory, proving they are just as effective in the local circuit as they are on the national stage.

Whether it's a perfectly timed tackle or a strategic clearance, this duo's chemistry is undeniable. As they continue to represent Nova Scotia with pride, the Kaur sisters are quickly becoming the faces of a bright future for Atlantic field hockey.



## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **TRIBUTES AND TRIUMPHS: HONOURING THE LEGACY OF JAGPAL SINGH TIWANA (1935-2024)** (BY KIMINDRA TIWANA)

**Our community in recent past bid a bittersweet farewell to a giant of our local history. Jagpal Singh Tiwana was more than just a librarian; he was the memory-keeper of the Maritime Sikh Society and a man whose wit could light up any room.**

#### **A Journey of Learning and Service**

Born in Punjab, India, in 1935, Mr. Tiwana was a lifelong scholar. After earning three degrees in India, including two Master's degrees, he immigrated to Canada in 1968 with his wife, Balraj Kaur. They chose Truro, Nova Scotia, as their home, where he served as a dedicated librarian at the Nova Scotia Teachers College for nearly three decades.

#### **The Voice of the Diaspora**

Mr. Tiwana didn't just read history; he lived and documented it. His passion for Sikh heritage led him to interview world-renowned scholars like Dr. W. Hew McLeod and Khushwant Singh, and he spent years curating a deep collection of Sikh history at the MSS Library to ensure future generations stayed connected to their roots. He also authored *The Maritime Sikh Society: Origin and Growth*, which remains the definitive account of our community's resilience and triumphs in Atlantic Canada.

## TRIBUTES AND TRIUMPHS: HONOURING THE LEGACY OF JAGPAL SINGH TIWANA (1935-2024)

### Putting Nova Scotia on the Global Map

Through his writing, Mr. Tiwana ensured that the progressive spirit of the Maritime Sikh Society was recognized worldwide. He chronicled milestone moments that made global headlines, such as:

- The election of an all women executive team.
- Martin Singh becoming the first Western-born President of a Gurdwara.
- Harkiran Kaur becoming the first Sikh woman permitted to wear a turban in the Canadian Navy.

His work was so impactful that Mr. M.S. Gill, Former Union Minister, once noted that the SGPC should "draw a leaf from the book of Halifax Sikhs draw a leaf from the book of Halifax Sikhs."

### A Gift for Laughter

Beyond his academic pursuits, Jagpal was known for his legendary storytelling. Whether he was roasting a close friend or commanding a room with a witty anecdote, his "lighter side" was a gift to everyone who knew him. He was a pillar of the Indian community—a loyal friend, a "favourite uncle," and a devoted husband and father.

Mr. Tiwana passed away on September 29th, 2024. While his physical presence is missed, his words and the history he preserved continue to guide us.

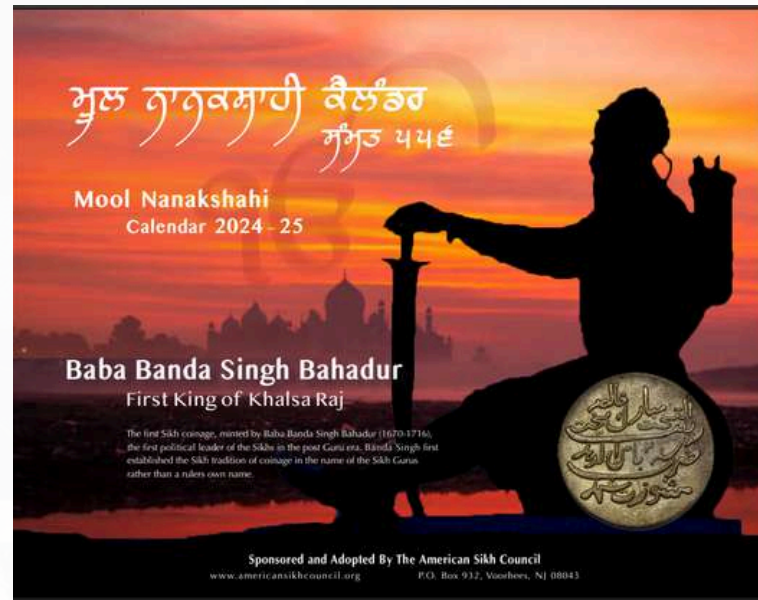
### Honor His Memory: Visit the Library

The best way to celebrate Mr. Tiwana's life is to engage with the knowledge he so carefully preserved. We invite all members of the community to visit the Maritime Sikh Society Library, spend a moment among the shelves he curated, browse the history of our growth in Nova Scotia, and perhaps find a story that inspires you. Let us keep his passion for learning and our shared heritage alive.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR (UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER)

- A CALENDAR OUTLINING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS
- SPECIAL EVENTS, INCLUDING VISITS FROM RAGI JATHAS/PERSONS

### UPCOMING EVENTS



Mool Nanakshahi Calendar (NS) combines the Original Nanakshahi Calendar as approved and introduced by SGPC in 1999 (commemorating 300th anniversary of Khalsa Sajna Divas); and also accurately fixes the date for Banteed Shord Divas.

