The last quarter of the year was comprised of intense infrastructure development, project documentation & evaluation and formation of future strategies. Also, the Trust made significant progress in streamlining daily operations. Nānakshāhī Trust hopes to move forward into the coming years with a committed volunteer support staff, a strong organizational base and a regular inflow of donor funds.

Looking back at the commencement of the project Virsā in 2003, Nānakshāhī has come a long way. Starting with a single workstation with only one employee, we have grown into a complete full time team working with institutions across the globe. We have constantly acquired new equipment to support this incredible project. Nearly 8,50,000 folios have been digitized to date, including manuscripts, rare books, pictures, magazines, newspapers, etc. We have set a target of digitizing 10,00,000 folios for the upcoming year. Although this is quite an aggressive goal, it will be possible with the help of committed supporters like you.

"Nānak established the dominion by raising the fort of truth on firm foundations"
-Gurū Granth Sāhib, p. 966

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”
- Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

Helping you preserve your manuscripts

Digitization

Pañjāb Virsā Digitization Initiative

Project Virsā has been renamed as Pañjāb Virsā Digitization Initiative (PVDI). This Initiative is a new statewide collaborative, established to define priorities needed to increase awareness and access to the unique and historically significant special collections scattered in the region. Currently, these important cultural items reside in different areas of the state such as villages, private collections, libraries, archives and museums. Most of these items are accessible only to
Vice Chancellor, and Mr. RD Mehla, librarian of Jawahar Lal Nehru Library for making this project a success. The University’s Dean, Dr. G. Khurana while explaining the digitization project to eminent personalities at the Manuscript Day function said “hamāri university ke upar Nānak sahāi gae hain”. Currently, the University has placed a request to the PVDI team to digitize an additional 6500 manuscripts and 1500 rare books. This project is pending funding approval. A noteworthy recognition of Nānakshāhī’s effort has been fully detailed on the Kurūkshetrā University’s website.

Those who can visit the site in person. Digital preservation holds enormous possibilities not only to preserve our cultural heritage but also to showcase the varied and fascinating history of the Pañjāb region. PVDI is crafting a vision to bring the documentary history and artifacts of Pañjāb to life. This new digital life will increase awareness and access to these important cultural items. This Initiative proposes to include interested individuals and institutions wanting to increase the statewide collaboration for project assistance, and expand access to their specialized collections. The project will include public libraries. A focus group of public librarians are invited to join the PVDI team to share their experiences and expertise concerning preservation and digitization of special collections. We are also willing to assist members of the focus group who would like to digitize their private collections on their own. For more information please send inquiries via email to info@pvdi.org

We successfully digitized over 2,250 manuscripts including:
The Gurū Granth Sāhib dated back to 1653, inscriptions of Gurū Gobind Singh ji and Gurū Tegh Bahādur Sāhib, Bhagyat Purān in Gurmukhī, Persian manuscripts, Arabic works such as Korān Sharīf, and 328 manuscripts of Shārdā Script. Important books include Map of Hindoostan (1708), Sketch of the Sikhs (1812), Bhagvat Gītā (1866). We were successful in converting over 75,000 pages (books, magazines & newspapers) into a searchable format. We have also digitized over 160 hours of historical interviews and 2000 rare photographs.

Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh organized a special function to recognize services of the Nānakshāhī trust for digitizing the Gallery’s manuscript collection. The function was presided over by Dr Man Singh Nirankari and Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, Governor of Tāmil Nādu, as the chief guest.

