

Punjabis in Canada: 2024 Budget; Baisakhi Parade and New Year Day

April 25, 2024

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---Special PROVISIONS for SIKHS in the 2024 BUDGET---

Apr 18, 2024: 1. A proposal to support the Sikh Arts & Culture Foundation

2. The Royal Ontario Museum to create a museum space in Toronto dedicated to Sikh arts, culture, and heritage. A sum of CA\$ 11 million, spread over two years beginning from 2024-2025, has been earmarked for that project and to support the operations of the Hellenic Community of Vancouver.

3. The Budget document also stated the Federal Government “will contribute to build a new museum highlighting the histories, cultures, and contributions of Canadians of diverse South Asian heritages.”

4. For almost a quarter century, **Sahib Thind**, founder of **Professor Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation**, had led the drive for a formal Parliamentary apology for the tragic affair of ss KOMAGATA MARU of 1914.



*Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and **Sahib Thind***

Sahib Thind has worked for decades through **Professor Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation** for obtaining justice for the 376 unfortunate young Indians, aboard ss Komagata Maru of 1914. They only wanted to create a better life for themselves in Canada.

The **Gadhri Babiyan Dha Mela**, an annual fair held in honour of those who have suffered, has been held in Surrey 22 times.

In 2009, **Prime Minister Steven Harper** apologized for the injustice suffered by the travelers, aboard Komagata Maru of 1914.

On May 18, 2016, Rt. Hon. **Justin Trudeau**, Prime Minister of Canada said in the Canadian Parliament: (Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/3489feua>)

“Today – while knowing that no words can fully erase the pain and suffering experienced by the passengers – I offer a sincere apology on behalf of the government for the laws in force at the time that allowed Canada to be indifferent to the plight of the passengers of the Komagata Maru.”



May 18, 2016: The Parliament of Canada, Ottawa

Presently, the goal of **Sahib Singh** and his organization is to pay tribute to those who were imprisoned and killed during the British rule. Their aim is re-name the islands that the British named to the names of those that sacrificed themselves.

Sahib Thind has also been a leading member of the South Asian Community in helping establish the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies. (Reference: <https://ufv.ca/sasi/>) at the **University of the Fraser Valley (UFV)**. The **Thind family**

has been one of the donors for the endowment fund, which facilitated the setting up of a Professorial Chair and the Center.

---- CENTRE for INDO CANADIAN STUDIES at UFV----

(Reference: <https://ufv.ca/sasi/>)

In 2004, at a meeting of the **South Asian community** at the **University of the Fraser Valley** (UFV), it was decided to develop a program of **India Canada studies** at UFV. In 2006, with a \$ 2.5 Mn endowment, the **BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada India Business and Economic Development** was created. UFV established the **Centre for Indo Canadian Studies** to house the Chair and as a hub for research, engagement and study. The Centre has undertaken numerous research projects, supported and mentored student research, initiated and implemented MoU's with Universities in India, built strong community partnerships locally, in BC and across Canada and with numerous Indian Diaspora communities, held international conferences, invited visiting scholars from around the world, curated acclaimed exhibits and developed business ties with India.

---- The FESTIVAL of **Vaisakhi** in BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA----

---- RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS by SIKHS in CANADA----

1. April 20, 2024: Surrey, BC: Baisakhi Parade:



*April 20, 2024: Surrey, British Columbia, Canada: Gurdwara Dashmesh Darbar, 85 Avenue
Baisakhi Parade: Celebration of the New Year day of 13th April*

April 14, 2024 marks **Vaisakhi** (or Baisakhi), the festival of the New Year day of the **Hindu calendar, known as the *Vikrami (or Bikrami) calendar***.

The solar new year, in Punjab, starts on the first day of the month of **Vaisakh (*the name of a month, according to the ancient Hindu calendar*)**.

A day, in the Hindu calendar, is considered from sunrise to next sunrise.

In Punjab, for the first day of the solar months, the Orissa rule is observed: “day 1 of the month occurs on Sankranti (or sangrānd), the day of the transmigration of the sun from one zodiac (constellation of stars) to the next, out of the 12 zodiacs, into which the path of the annual revolution of the earth, around the sun, has been divided by the Hindu astronomers. In Saurmana varsha (meaning the “Solar year”), there are twelve Sankrantis, corresponding with twelve months of a year.

Baisakhi marks the transition of the Sun to the **Aries sign** or **Mesha Rashi** and proclaims the arrival of Spring equinox as per the Sidereal calendar.

