



# JAN 2021

## Sangh Mail

**Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan**



Sangh Mail is an internal organizational publication and for well-wishers to keep them informed on recent updates and news on a monthly basis. It is not for public distribution. Please continue to send in your news and views related to your shakhas / Swayamsevaks/ Sevikas/ for wider sharing and inspiration at [sanghmail@hssuk.org](mailto:sanghmail@hssuk.org)

## CHELTENHAM BALAGOKULAM

During the pandemic, we celebrated all Hindu festivals in our online BG sessions. I learnt more detail about the Hindu festivals with a good explanation. Regarding those festival's art & craft activities, I thoroughly enjoyed making Ganpati out of clay and other things that taught me religious values. While reading amrut vachan, it built up my confidence to speak loudly and clearly. The positivity of vachan gave us good energy during the hard times. I loved the opportunity to lead a Niyudh session because it gave me an opportunity to lead a group, it helped my self-discipline and have a good attitude towards others. Also, I wanted to teach something that I am very good at.

**VIRAAJ MODI, AGED 10**

This year I missed school most of the time but I learnt many new things, more about online meetings through our Balagokulam sessions, for example I did not know about zoom meetings where more people can gather online. I learnt about kahoot quiz which I really enjoy and find it very interesting. I can now lead e-Khels confidently!

**VIR SRIVASTAVA, AGED 8**

Lockdown was a very interesting time. Balagokulam has played a very important part in lockdown. We started to conduct weekly sessions every Sunday to end our week on a refreshing note. We'd also been lucky to participate in many celebrations and festivals such as Guru Poornima with the whole vibhaag or Raksha Bandhan with the local emergency and community services. What made this experience even more amazing was that Zoom meetings allowed adhikaris and special guests from over the country to attend our sessions and they gave many inspiring and motivating bauddhiks. To summarise, BG and Shakha was one of those things that made lockdown a positive experience.

**SWAYAMSEWAK, AGED 15**

During lockdown I have lead khels and warmups and I have also taken a few art and craft sessions for example making rakhis out of coloured papers and string. It has really boosted my confidence; I can now speak clearly and loudly in front of many people. For the past few sessions. I have been a mukhya shikshak. It has been a privilege and it has developed my leadership qualities.

**AARIKA SAHDEV, AGED 12**

When the lockdown started in March, it was very difficult because we couldn't go out. But every weekend there was Balagokulam and I really enjoyed the khels and warm-ups. It is a great way of learning about Hindu cultures and how it compares to our life today. I learnt of new information from the Kahoot quizzes and also learned how to make one myself. Niyudh is a good way of learning self-defence. I could see lots of friends online because of Balagokulam on Sundays. I also enjoyed making the Hindu temple out of Lego. We also made thank you cards for essential services for Sewa day.

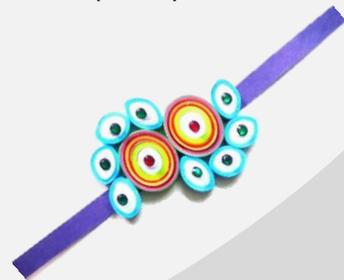
**ATHARVA IYER, AGED 7**

# THE LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCE

To develop the writing skills of children, Cheltenham BG asked their children to write about how Cheltenham BG has engaged and helped them to develop their skills during this period of lockdown



# Kahoot!

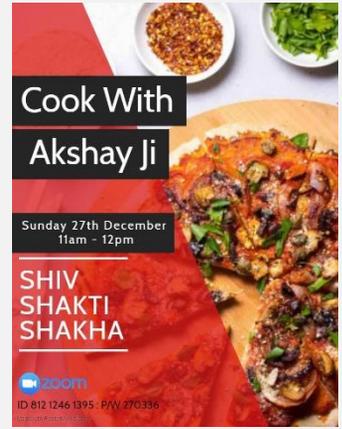


“ To summarise, BG and Shakha was one of those things that made lockdown a positive experience ”

## WELLBEING, STAYING CONNECTED & PITTA PIZZA

Another great initiative from Leicester Nagar and Akshay Mistry (Vibhaag Shareerik Pramukh) who is a keen cook and enjoys experimenting in the kitchen. Over the past two months Akshay ji has organised "Cook with Akshay ji" workshops with Sangh and Samiti on Zoom with Shakhas around Leicester Nagar. A list of ingredients would be sent to to the Shakha and what item was to be made. Previous items include Pancakes with Kunti Samiti Leicester. On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December, Shiv Shakti Pariwar Shakha made delicious Pitta Pizza with families choosing their own variety of toppings with a lovely masala pizza sauce. It was great to see pariwar in the comfort of there kitchen preparing their lunch and having fun. For Leicester Nagar wellbeing is the priority and where we can get families connected, engaged and to have fun within Shakha using cooking is a great idea. Bon Appetit!

