



GURU NANAK
INSTITUTE
OF GLOBAL STUDIES

FIFTH ANNUAL

International Sikh Research Summit

"Curiosity Becomes Scholarship. Voices Become Impact."

OCTOBER 3 & 4, 2026 | IN PERSON & VIRTUAL | SURREY, B.C. CANADA





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Experience a weekend of inspiring ideas and meaningful connections. Explore the program and meet the scholars and leaders bringing this summit to life!

WELCOME MESSAGES	1 - 2
SUMMIT OBJECTIVES	3
SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE	4
AGENDA	5 - 6
GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
KEYNOTE SPEAKER	8
DAY 1 OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS	9
DAY 2 OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS	10
SUMMIT DINNER AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS	11
DAY 1 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS	12 - 15
DAY 2 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS	16 - 21
SUMMIT SPONSORS	22
ABOUT GURU NANAK INSTITUTE OF GLOBAL STUDIES	23 - 24
GNI PROGRAMS	25
GNI TEAM	26
CELEBRATING FIVE SUMMITS OF KEYNOTE VOICES	27

We are grateful to host this Summit within the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Musqueam, Qayqayt, Tsleil Waututh, and Tsawwassen First Nations.

Discover the rich history and heritage preserved in the Sikh National Archives of Canada, on display at the Summit.



WELCOME FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

To GNI's fifth annual International Sikh Research Summit
www.gurunanakinstitute.ca

On behalf of the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies, we welcome you to the fifth International Sikh Research Summit. The theme of this year's Summit is: 'Curiosity Becomes Scholarship. Voices Become Impact'.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the academicians, scholars, and community leaders joining us both in person and online. Your presence from Punjab, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and beyond brings together voices we hope will foster innovation rooted in spiritual and ethical tradition. Over the coming two days, we look forward to rich and impactful conversations spanning historical perspectives and contemporary opportunities and challenges, including those offered by Artificial Intelligence and its role in global post-secondary education and research.

This year's Summit also features a distinctive addition: we hear thoughts and ideas from Gurduara representatives and thought leaders on the evolving role of Gurduaras in sangat/communities. We also hear from Sikh organizations that advocate not only for Sikh causes but also help communities around the world survive and thrive even in the face of serious challenges. We are equally excited to share our vision for progressing from Guru Nanak Institute to Guru Nanak University.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participants, presenters, and supporters for making this Summit possible. We look forward to inspiring presentations and discussions.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh



Dr. Satpal Singh



Dr. Kamaljit Kaur Sidhu

*Academic Co-Chairs,
5th Annual International Sikh Research Summit 2026*



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Every meaningful advance begins with a question, and its true value is realized when the knowledge it generates leads to meaningful change in society. This idea has been at the heart of the International Sikh Research Summit since its beginning. This year, we gather for our **5th Summit at Surrey City Hall on October 3–4, 2026**. Our theme: *'Curiosity Becomes Scholarship'*. *Voices Become Impact* reflects our purpose: to encourage serious research, bring new voices into the conversation, and connect knowledge with meaningful community impact.

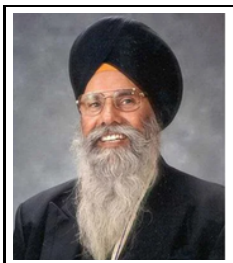
Day One brings together research, ideas, and new perspectives: from the Sikh diaspora and Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Indigenous-Sikh engagement, Gurbani research, and Sikh Studies. This year, we focus on Artificial Intelligence, including AI's growing role in global post-secondary education.

Day Two turns from research to the community: *'Voices Become Impact'*. Sikh organizations will share their experiences around three important questions: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going? The discussion will examine the evolving role of the Gurdwara, the changing needs of the Sangat and wider community, and gaps where research, professional expertise, technology, and greater collaboration can make a meaningful difference.

We will not resolve every issue in two days, and we do not expect to. But we can listen. We can identify priorities. We can ask better questions and build stronger connections between those who research our community and those who serve it. Curiosity can lead to scholarship. Scholarship can deepen understanding. And when community voices help give that knowledge direction, it can lead to impact.

On behalf of the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies, I warmly welcome you to the 5th International Sikh Research Summit. I encourage you to participate fully, ask questions, challenge ideas, share your experience, and make new connections. We have brought together researchers, scholars, students, professionals, and community leaders for a reason: to learn from one another and to turn knowledge into action.

Let us endeavour to leave these two days with new knowledge, stronger connections, and new questions that advance research, deepen understanding, and inspire meaningful action.



Gian Singh Sandhu

Gian Singh Sandhu

President & CEO, Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies



SUMMIT OBJECTIVES

5th Annual International Sikh Research Summit
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The International Sikh Research Summit brings together thought leaders, experts and passionate scholars who are interested in:

- Advancing the vision of Guru Nanak University in Canada
- Advancing Sikh studies through multidisciplinary dialogue, learning, and scholarly exchange
- Facilitating global networking and collaboration among Sikh scholars
- Fostering collaboration and forward-looking dialogue on Sikh studies, institutions, initiatives, and community leadership
- Supporting GNI's long-term academic and institutional development, subject to applicable regulatory approvals

The Board of Directors of the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies welcomes you to our 2026 Summit!