In **Kerala**, this occasion is marked as **Vishu**. It is also known as **Pohela Boishakh** in **West Bengal**, **Bohag Bihu** in **Assam**, **Puthandu** in **Tamil Nadu**, **Bihu** in **Uttarakhand**, **Ugadi** in **Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka** and **MahaVishuva Sankranti** in **Odisha**.

On the 1st day of Vaisakh in 1699 CE, **Guru Gobind Singhji**, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, established the Khalsa Panth (meaning the “*society of the pure*”) in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab. Guruji called the first five volunteers as the “**Panj Pyare**”.

The five volunteers were: Daya Ram (**Bhai Daya Singh**), Dharam Das (**Bhai Dharam Singh**), Himmatt Rai (**Bhai Himmatt Singh**), Mohkam Chand (**Bhai Mohkam Singh**), and Sahib Chand (**Bhai Sahib Singh**).

In 1699 CE, the 1st day of Vaisakh, according to the Bikrami Calendar, fell on 30th March. Since the middle of the 19th century, the day is celebrated on 13th April by the Gregorian calendar.

Guru Gobind Singhji started the Khalsa tradition after his father, **Guru Tegh Bahadur** (the 9th Guru) and his three disciples - **Bhai Mati Dass**, **Bhai Sati Das**, and **Bhai Dayala**- were beheaded on November 24, 1675 CE during the Islamic sharia rule of the **Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb**. (Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/3buh9vsh>)

Several Sikh Gurus had been killed by the Mughals during the period of the Sikh Gurus' leadership and the Mughal Empire's rule in India. The Sikh Gurus who were martyred by the Mughals are: **Guru Arjan Dev Ji** (1563-1606); **Guru Arjan Dev Ji**, the fifth Sikh Guru, was executed by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1606. He was

tortured and subjected to extreme cruelty, eventually leading to his death. **Guru Arjan Dev Ji's** martyrdom holds significant importance in Sikh history and strengthened the Sikh community's resolve.

Guruji completed the Harimandir, the Golden Temple, at Amritsar, where all Sikhs could worship as they pleased. He became the first Guru to serve as both temporal and spiritual head of the Sikhs.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji prepared the **Kartarpur Pothi**, the volume upon which the canonical **Adi Granth**, or **Guru Granth Sahib** (meaning “*The Granth as the Guru*”), the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, is based. **Guruji** was a prolific poet who created hymns of great lyrical quality.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675) was martyred by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 CE.



*April 14, 2024: Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA: Celebration of Vaisakhi
A parade float carrying “Guru Granth Sahib” (the Sikh holy book)*

Start of the procession: **Punjabi Market**, near East 49th Avenue and Main Street
It is important to understand that the **martyrdom of the Sikh Gurus played a pivotal role in shaping the Sikh faith and reinforcing the principles of justice, equality, and freedom.** Hindus as well as Sikhs hold immense reverence for the

Gurus and commemorate their sacrifices through various religious observances and events.

Guru Gobind Singhji created and initiated the Khalsa as a warrior with a duty to protect the innocent from religious persecution. The founding of the Khalsa started a new phase in the Sikh tradition. It formulated an initiation ceremony (amrit sanskar, nectar ceremony) and rules of conduct for the Khalsa warriors.

Upon initiation, a male Sikh was given the title of Singh (meaning the "*lion*"). Kaur was made the sole, compulsory identifier for female Sikhs in the twentieth century.

The rules of life, include a behavioral code called **Rahit**. Some rules are no tobacco, no intoxicants, no adultery, no Kutha (i.e. *no Halal meat*) meat, no modification of hair on the body, and a dress code (Five Ks).

He introduced ideas that indirectly challenged the discriminatory taxes imposed by Islamic authorities. For example, Aurangzeb had imposed taxes on non-Muslims that were collected from the Sikhs as well, for example the **jizya** (*poll tax on non-Muslims*), **pilgrim tax** and **Bhaddar tax** (*a tax to be paid by anyone following the Hindu ritual of shaving the head after the death of a loved one and cremation*).

However, the new code of conduct also led to internal disagreements between Sikhs in the 18th century, particularly between the **Nanakpanthi** and the **Khalsa**.

His tradition has survived into the modern times, with initiated Sikh referred to as **Khalsa Sikh**, while those who do not get baptized referred to as **Sahajdhari Sikhs**.