**Digitization Standards & Procedures**

The daunting task of digitization can be quite complex when done correctly as large-scale projects typically involve digitizing millions of documents. Complexities include handling fragile and handwritten documents, multiple column formats, different size documents and various types of content such as pictures, tables, charts and graphics. Faced with these challenges, PVDI independently developed its benchmarks over the past four years, while bearing in mind the latest technological trends and guidelines set in the international digital world. PVDI has developed standards for digitization through digital cameras, their settings and lighting system apart from the quality criteria. A comprehensive manual of this has been developed. This document outlines digitization standards and procedures that have been implemented in the project. Digitization in the broad sense means the complete processing that covers image capture, image analysis, (which includes checking, cropping, skewing, watermarking), text recognition, and so forth. This manual was developed after in-depth study of documents from leading organizations such as International Council of Archives (ICA), International Institute of Conservation (IIC), International Standards Organization (ISO), Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA International) and Association of Image and Information Management (AIIM)

**Pañjāb Languages Department**

In June, the Trust initiated digitization of the entire collection of 604 manuscripts of the Pañjāb Languages Department. The collection was of a formidable size, 2,70,000 folios. The project concluded in January. The trust has also undertaken to digitize the huge collection of the department’s rare books section. This project was made successful by the efforts of Mr. Mohan Ram Banga, Director, and Mr. Chetan Singh, Deputy Director amongst others. Their foresight has

**Kurūkshetrā University**

Nānakshāhī Trust partnered with Kurūkshetrā University and did a pilot project for the University. Here we digitized over 430 manuscripts in five different scripts. We are grateful to Prof. RP Hooda, Vice Chancellor, and Mr. RD Mehla, librarian of Jawahar Lal Nehru Library for making this project a success. The University’s Dean, Dr. G. Khurana while explaining the digitization project to eminent personalities at the Manuscript Day function said “...hamāri university ke upar Nānak sahāi gae bain”. Currently, the University has placed a request to the PVDI team to digitize an additional 6500 manuscripts and 1500 rare books. This project is pending funding approval. A noteworthy recognition of Nānakshāhī’s effort has been fully detailed on the Kurūkshetrā University’s website.
put the department on the world map. A full fledged Digital Library will be made functional at their Patiala office. Department will convince others to get their collections digitized to enrich their collection. In near future department will make its digital collection online.

Chief Khalsa Diwan

PVDI successfully finished the digitization of 29 manuscripts in their possession. A great number of the items were quite old and precious, creating nearly 37,000 folios. Nankanwahi will compile all digitized manuscripts into a Digital Library that will be made functional at their headquarters in Sri Amritsar jio. S. Bhag Singh ji Ankhi has assured us that Chief Khalsa Diwan will continue to work in coordination with Nankanwahi to get more manuscripts digitized. Nankanwahi will soon take up digitization of historical records that have been generated in the course of Chief Khalsa Diwan’s hundred year history.

Future Projects

Permission to digitize manuscripts and books from the collection of Dr. Trilochan Singh has been granted by S. Anurag Singh. Mr. Singh is also helping PVDI to acquire additional manuscripts for digitization from various locations.

Permission to digitize 135 manuscripts in collection of Jathedar Dalip Singh ji has been granted. Work will soon start at Mallu Nangal, his native village.

Proposals for digitization have also been submitted to Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Khalsa College, Sri Amritsar, Panjabis Sahit Academy and Panjabis Archives Department. We hope to begin digitization with these institutions as soon as permission is granted.

Nankanwahi will launch Panjabis Virsa Online Catalogue(PVOC) containing bibliographic records of Books, Manuscripts, Magazines, Newspapers, maps, photographs, and other significant cultural materials relevant to Panjab this year. This will help promote shared use of records and library resources. Users can discover relevant written literature online and thus increase their visibility and accessibility. This would make the task of promotion of books much easier. Authors, publishers or readers, everybody will benefit from it. Many users accessing PVOC will be delighted to learn that materials are held by a nearby library, to which they can travel in order to use the material. PVOC will be enriched by the inclusion of rare materials, even if the holding library has no intention of lending it. Scholars are usually willing to travel considerable distances for the privilege of examining rare materials on site, now they will know beforehand the location of a particular book. User will just have to enter keywords or phrases in the search box and the website will find all the books whose contents match the search criteria.

Wide and varied in genre, this exhaustive catalogue would benefit all classes of scholars and academicians who wish to study the ethos of the land of Panjab thru diverse recorded sources with quick and easy access; may it be history, philosophy, religion, folk, art, culture or sciences.