Gurjit Kaur Bains



Gian Singh Sandhu



Harpreet Singh Dardi



Jaswinder Singh Parmar



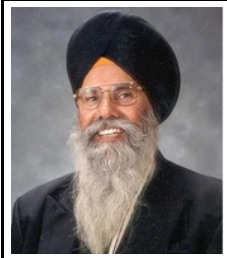
Dr. Kamaljit Kaur Sidhu



SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meet the people behind this Summit.
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Gian S. Sandhu



Summit Visionary
Surrey, BC, Canada

Dr. Baljit Singh



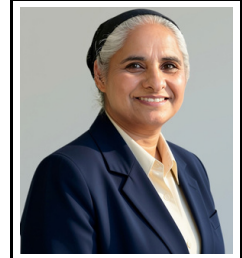
Sr. Summit Advisor
Saskatoon, SK, Canada

Dr. Satpal Singh



Summit Co-Chair
Buffalo, NY, USA

Dr. Kamaljit K. Sidhu



Summit Co-Chair
Surrey, BC, Canada

Aman S. Hundal



Logistics Chair
Kelowna, BC, Canada

Dr. L.S. Bedi



Content Advisor
Surrey, BC, Canada

Neesha K. Hothi



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Vancouver, BC, Canada

Satveer K. Sidhu



Planning Team
Surrey, BC, Canada

Mandeep S. Sajjan



IT/Web Developer
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Sukhmani K. Sidhu



Planning Team
Surrey, BC, Canada

Sukhvinder K. Sandhu



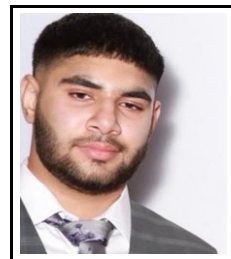
Hospitality Team Lead
Surrey, BC, Canada

Khushi K. Johal



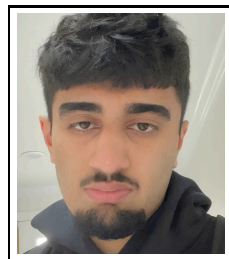
Creative & Design
Surrey, BC, Canada

Jaison S. Dhaliwal



Social Media
Surrey, BC, Canada

Lavin S. Sandhu



Social Media
Surrey, BC, Canada



DAY 1 AGENDA

Saturday, October 3, 2026
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- 8:00 AM* Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 AM **Welcome:** Land Acknowledgement
- 9:30 AM **Keynote: Sikh Diaspora in a New World: Challenges, Opportunities, New Heights**
Dr. Manmohan Singh Kumar, Economist, Former IMF Division Chief, Investor, Philanthropist & Scholar, USA
- 10:30 AM **Sunia Mania Manu Kita Bhau (Translation: Hearing and Listening, Remembering and Embracing, Passionate and Transformative Loving)**
Dr. Sandeep Kaur Glover, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- 11:00 AM **Break**
- 11:30 AM **Sovereign State of Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh**
Dr. Anjum Dara, Deputy Director, Directorate General of Archaeology, Government of Punjab, Pakistan
- 12:00 PM **From Ancestry to Academia: Crossing Paths and Walking Together**
Valerie Cross (Chemkwaat), Director, Community Engagement, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- 12:30 PM **Lunch**
- 1:30 PM **Future of Higher Education in a Rapidly Changing World**
Dr. Zora Singh, Chancellor, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab, India
- 2:00 PM **Alexander, Porus and the Punjabi Resistance: Rethinking the Battle of the Hydaspes**
Dr. Tarlochan Singh Nahal, Sikh Scholar and Historian, USA
- 2:30 PM **GNI Research Project: Gurbani Arth Milaan**
Dr. Gurmail Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, India; Dr. Harjinder Singh Sandhu, AI Entrepreneur, USA; Mandeep Singh Sajjan, IT Manager, GNI Canada
- 3:10 PM **Break**
- 3:25 PM **Youth Talks**
Gurmehar Singh Sandhu (BCIT), Jasmine Rehal (UBC)
- 3:55 PM **Focused Session: Role of AI in Global Post-Secondary Education**
Dr. Sarabjot Singh Anand, Co-Founder & CEO, Tatrass Data, Former Associate Professor, University of Warwick, UK
- 4:45 PM **Day 1 Summary**
Dr. Roselene K. Dhaliwal, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Canada
- Evening Event**
- 6:00 PM **Dinner and Fireside Chat with The Honourable Baltej Singh Dhillon, Senator**
Moderated by Neesha Hothi, Communications Strategist for Creative & Cultural Sectors
Surrey City Hall Atrium, 13450 104 Ave, Surrey, BC V3T 1V8.

***NOTE: All times are listed in Pacific Time (PT)**



DAY 2 AGENDA

Sunday, October 4, 2026
www.gurunanakinstitute.ca

8:00 AM*	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:00 AM	Welcome Remarks
9:30 AM	Sikh Organizations Where have we been? <i>Dr. Gurmail Singh, Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, India</i> Where are we now, and where are we going? <i>Santbir Singh, Ph.D. Candidate, York University, Canada</i>
10:30 AM	Guru Nanak Institute to Guru Nanak University Vision <i>Gian Singh Sandhu, President and CEO, Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies</i>
11:00 AM	Break
11:20 AM	Rapid Fire Presentations: Sikh Organizations
1:00 PM	Lunch & Group Picture
2:00 PM	Rapid Fire Presentations: Sikh Organizations <i>Continued</i>
2:30 PM	Panel Discussion - Evolving Role of Gurduaras & Sangat/Community Needs <i>Moderator: Dr. Satvir Singh</i> <i>Panelists: Dr. Daljeet Singh, Dr. Jasvir Kaur, Giani Jasbir Singh, Avtar Singh Malhi</i>
3:30 PM	Break
3:45 PM	Open Discussion: Working Together for Sarbat da Bhala
4:45 PM	Day 2 Summary & Closing Remarks <i>Dr. Kamaljit Kaur Sidhu, Vice-President Academic, Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies and Summit Co-Chair</i>



GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

October 3, 2026
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Indigenous Welcome - Valerie Cross (Chemkwaat)



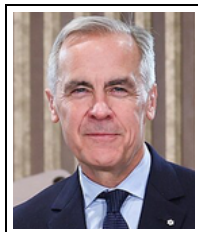
Valerie Cross is a proud Tsawwassen First Nation citizen whose leadership is grounded in the teachings of her grandparents and the matriarchs who shaped her early years. She currently serves her community as a member of the Tsawwassen Legislature, Executive Councillor, and Squigel (Speaker) of the Legislature. Drawing on two decades of Indigenous governance experience, Valerie has helped advance self-government while fostering community-driven decision-making rooted in respect, trust, and inclusion.

Ardaas - Gurmat Singh Dhaliwal

A Business Management student at Simon Fraser University, Gurmat Singh is committed to blending his academic knowledge with hands-on experience in financial literacy for families, while exploring the broader implications of economic stability at both micro and macro levels. As a non-partisan staff member at the House of Commons, he received a unique opportunity to observe the Canadian democracy in action and gain firsthand insight into the complexities of the legislative process.



OFFICIAL GREETINGS



The Right Hon. Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada



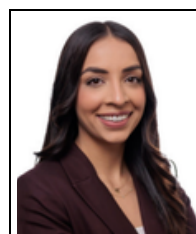
The Hon. David Eby
Premier of British Columbia



Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey, B.C.



The Hon. Randeep Singh Sarai
*Secretary of State,
International Development*



The Hon. Jessie Sunner
*Minister of Post-Secondary
Education and Future Skills*



SUMMIT KEYNOTE SPEAKER

October 3, 2026

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Saturday Opening Keynote - Dr. Manmohan Singh Kumar



Dr. Manmohan Singh Kumar is a renowned economist with a career spanning over four decades bridging global economic policy, institutional investment, research and academia. He has held senior leadership positions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a major global institutional investment group (CDPQ), a large investment bank, and taught at some of the world's top universities, including Cambridge, Georgetown and Harvard. Beyond his professional work, he has served since 2020 as Chairman of the Board of Sikh Human Development Foundation (SHDF), which provides college scholarships to bright but financially constrained students in Punjab and neighboring areas, and has given over 15,000 scholarships. He has been a member of the Board of the Guru Nanak Foundation of America, is a founder of Sikh Society Cambridge and is an author of many articles on various aspects of Sikh philosophy and history. He is also a frequent speaker at Sikh Institutions and Gurudwaras. He holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University, and M.Sc. and B.Sc. from London University. He has received several prizes and honors from London and Cambridge Universities, from the IMF, and is a recipient of several other awards from public and private sector institutions.

Sikh Diaspora in a New World: Challenges, Opportunities, New Heights

The Sikh diaspora now represents one of the most significant and dynamic Sikh populations outside of India. Its achievements and contributions to humanity are immense. However, there are major structural forces reshaping the world which are likely to exacerbate the challenges that the diaspora face relating to language, culture, and identity. These forces will hit with unusual ferocity. But many of these forces also offer tools of preservation and power that no previous generation of the diaspora has ever held.

The address first provides a brief assessment of where the Sikh diaspora stands globally, including its extraordinary density of intellectual human capital and its remarkable achievements. It then discusses the structural forces constituting the new world: these include the realignment of the global economic order, restructuring of immigration policies, increasingly severe imbalances in the West, AI and the technological revolution, and generational challenges. These forces interact with each other and are creating challenges for the diaspora that are gathering force. The address discusses strategies, consisting of specific actions, to successfully meet these challenges. These include: underlining the diaspora's historic commitment to education and human capital, with systematic efforts to strengthen Sikh education at all levels and utilizing AI as needed; developing financial institutions to mobilize the very significant community resources; providing AI and professional leadership and mentorship across the world; institutionalizing civic involvement and upgrading internal governance; and conveying the message of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh Ji to the world, highlighting the diaspora's commitment to Sarbat Da Bhala. As these measures are implemented, the Sikh diaspora will not only overcome the headwinds of the new world, they will uplift their ancestral heritage, enrich even more the nations in which they live, and guide future generations towards new heights.



DAY 1 OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS

October 3, 2026

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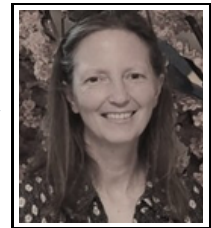
Day 1 EMCEE - Gurjit Kaur Bains



Gurjit Kaur Bains is a lawyer, educator, mediator, and community leader whose work spans education, dispute resolution, healthcare governance, and public service. She holds an LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School and brings extensive experience in legal education, mediation, equity-focused practice, and organizational leadership. Gurjit contributes to several healthcare and community advisory bodies, including Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Medicine and William Osler Health System, bringing community, patient, and equity perspectives to institutional decision-making. With more than three decades of community service, her interests centre on access to justice, education, equity, culturally responsive practice, and strengthening the connection between institutions and the communities they serve.

Day 1 Opening Remarks - Dr. Michelle Rhodes

Dr. Rhodes is an experienced educator, curriculum specialist, and academic consultant with over 25 years of experience in post-secondary education. She holds a PhD in Education/Curriculum Studies and has served as an Associate Professor, Instructor, and consultant at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). Her expertise includes curriculum development, program review, and academic quality assurance. As an External Academic Member of GNI's Academic Council, she has contributed significantly to the development and review of GNI's proposed Bachelor of Arts, Major in Sikh Studies.