On Monday, April 25, 2016, the **Narendra Modi Government** got a Bill passed by the Indian Parliament to make Sahajdhari Sikhs ineligible to vote in the elections to the **Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee** (SGPC). This was done to satisfy the long-standing demand of SGPC.

OTHER HISTORICAL EVENTS of BAISAKHI DAY: Another historical event connecting the Sikh community and Baisakhi was the **proclamation of Ranjit Singh as the Maharaja of the Sikh Empire in 1801**.

A tragic event happened on Baisakhi day in the year 1919 when the British Army under the command of **Colonel Reginald Dyer** opened fire at a gathering of unarmed civilians, mostly Sikhs, who had assembled at **Jallianwala Bagh** to participate in the annual Baisakhi celebrations. Almost a thousand people died. This day is remembered as a **black day in the history of India's freedom struggle**.

2. April 20, 2024: Celebration of Bhagat Dhanna's Birthday:

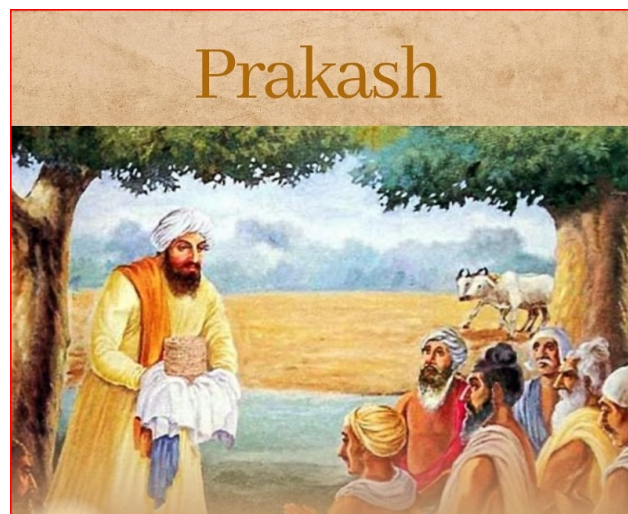
Bhagat Dhanna is among the 15 saints whose hymns have been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji while compiling **Sri Adi Granth Sahib**, now called **Sri Guru Granth Sahib**, included the hymns of 15 saints belonging to different castes, 11 Bhattas and four other holy men. In **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** three hymns of Bhagat Dhanna ji in two **Rags** (*Indian musical measures*) have been included, out of which two Rags are in **Asa Rag** and one in **Dhanasri Rag**.

Bhagat Dhanna was born in a Jatt family in the village Dhuan in District Tonk of **Rajasthan** in Samvat 1473 (i.e. 1416 CE) on Vaisakh 8 according to the Vikrami calendar.

In this village at his sacred birth place now stands an elegant Gurdwara Sahib named Gurdwara Bhagat Dhanna Ji wherein a **sarovar** (means "holy tank") also exists.

Every year in this Gurdwara Sahib as well as in all the other Gurdwara Sahibs a comprehensive three - day program is organized during March 1-3.



Sri Guru Ram Das Ji (*the 4th Guruji*) and **Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji** (*the 5th Guruji*), in their hymns, have referred to Bhagat Dhanna Ji's name. **Sri Guru Ram Das Ji** while clarifying that a person by repeating God's name is blessed with the darshan of God Almighty has referred to Bhagat Dhanna Ji's name.

Efforts to develop a separate identity of Sikhs, separate from Hindus: The first 9 Sikh Gurus were Hindus. The tenth Guru had been named Gobind Rai at birth.

To face the Muslim rulers' atrocities, Hindu families started the practice of making the eldest son a Sikh. This practice continued till the 1960s. So, inter-marriages between Sikhs and Hindus take place as a normal practice.

On 13th April 2003, the SGPC adopted **Nanakshahi calendar**, designed by Canada-based Sikh scholar **Pal Singh Purewal, a Canadian retired computer engineer**. He started worked on replacing the ancient Bikrami calendar, to work out the dates of gurburb and other festivals. The basic premise was that a separate calendar would reinforce separate Sikh identity.

----a BACKGROUNDER on the Vikrami Calendar----

To understand HINDU ERAS and EPOCHS, a few lines on the calendar followed today:

The Gregorian calendar: Western Christians mark the birth of Jesus Christ as year zero, and any year before that is denoted as **Before Common Era (BCE)** while the years following are denoted CE. The year 2017 in the Gregorian calendar is therefore 2,017 years after the assumed date of Jesus' birth.