We hope to make about 1,00,000 bibliographic records online this year; metadata of over 30,000 books in Gurmukhi script has already been created. Search engines for this website are being developed in collaboration with a Chandigarh based company. Interested volunteers are welcome to work on this historical project.

All Public & private libraries, Historical societies, Government departments, Religious institutions and Universities are invited to participate in this project.

Research and Development

Personal Digital Library

Developed a software meant for viewing presentations of digitized manuscripts, independent of any photo viewing software, keeping in mind viewing needs particular to manuscripts research, such as general browsing, going to a particular page, metadata viewing etc. Thirteen additional software and automation tools have been developed for smooth operation of the project.

Virsa Audio File Size Calculator

Before converting an analog file to a digital format one must determine just how BIG those files will be and how much storage space will be required. When we convert an analog to digital format (mp3), it is difficult for us to know about the size of digital file, as we can digitize an analog file in many formats. We developed this tool for digital audio conversion projects to determine the ultimate file sizes of their encoded media.

Digitization Platforms

Specialized worktables have been developed for digitizing newspapers, books, magazines and unbound documents. Glasses on top are used to remove creases thus resulting in high quality images.

Heritage Acquired

We have acquired a huge newspaper collection from different sources, which include The Indian Express, Tribune, Akali Patrika, Ajit, Hind Samachar and Jag BanI from 1961 to 2006. All the newspapers are being sorted according to date, month and issue wise. With active support of Dr. Kuldip Singh, almost all the issues of The Sikh Review since 1960 have been collected. Sant Sipahi and some other rare magazines since 1960 have been collected.
Conclusion

Nānakshāhī thanks all its supporters for their continuous commitment to preserve the heritage of Pañjāb. Nānakshāhī needs your invaluable time and monetary assistance to advance towards realizing its vision at an effective pace. We seek your inputs on the ‘Perceptions, Possibilities, and Practicalities of our mission. Nānakshāhī wishes to write new chapters in the coming years, in its effort to preserve our heritage.

Administration

During the initial period last year, Nānakshāhī took a crucial decision to go public to support and further its projects through funding. It introduced annual memberships for interested individuals and corporate houses. Since then, Nānakshāhī has been trying to organize promotional events to increase public involvement. Rallying for the cause, Nānakshāhī held a series of meetings and awareness campaigns later in the year. With a good amount of accomplishments to the credit, we found it well placed to review our achievement to date and place it before the appreciative public for their appraisal, and support.

In January, Nānakshāhī rented a new facility with larger space to accommodate its increasing work activity and staff. Here we will expand our operations in areas we were previously unable to due to space constraints. Amongst others are setting up of three separate in-house studios for digitization of manuscripts, books, and newspapers. Separate lighting systems, apart from specially designed tables to cater to the specific needs of respective digitization studios were also acquired. The Trust added two 10MP cameras and five new employees.

Nānakshāhī was successful in training 7 volunteers for image capturing. We are happy to report that 2 new volunteers joined Nānakshāhī in this period. One is a Professional Archivist and other is a Research Professor. We welcome them to our team consisting of 32 volunteers and 7 employees. During the next quarter, the team needs an IT Professional and a part time Editor. If you or someone you know is interested in these positions please contact our office.

Library

Currently we have 3153 books in our library! We are also collecting old periodicals for the library. Furthermore, we are looking for some copies of The Sikh Review, Parakh, Journal of Sikh Studies, Sant Sipāhī, Gurmāt Parkāsh and Seminar. For the list of needed volumes please contact us at our head office.

1946 have been acquired. SGPC resolutions since 1932 are among few others.

Fifteen manuscripts including seven copies of Gurū Granth Sāhib have been donated to the Trust by its supporters. Seven manuscripts were gifted by S. Kamaljeet Singh of Dasuyā, five manuscripts of Gurū Granth Sāhib were gifted by Mahant Shiv Rao Singh of Dharamkot and one was gifted by Dr. Surinder Singh. We thank them for their faith in our services and continued support. All these manuscripts will be scientifically preserved and displayed in a museum later.

Visit us online at www.nanakshahi.org

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Revealing the invisible heritage of Pañjāb