Day 1 Closing Remarks - Dr. Roselene Dhaliwal



Dr. Dhaliwal is an inclusion and health promotion practitioner, educator and scholar. Her professional practice over the last 20 years spans health care, community and academic settings within Greater Vancouver, British Columbia. As faculty member of Arts and Social Sciences with Simon Fraser University, she developed and continues to teach a course on cultural humility. As the inaugural Director, Equity and Inclusion with the Canadian Mental Health Association British Columbia Division, Dr. Dhaliwal embeds equity and social justice into the organization's vision of 'a Canada where everyone can realize their human right to their best possible mental health.' As a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory, she introduces this assessment into her teaching and professional practice. Dr. Dhaliwal is an advocate for inclusion, creating vibrant, collaborative learning and working communities in all her roles.

Day 1 Evening EMCEE - Dr. Ranbir Kaur Banwait

Dr. Banwait is a researcher and educator. She has a PhD in Asian Diasporic Studies from Simon Fraser University. Her specialization includes gender studies and histories of immigration and citizenship in Canada. Dr. Banwait's current research explores affect and embodiment in Asian Canadian literature. She has taught English at Columbia College and Communications at the University of the Fraser Valley.





DAY 2 OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS

October 4, 2026

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Day 2 EMCEE - Aman Singh Hundal



Mr. Hundal is a senior health leader who is passionate about improving the healthcare system. Born and raised in a small rural community in northern British Columbia, Aman quickly learned the challenges faced by rural communities with respect to health care services, particularly the impact of the social determinants of health on a population. He has worked for Northern Health, Interior Health and the Doctors of BC, in British Columbia. Aman Singh has led teams facilitating system-wide transformation and has experience managing provincial programs in a collaborative partnership with multiple stakeholders. Aman holds a BCom with a double major in Management and Finance, along with an MBA in Human Resources and Management and has attained his Financial Management Advisor designation.

Day 2 Opening Remarks - Dr. Satpal Singh

Dr. Singh is Professor Emeritus of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the State University of New York at Buffalo. His research focused on understanding and combating neurodegenerative diseases, and he previously ran an annual summer-long research program at Cambridge University, UK. Dr. Singh is a 1984 Sikh genocide survivor. He is a founding trustee of the Sikh Council for Interfaith Relations, a key promoter of interfaith harmony, and represented Sikhi in many forums including delivering a prayer on peace and harmony along with Pope Francis. Dr. Singh is a regular Op-Ed writer for the Washington Post and the Huffington Post.



Day 2 Closing Remarks - Dr. Kamaljit Kaur Sidhu



Dr. Sidhu has over 35 years of experience across education, counselling psychology, academic leadership, advocacy, and community service. She began her career in education in 1987 and completed her Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia in 2000. Her academic experience spans undergraduate teaching and research-assistant work at UBC, SSHRC-supported doctoral research, and a doctoral internship with SFU Health Services. Her work reflects a longstanding commitment to diversity, mental health, professional collaboration, and the wellbeing of youth, families, and communities. She has served on government-appointed and professional committees and held leadership roles with the British Columbia Psychological Association, including as President and through sustained involvement with its Diversity Committee. At GNI, she serves as Vice-President Academic, a member of the Board of Directors, and Academic Co-Chair of the International Sikh Research Summit 2026.



SUMMIT DINNER AND DISTINGUISHED GUEST

October 3, 2026

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Fireside Chat Distinguished Guest - The Honourable Baltej Singh Dhillon, Senator



Senator Baltej Singh Dhillon is a retired career police officer, a community leader, and a lifelong advocate for diversity and inclusion. Emigrating from Malaysia in 1983, Senator Dhillon made history in 1991 as the first Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer to wear a turban, advocating for the right to practice his faith while serving Canada. He went on to have a successful 35+ year career with the RCMP as an accomplished major crime investigator, police interrogator, polygraph examiner, intelligence officer, and emergency planner.

Senator Dhillon also held various leadership roles, including overseeing the British Columbia RCMP Divisional Emergency Operations Centre and the federal Serious and Organized Crime's Intelligence section as well as establishing and managing intelligence operations at the Provincial Intelligence Centre of British Columbia (now the Real-Time Operations Centre of British Columbia), the first of its kind in Canada.

Senator Dhillon serves on various committees and has led youth camps. He has received numerous distinctions and awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from The Times of Canada, the King's Coronation Medal, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal, the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award, and a host of other community accolades celebrating his service and leadership.

Fireside Chat Moderator - Neesha Kaur Hothi

Neesha Hothi is a cultural advocate and creative sector strategist recognized as one of Canada's leading voices in entertainment brand storytelling and cultural representation. For over two decades, she has championed cultural fluency, diversity, and inclusion, building the scaffolding that ensures underrepresented voices are seen, heard, and celebrated. In 2025, she was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for outstanding community leadership and was a finalist for the Surrey Board of Trade Women in Business Awards.



As Founder & CEO of Neesh Communications, Neesha has led transformative campaigns across arts, culture, and community sectors while continuing to support not-for-profits that preserve and elevate South Asian voices. She is a proud Advisory Board Member of the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies, where she provides strategic communications counsel and has produced three editions of the International Sikh Research Summit, showcasing groundbreaking scholarship from South Asian researchers worldwide.