The Hindu calendar: Hindu tradition marks large spaces of time by a repetitive cycle of **Yugas** (roughly translated as "*epochs*" or "*eras*"). One complete cycle consists of the **Satya Yuga**, the **Treta Yuga**, the **Dvapara Yuga** and the **Kali Yuga**.

By the **Hindu calendar**, our present time is the **Kali Yuga**, which began in the year corresponding to the Gregorian year 3102 BCE, when the Kurukshetra war is thought to have ended.

As per Hindu astrology, the three lunar days of Yugadi, Akshaya Tritiya, and Vijaya Dashami do not need any auspicious Muhurta to begin or perform any auspicious work as these days are free from all malefic effects.

Falling during the Shukla Paksha, the waxing phase of the moon, in the month of Vaisakha the Tiritiya Tithi begins at 04:17 a.m. on 10 May 2024 and ends at 02:50 a.m. on 11 May 2024. **Akshaya Tiritiya**, also known as **Akha Teej**, holds immense significance in the Hindu calendar. It is celebrated on the third tithi (lunar day) of the Shukla Paksha (waxing phase) in the month of Vaishakha, when the Sun is at its brightest in Mesha Rasi during daytime and the Moon is at its brightest during nighttime while stationed in the Rishaba Rasi. This unique alignment of celestial

bodies is believed to bless the Earth with the best of both worlds, that of the Sun and the Moon.

On Akshaya Tritiya, Surya Deva presented Panchali, the wife of Pandavas, with the Akshaya Patra during the exile of the Pandavas.

Akshaya Tritiya day marks the beginning of Tretha Yuga. Veda Vyasa started his composition of the grand Itihasa Mahabharata on this day.

Akshaya Tritiya also marks the birth anniversary of Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who cleansed the Earth of evil kings and created the land of Kerala.

It is also believed that the holy Ganga descended to the Earth from heaven due to Bhagiratha's efforts on Akshaya Tritiya day.

This day is also considered to be the birthday of Annapurna, the goddess of food and the kitchen.

The tradition of buying gold and jewellery on Akshaya Tritiya day ushers happiness and prosperity in the household and ensures eternal wealth for the devotees. It is believed that gold purchased on this day will never diminish and would continue to grow or appreciate every year.

A DAY: The West considers a day to begin immediately after mid-night and the day ends, after 24 hours, at the next midnight.

A **calibrated** instrument like an **hourglass** (or a "sand clock" or a "sandglass") or a **watch** or a **clock** can be used to measure the correct length of time.

In India, the 'Hindu day' is considered from sunrise to next sunrise. Hence, the number of hours may vary from one day to the next.

MONTHS: The months in the ancient calendar system of India begin on the **first day after the new moon and end on the last day before the new moon.**

NUMBER of DAYS in a 'Hindu Month': The number of days in a 'Hindu month' are obtained by rounded off the number of days it takes for moon to complete one revolution around the earth.

The **Orissa rule** is observed: day 1 of the month occurs on the day of the transition of monthly constellations, Sankranti (or sangrānd in Punjabi). **27.32 days** (a tropical month and sidereal month) and one revolution relative to the Sun in about 29.53 days

In Punjab, Purnimānta calendar (or calculated from the ending moment of the full moon: the beginning of the dark fortnight) is followed. The year begins on Chet Sudi: the first day after the new moon in the month of Chaitra (or Chet). This

means that the first half of the Purṇimānta month of Chaitra goes to the previous year, while the second half belongs to the new year. (*The amānta tradition ends the lunar month on the new moon day.*)

The Punjabi solar new year starts on the first of Vaisakh.

#	Name of Month	Western Month	
1	Vaisakh	mid April-mid May	
2	Jeth	mid May-mid June	
3	Harh	mid June -mid July	
4	Sawan	mid July -mid August	
5	Bhadon	mid August -mid September	
6	Assu	mid September -mid October	
7	Kattak	mid October -mid November	
8	Magghar	mid November -mid December	
9	Poh	mid December -mid January	
10	Magh	mid January -mid February	
11	Phaggan	mid February -mid March	
12	Chet	mid March -mid April	

Note: Please read “Khalistanis Threaten Indian Diplomats in Canada, UK, Australia & USA” dated July 9, 2023 at <https://diginews360.com/khalistanis-threaten-indian-diplomats-in-canada/> . The news is followed by a 4-page Backgrounder on the History of Khalistan. On the last page is the INTERESTING Editorial Page of www.DiGiNews360.com .