January ( ੧੩ - ੧੫੦ )	February ( ੧੫੧ - ੧੬੨ )	March ( ੧੬੩ - ੧੭੪ )
Jan 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi 11 Jan 18 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Mela Mangli-Narain: Foundation Day - Dastar Sahib-Aarman Jan 18 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Chhawan da Marcha Jan 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday - Baba Deep Singh ji Jan 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday - Bhagat Ravinder ji Jan 27 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi - 7	Feb 06 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Vaidh Chhullghara Feb 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Sahibzada Aja Singh ji Feb 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Banteed Shord Divas Feb 27 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Saka Nankana Sahib Feb 27 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Janda Mancha	Mar 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Hala, Nishala Mar 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-7 Mar 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Nanakshahi New Year Day Mar 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Delhi Fair: Bhai Baghel Singh Mar 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Jai Jai Panchahi-6 Mar 25 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh
April ( ੧੭੫ - ੧੭੬ )	May ( ੧੭੭ - ੧੭੮ )	June ( ੧੭੯ - ੧੮੦ )
Apr 06 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Sahibzada Jitender Singh ji Apr 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-1 Apr 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Bhalu Naina Divas Apr 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Vankhara Apr 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-2 and 3, Jai Jai Panchahi-2 and 3 Apr 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-2 and 3 Apr 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Baba Farid ji	May 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-5 May 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Chhawan Chhullghara May 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-3	June 06 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Chhullghara 1984 June 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-4 June 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi Panchahi-5 June 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Bhagat Kabir ji June 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Tuba Banda Singh Bahadur June 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Bhai Mahatara Hanja Singh
July ( ੧੮੧ - ੧੮੨ )	August ( ੧੮੩ - ੧੮੪ )	September ( ੧੮੫ - ੧੮੬ )
Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Foundation Day Sri Akal Takht Sahib Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-8 Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Bhai Man Singh ji Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Bhai Tarn Singh ji Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Maa Poo Panchahi-4 Jul 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-8	Aug 06 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Completion of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at Darshan Sahib	Sep 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) First Parkash of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at Harmandir Sahib Sep 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-4 and 5, Jai Jai Panchahi-3 and 4 Sep 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-7 Sep 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Jai Jai Panchahi-1
October ( ੧੮੭ - ੧੮੮ )	November ( ੧੮੯ - ੧੯੦ )	December ( ੧੯੧ - ੧੯੨ )
Oct 06 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Parkash Panchahi-4 Oct 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Gargakhi Panchahi-6 Gargakhi Gurus Gurbani Sahib Jai Jai Panchahi-7 Oct 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Jai Jai Panchahi-10 Oct 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Saka Panna Sahib	Nov 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Mata Sahib Kaur ji Nov 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Bhagat Nanaka ji Nov 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Baba Deep Singh ji Nov 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Parkaha-3, Bhai Mail, Bhai Bhai Bhai, and Bhai Dyalda Gargakhi Panchahi-11 Nov 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Sahibzada Zoravar Singh ji	Dec 16 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Birthday: Sahibzada Parsh Singh ji Dec 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Elder Sahibzada and Sahibzada at Chankar Dec 26 ( ੧੭ ੧੭ ) Shikandi: Younger Sahibzada and Mata Gopi ji

## THE CAPTAIN'S COMPASS

An old sea captain, retired and weathered by years of salt and storm, was visited by his son, who had just been promoted to Captain of his own vessel.

**The son was filled with anxiety. "Father," the son confessed,** "the seas are more unpredictable than ever. I am afraid that in the middle of a storm, I will lose my nerve and my way. How did you stay so steady for forty years?"

The old man pulled a battered, brass compass from his pocket. The needle was jittery, it vibrated and shook with every small movement. **"Look at this needle, son," the father said. "It's old, it's scratched, and it never stays perfectly still."**

**The son frowned. "How can you trust something so shaky?"**

**The father smiled. "The needle shakes because it is sensitive to the world around it. It feels the wind and the iron of the ship. But notice—no matter how much it trembles, it always returns to its truth. It never stops seeking North."**

**He placed the compass in his son's hand. "In life, you will shake. You will tremble under the weight of your struggles and the fear for your children. Do not mistake your shaking for being lost. As long as your heart is fixed on your 'North' your faith and your values, the trembling is just a sign that you are alive and navigating."**

## THOUGHT COLLECTIVE FEATURE





# MARITIME SIKHS

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**FEATURING ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND VOICES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBAL SIKH DIASPORA**

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### **WE VALUE YOUR INPUT;**

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW WE CAN IMPROVE OUR NEWS MAGAZINE? PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS WITH US SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THE MOST RELEVANT AND ENGAGING CONTENT.

WE EXTEND OUR PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR THE INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JAGPAL SINGH TIWANA'S ARCHIVES, ALONGSIDE A MYRIAD OF OTHER DISTINGUISHED SOURCES, WHICH HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY ENRICHED THE CONTENT PRESENTED IN THIS EDITION OF MARITIME SIKHS.