DAY 1 PRESENTERS

October 3, 2026
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PRESENTATION

Sunia Mania Manu Kita Bhau (Translation: Hearing and Listening, Remembering and Embracing, Passionate and Transformative Loving)

Dr. Sandeep Kaur Glover



Dr. Glover is an educator, scholar, artist, and activist whose interdisciplinary research integrates embodied, arts-based, and decolonial methodologies. A fourth-generation Punjabi-Sikh Canadian, Dr. Kaur Glover recently completed her PhD in Arts Education at SFU. Her research foregrounds Punjabi-Sikh onto-epistemologies and intergenerational lived experiences in cultivating culturally responsive approaches to inter-generational healing, identity development, and social justice activism. Her work has been widely published, and she received the Simon Fraser University's 2026 Dean of Graduate Studies Convocation Medal and the 2026 Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (CACS) ARTS SIG 2026 Doctoral Dissertation Award. Since 2001, she has taught in the B.C. K-12 system, international and community-based education, and higher education. Dr. Kaur Glover's scholarship grows out of formative experiences in a garden with her Babaji (grandfather), who indelibly shaped her reverence for the land and a felt connection through her sensing soles and fingertips.

PRESENTATION

Sovereign State of Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Dr. Anjum Dara



Dr. Dara has been serving in the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Punjab, Pakistan since 2001. He has been Deputy Curator and Curator of Lahore Fort Sikh Heritage Museums from 2001 to 2020, extensively studying Sikh artifacts, particularly the collection of Princess Bamba, daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh and granddaughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. As custodian of the Sikh Heritage Museum, he received and conducted high-profile foreign delegations, particularly from Sikh diaspora communities. As an historian & archaeologist, he has represented his department internationally in Italy, Japan, Korea, China, Turkey, and the USA. For the last four years, he has served at Taxila Museum and supervised Rohtas Fort, Kattas Raj Hindu temples, and Kallar Kahar Museum. He is devoted to preserving and promoting the socio-cultural heritage of Punjab, Pakistan particularly the Khalsa struggle and the ruling period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

PRESENTATION

From Ancestry to Academia: Crossing Paths and Walking Together

Valerie Cross (Chemkwaat)



Valerie Cross is a proud Tsawwassen First Nation citizen whose leadership is grounded in the teachings of her grandparents and the matriarchs who shaped her early years. She currently serves her community as a member of the Tsawwassen Legislature, Executive Councillor, and Squigel (Speaker) of the Legislature. Drawing on two decades of Indigenous governance experience, Valerie has helped advance self-government while fostering community-driven decision-making rooted in respect, trust, and inclusion.



DAY 1 PRESENTERS

October 3, 2026

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PRESENTATION

Future of Higher Education in a Rapidly Changing World

Dr. Zora Singh



Dr. Singh is a visionary educationist, philanthropist, pediatrician and the Founder and Chancellor of Desh Bhagat University in Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab. After serving the community as a pediatrician for 17 years, he devoted himself to education and social development. He established the University in honour of his father, Sardar Lal Singh, a freedom fighter associated with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Under Dr. Singh's leadership, Desh Bhagat University has become a NAAC A+-accredited multidisciplinary institution, offering academic programs through 17 faculties, including medicine, engineering, nursing, law, management, agriculture, and the liberal arts. His work has emphasized accessible education, scholarships for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, women's empowerment, rural employment, affordable healthcare, and campaigns against substance abuse. His leadership reflects a sustained commitment to education, community service, and social responsibility.

PRESENTATION

Alexander, Porus and the Punjabi Resistance: Rethinking the Battle of the Hydaspes

Dr. Tarlochan Singh Nahal

Dr. Nahal is a California-based historian and independent research scholar specializing in Sikh studies and Punjab history. He holds an M.A. in English from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and a Ph.D. in Political Science with doctoral research focused on Miri-Piri and the relationship between religion and politics in Sikhi. He is the author of *Religion and Politics in Sikhism: The Khalsa Perspective* (2011) and the recently published *Alexander the Great's Invasion of India and Battle with King Porus: Battle of the Hydaspes and Punjabi Resistance* (2026). Alongside his historical scholarship, Dr. Nahal has spent four decades working in technical communication in Silicon Valley and has remained actively engaged in Sikh academic conferences, community institutions, and historical research in the United States.





DAY 1 PRESENTERS

October 3, 2026

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PRESENTATION GNI Research Project: Gurbani Arth Milaan

Dr. Gurmail Singh



Dr. Singh is the Head of the Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala, where he earned both his master's degree and Ph.D. in Sikh Studies. A respected scholar in Sikh and religious studies, he has authored four books, edited three others, and presented numerous research papers at national and international conferences. Dr. Singh has supervised the work of multiple graduate and doctoral students and is widely recognized for his contributions to teaching and research. He also serves as the voluntary supervisor of GNI's Gurbani Arth Milaan project.

Dr. Harjinder Singh Sandhu

Distinguished Technologist and Healthcare AI Leader Harjinder Singh Sandhu holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Toronto, is the former CTO, Health and Life Sciences Solutions and Platforms at Microsoft, has served as Assistant Professor of Computer Science at York University in Toronto, as well as acting as a visiting scientist at IBM. He has co-founded three successful startups, centred around AI and healthcare. His most recent startup Saykara which built an AI digital scribe solution, was acquired by Nuance in 2021. He served as VP Technology Strategy at Nuance Communications prior to its acquisition by Microsoft. In his last role at Microsoft, he helped chart Microsoft's strategy around the application of AI in healthcare.



