

## #thebigstory Guru Nanak 550<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary

When the University of Birmingham was offered the opportunity to welcome over 15,000 visitors over a five-day event, 'yes' was the only possible answer.

Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) is a Sikh organisation based in Birmingham. Their charitable work extends to Kenya and India, as well as continuous efforts to improve inter-faith relationships nationally and internationally. The 550th birth anniversary of the first Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, is a key moment in their calendar – and it was a privilege to host them here on campus.



### Transformation

Campus transformed into a bustling hive of activity, with the largest ever network of marquees on the lawns of Chancellor's Court for a Darbar hall (main prayer hall), a Keertan Darbar (hymn hall), several exhibitions, washing space and shoe racks, and a creche. Marquees also provided dining, kitchen and storage space for Langar, a free vegetarian meal from the Guru's Kitchen available to every visitor.



## Teamwork

Teams across HAS united to bring the event to life, alongside the 50 volunteers who cooked, washed up and served in the Langar, directed visitors, and shared their knowledge. The Conferences & events team coordinated the event, working with Estates to ensure correct siting, and access to campus for the marquee providers. Security staff met with the GNNSJ volunteers and police to develop an event safety plan, ensuring every eventuality had been prepared for. The Bramall's in-house AV team laid cable to provide power, and supported the formal evening event in the Great Hall.

“It has truly been a pleasure and a wonderful experience to have worked so closely with the University of Birmingham’s Conferences & events Team over the last few weeks. Throughout the planning and delivery of the five-day celebratory event marking the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the UoB staff worked side by side with Nishkam volunteers to ensure the smooth delivery and success of all aspects of the event.”

*Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha*

Particular thanks must go to the **Security** team who managed a challenging situation swiftly with diplomacy and sensitivity, drawing on the relationships they had built with all involved; and to Sally Badham-Lee in the **Conferences & events** team, who managed the event.



Visitors to the event came from all over the UK, Kenya, India, America, Canada and the EU.

This University is an institution dedicated to acquiring new knowledge. It's fair to say that everyone who attended took away a deeper understanding of what the Sikh Dharam means.

*"We feel deeply indebted and humbled by the care, compassion and inclusiveness afforded by everyone who worked tirelessly to meet and exceed our expectations on this auspicious occasion. With heartfelt thanks and gratitude to you all."*

*Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha*



**3,000 MEALS SERVED EVERY DAY**



**7 PALLETS OF FRUIT**



**25,000 CHAPATTIS LAID END-TO-END, THE DISTANCE FROM CAMPUS TO ASTON**



**15,000 VISITORS ENOUGH TO (ALMOST) FILL THE RESORTS WORLD ARENA**



**22 PALLETS OF VEGETABLES**