Mandeep Singh Sajjan



Mr. Sajjan is a technology professional with a background in computer science, web development and IT leadership. He studied Computer Science at the University of British Columbia (UBC) before completing the New Media and Web Development program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Mandeep is passionate about using technology to create practical solutions. Mandeep currently serves as Senior IT Manager at Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies. Prior to joining the institute, he spent over 6 years with Apple, working at the Genius Bar and developing extensive experience in technical support, troubleshooting, and customer service.



DAY 1 PRESENTERS

October 3, 2026
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YOUTH TALKS TED Talks Format

The International Sikh Research Summit Youth Talks 2026 provides a platform for young leaders, innovators, and changemakers to share fresh perspectives with an international academic audience. Inspired by the TED Talk format, it fosters meaningful dialogue on Sikh identity, research, leadership, education, innovation, and community development. Reflecting the Summit's theme, "Curiosity Becomes Scholarship. Voices Become Impact," Youth Talks empowers young minds to turn curiosity into inquiry, amplify their voices, and inspire positive change in Sikh scholarship and community leadership.



Gurmehar Singh Sandhu

Electrical Engineering Student
British Columbia Institute
of Technology



Jasmine Rehal

Biophysics Student
University of British Columbia

FOCUSED SESSION Role of Artificial Intelligence in Global Post-Secondary Education

Dr. Sarabjot Singh Anand

Dr. Anand is Co-founder and Chief Data Scientist at Tatra Data, where he has spent over a decade delivering production AI systems for enterprise clients across telecoms, financial services, retail and the public sector. He is also Co-founder of the Sabudh Foundation, which trains students in AI/ML and partners with government, non-profits and universities. He brings a rare dual vantage point to the question of AI in education. Before industry, he spent fifteen years in academia, as associate professor at the University of Warwick, senior lecturer at the University of Ulster, and director of Computer Science at BML Munjal University. He holds a PhD in Computer Science and has published over 90 papers in data mining and personalization.



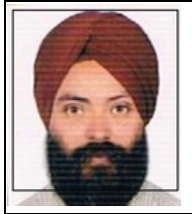


DAY 2 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

October 4, 2026
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SIKH ORGANIZATIONS Where have we been?

Dr. Gurmail Singh



Dr. Singh is the Head of the Department of Religious Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala, where he earned both his master's degree and Ph.D. in Sikh Studies. A respected scholar in Sikh and religious studies, he has authored four books, edited three others, and presented numerous research papers at national and international conferences. Dr. Singh has supervised the work of multiple graduate and doctoral students and is widely recognized for his contributions to teaching and research. He also serves as the voluntary supervisor of GNI's Gurbani Arth Milaan project.

SIKH ORGANIZATIONS Where are we now? Where are we going?

Santbir Singh



Mr. Singh is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at York University. His academic research examines Sikh activism and the relationship between Sikhi and anarchism, with a particular focus on historical and contemporary social movements, including the 2020 – 2021 Kisan Morcha (Farmers' Protests). With over twenty years of experience as an educator and community activist, Santbir has worked in Sikh education, leadership development, and social advocacy. His research looks at Sikh views on social justice, feminism, decolonization, and community empowerment. He is also a facilitator and alumnus of Sidak, SikhRI's leadership development program, where he continues to mentor and support emerging Sikh leaders.

PRESENTATION Guru Nanak Institute to Guru Nanak University Vision

Gian Singh Sandhu



Gian Singh is the President and CEO of Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies (GNI), guiding its long-term academic and institutional development and vision for Guru Nanak University in Canada, subject to regulatory approvals. An author, academic, and enterprise strategist, he previously served as President and CEO of a group of forest companies in British Columbia. His extensive contributions to social, cultural, and professional organizations, along with his service on regional, provincial, and national advisory boards, have earned him the Order of British Columbia.



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RAPID FIRE PRESENTATIONS Prominent Sikh Organizations

Blood Donation by Sikh Nation.....Jastej Kaur



Sikh Nation is one of the Canadian Blood Services' largest contributors to the pledge-based Partners for Life program. Together, their volunteers are playing a vital role in ensuring Canada's national system for blood and other life essentials reflects our country's cultural mosaic.



Basics of Sikhi Harman Singh



Basics of Sikhi is an education campaign which utilizes YouTube, printed material and social media to spread Guru's wisdom. In addition, the team works to promote the Sikh faith by hiring speakers to teach at various religious and educational institutions across the world.



The Sikh Coalition Harjot Singh



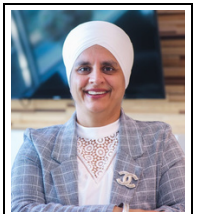
The Sikh Coalition is a national community-based organization with offices and staff in New York City, California, Washington D.C., and Chicago with over one hundred volunteer community advocates working to protect Sikh civil rights across the United States. The Sikh Coalition is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization.



Khalsa Centre Miracle Valley Sundeep Kaur



Khalsa Centre is an organization that provides exceptional experiences for children, teens, and adults, where they encounter a vibrant Sikh community in the beauty of the natural world. We teach our campers to thrive and provide the tools needed to navigate their world through relevant faith experiences. We develop valuable, intelligent, talented and confident people who bring Sikhism back into their homes and communities.





DAY 2 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

October 4, 2026
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Khalis Foundation..... Inderpreet Singh



Khalis Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness of Sikh culture and lifestyle through various services such as media, apps and books. Khalis provides resources to Sikhs around the world through technology and media. Their goal is to serve and inspire the whole of humanity by spreading the teachings of our Gurus to the masses.



Khalsa Credit Union Hardeep Singh Bains



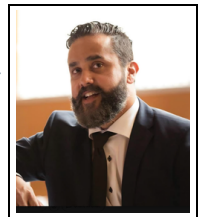
Khalsa Credit Union was established to provide financial services that empower British Columbia's Sikh community. Guided by Sikh values and a commitment to doing what is right, the credit union brings together like-minded individuals dedicated to supporting their members, employees, community, and the planet.



Guru Nanak Free Kitchen Balkaran Singh



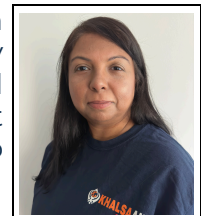
Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen was founded by like-minded individuals who wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the Lower Mainland. With the basic principle of Sikhism, "Sarbat da Bhala", the organization established its motto as "Love All Feed All" and began serving cooked meals for those in need.



Khalsa Aid Baljit Kaur



Khalsa Aid is a non-profit humanitarian organization that provides disaster relief, actively supports refugees, and tirelessly works to aid communities globally. Founded in 1999, it operates under the principle of selfless service, no matter who you are.





DAY 2 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

October 4, 2026
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World Sikh Organization Upinder Singh Dhindsa



The World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) promotes and protects the interests of Sikhs in Canada and around the world and advocates for the protection of human rights for all. They engage in media and government relations across Canada to ensure the Sikh narrative, identity and lived experiences are articulated, understood and respected.



SikhRi (Research) Bhavraj Singh Ghtaura



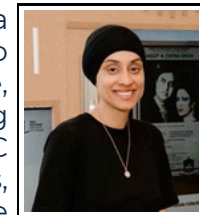
SikhRI is a global non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational resources on Sikhi through courses, events, and engaging content. Rooted in the Guru Granth Sahib's paradigm of IkOankar, SikhRI encourages individuals to explore Sikh thought and teachings and to develop a deeper understanding of Sikhi.



Sikh National Archives Rapinder Kaur



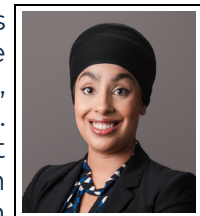
The Sikh National Archives of Canada (SNAC) is a registered non-profit organization committed to preserving and sharing the rich history, literature, and cultural heritage of Sikhs. Through a growing digital platform and physical collection, SNAC safeguards rare books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, and oral histories that reflect the lived experiences of Sikh communities in Canada and beyond.



Sikh Heritage Month Mohnaam Kaur Shergill



In 2013, history was made when April was proclaimed Sikh Heritage Month by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario through Bill 52, making it the first of its kind worldwide. Celebrating Sikh arts, culture, and heritage, it brings diverse communities together through annual cultural events and collaborations with public institutions, artists, and over 20 community partners.



Alberta Advance Academy Jagvinder Singh Sidhu



Alberta Advance Academy is a university-preparatory charter school fostering academic excellence, character development, and community service while promoting integrity, compassion, equality, and inclusivity. It welcomes students from all religions and communities and prepares them for responsible, purposeful lives.





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October 4, 2026
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PANEL DISCUSSION Gurduara: Evolving Role and Sangat Needs

Moderator - Dr. Satvir Singh

Dr. Singh is a distinguished educator and researcher specializing in international business, organizational behaviour and law. Holding a Ph.D. from the University of Texas El Paso, an MBA from Willamette University and a law degree from Punjabi University, his profound understanding of global complexities is multi-dimensional. Noteworthy for his instruction and mentorship, Dr. Singh significantly influences academia through his numerous publications and presentations.



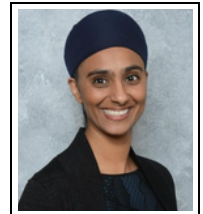
Panelist - Dr. Daljeet Singh



Dr. Singh is a respected scholar in Punjabi literature and Sikh religious studies, known for his dedication to Sikh education and spiritual service. He has earned an M.A. in Religious Studies, an M.Phil. in Philosophy, and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Punjabi University, Patiala. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 2011, focused on Mysticism in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, with special emphasis on Bhagat Bani Rahaswad, exploring the inner spiritual journey and mystical insights conveyed through their bani.

Panelist - Dr. Jasvir Kaur

Dr. Kaur brings a rich perspective on gender, institutional leadership, and community resilience to the International Sikh Research Summit panel. As the former Religious Secretary for the Palatine Gurdwara, she offers firsthand insight into navigating female leadership within traditional governance structures. Her commitment to institutional equity and community health is reflected in her role as a board member of the Sikh Family Center and as a contributing author in Kaur's Reimagine.



Panelist - Giani Jasbir Singh



Giani Jasbir Singh is a Sikh researcher, educator, author, and Head Granthi who earned an MA in Punjabi from Guru Nanak Dev University in 1986 and has served as Head Granthi at the Akali Singh Sikh Society in Vancouver since January 1987. He has published two books on Gurbani, written over 150 educational tracts on Sikhi, hosted the Gurbani Vichar program on Sher-E-Punjab Radio for five years, and currently shares Gurbani teachings through his YouTube channel, Eh(u) Hamara Jivana.

Panelist - Avtar Singh Malhi

Mr. Malhi is a skilled Canadian professional with a strong background in industrial maintenance, engineering, safety leadership, education, and community service. He works as a Red Seal Journeyman Industrial Mechanic (Millwright) with West Fraser Mills Ltd. in Williams Lake, British Columbia, since 2020. He has served as Safety Co-Chair on the West Fraser Plant Safety Committee since 2021. Avtar holds a Master of Technology in Electronics & Communication Engineering from Shri Guru Granth Sahib World University and a Bachelor of Technology from Punjab Technical University.





DAY 2 PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

October 4, 2026

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Open Discussion:
Working Together for Sarbat da Bhala
(Rapid-Fire Sikh Organizations and Gurduaras)

Co-Facilitator - Gurjit Kaur Bains

Gurjit Kaur Bains is a lawyer, educator, mediator, and community leader whose work spans education, dispute resolution, healthcare governance, and public service. She holds an LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School and brings extensive experience in legal education, mediation, equity-focused practice, and organizational leadership. Gurjit contributes to several healthcare and community advisory bodies, including Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Medicine and William Osler Health System, bringing community, patient, and equity perspectives to institutional decision-making. With more than three decades of community service, her interests centre on access to justice, education, equity, culturally responsive practice, and strengthening the connection between institutions and the communities they serve.



Co-Facilitator - Major (Ret'd) Jasbeer Singh



Major (Ret'd) Jasbeer Singh is a veteran officer of the Army Corps of Engineers, with a diverse background in engineering, commerce, information technology, business planning, and project management. After moving to Canada in the mid-1970s, he built his professional career in the telecommunications and technology sectors and served on civic and provincial boards. A long-standing community leader, he co-founded the Sikh Federation of Edmonton and served as Vice - President of the WSO (World Sikh Organization) of Canada. He also brings considerable experience in print publications, public communication, and grassroots community initiatives. Now retired, Major Singh remains enthusiastically engaged with the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies, contributing to its institutional development and providing valuable guidance and support to several of GNI's major research initiatives.



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The Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies (GNI) is a non-profit teaching and research institute established in Canada. With an advisory team of over 200 international academics and professionals, GNI aims to research and expand the understanding of the Sikh ethos from an academic perspective, striving for the co-existence of Sikhi and cultural diversity through research, education and service.

The GNI vision is to create a university comparable to the world's leading educational institutions. GNI is committed to the values of humanity, equality, equity, justice, compassion, open dialogue, spiritual revolution, lifelong learning, and emancipatory teaching that are synonymous with the name Guru Nanak (the revealer of Sikhi).

Guru Nanak Institute Of Global Studies
Celebrating cultural diversity and a spirit of co-existence through research, education and service.

WWW.GURUNANAKINSTITUTE.CA



ABOUT GNI

Learn more about the Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies.
www.gurunanakainstitute.ca

The Guru Nanak Institute of Global Studies (GNI) is a non-profit foundation. GNI was founded in 2021 by prominent leaders from the Canadian Sikh community, the largest outside of India, to commemorate Guru Nanak's 550th anniversary. Today, the global Sikh population exceeds 28 million (the fifth largest religious faith), of which over 750,000 call Canada home.

- GNI's founders currently form the institution's Board of Directors and are supported by an Advisory Board, made up of academics and professionals, as well as an Academic Board composed of educators and researchers from countries around the world, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. GNI is proud to host:
- A faculty comprised of globally based university professors from a variety of fields and disciplines, with strong representation from British Columbia's post-secondary institutions.
- A staff that reflects the composition of the community it serves and that of our student body.
- A diverse and inclusive student body comprised of domestic learners from British Columbia and Canada as well as international learners from the global community.
- Research scholars from around the world.

OUR GOALS

- Provide a world-class infrastructure and academic environment for research and teaching on Sikh philosophy, history, literature, culture, and devotional music in an interdisciplinary manner.
- Establish partnerships with accredited, public secondary and post-secondary institutions to offer for-credit courses, evolving into micro-credential programs and then to diplomas and certificates, ultimately becoming a degree-granting institution accredited by the Province of British Columbia.
- Support independent applied research on topics relating to Sikhs, Sikhi, and other related fields, where researchers are provided with an environment of complete academic freedom, unconstrained by GNI or outside influences.
- Enable educational research that is focused on curriculum development and assessment, the evaluation and implementation of tools for teaching and learning, as well as educational technologies and methodologies.
- Ensure equal and open access to all prospective students by alleviating funding and other financial barriers.
- Support ground-breaking research projects and student scholarships.



OUR PROGRAMS

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Our courses are approved by the Private Training Institutions Regulatory Unit (PTIRU) of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, British Columbia

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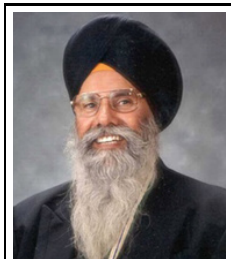


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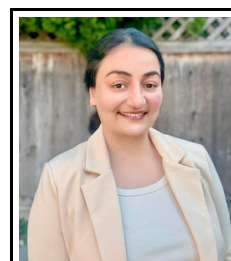
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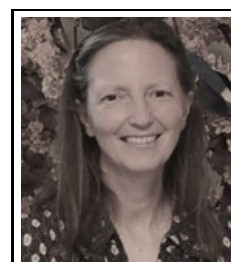
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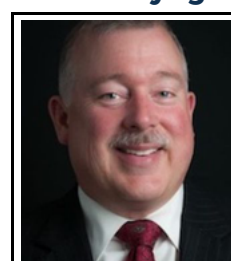
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Inaugural International Sikh Research Summit

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Sky Is the Limit

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*Strategic Planning Advisor, GNI
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Dr. Alastair Summerlee



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Dr. Manjeet Kaur Ramgotra



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Dr. Muninder Kaur Ahluwalia



The Personal is Professional:
My journey as a Sikh scholar

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Counseling, Montclair State University*

Dr. Harjinder Singh Sandhu



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