**AKSHAY MISTRY, LEICESTER**



## SHINING A LIGHT ON THE UTSAV

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January Shiv Shakti Pariwar Shakha Leicester held it's first Utsav of the year Makar Sankranti. It was a fantastic fun filled morning which consisted of warm up's, yogasan, khel, varshik sabha, guest speaker [Jitenji Davdra] giving bauddhik and a presentation of the new energetic Shakha team for 2021. All this on Zoom participants 33 sankhya 51. More important was the reflection of 2020 through the pandemic and what beneficial changes have come into us. Also the idea of lets be like the kites and fly high in tandem towards the sun. Have high positive thoughts and work together in true Sanghatan.

**RAKESH PATEL, LEICESTER**

## MAKAR SANKRANTI

“ Lets be like the kites and fly high in tandem towards the sun. Have high positive thoughts and work together in true Sanghatan.”

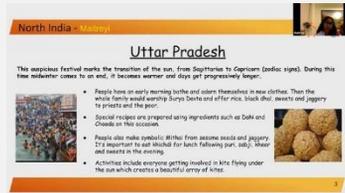


# INSPIRATION

“ an inspiring bauddhik on the message of gratitude during the harvest festival and positives overcoming negatives ”

## READING NAGAR FLYING HIGH

Reading Nagar celebrated Makar Sankranti Utsav on 15<sup>th</sup> Jan with Varshik (annual 2020) review, warmups, sloka, bingo khel, geet, kite making and presentations on different customs and local traditions on how the festival is celebrated in India. Shri Nileshji Solanki (Kendriya Saha Karyawaha) delivered an inspiring bauddhik on the message of gratitude during the harvest festival and positives overcoming negatives. **RAMESH MEPA**



## THE GREAT BIG COOK OFF

Bradford Savitri Mahila's joined together to celebrate the utsav of Makar Sankranti on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Using the 'Chai & Chat' platform where mahilas come together to play khels and have informal conversations about each others wellbeing, we thought it would be an ideal opportunity to hold a cook off. We joined one of our senior Karyakartinis in making Tal Sankri (Chikki). For many of the mahila's it was a first but we all cooked together and in the end shared our results. We welcome you all to join us next year to our Bradford Makar Sankranti utsav where there will be plenty of Tal Sankri (Chikki) to share with friends and family! **BRADFORD MAHILA MILAN TEAM**



## Makar Sankranti Special

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
4.00PM via Zoom

To celebrate the auspicious festival of Makar Sankranti we have decided to learn how to make Tal Sankri/Chikki.

We will be making the dish together, please have the following ingredients ready:

- 1 medium size bowl ROASTED til/sesame seeds
- 1 medium size bowl GRATED gur/gor/jaggery
- 1 teaspoon dry ginger powder- optional
- 2 teaspoon ghee
- Non-stick pan Spatula
- Rolling pin/velan/Belna
- Grease proof/baking paper



# NORTH EAST & SCOTLAND

## MAHILA YOG SHAKHA

The North East and Scotland Vibhag started a bi-weekly Mahila Yog Shakha in the New Year. The first shakha was on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The shakha started with light warm ups including stretches and suryanamaskars. After the warm-up, various asanas, such as Trikonaasan, Parighaasan, Vajaraasan, Bhunaman vajaraasan, Gaumukhaasan and Vakraasan were demonstrated by our shikshika from Leeds Shivaji Shakha and practiced by the mahilas. These asanas are particularly beneficial to women's health and should be practiced on a regular basis. After practicing various asanas all the mahilas did a guided Dhyana (meditation) which helped in relaxation and achieving inner focus, therefore bringing calmness to one self. By the end of the shakha, the mahilas felt refreshed and energised, both physically and mentally. It was a great way to start the weekend and all are looking forward to the next Shakha. The total sankhaya for the first shakha was 58, mahilas joining from all nagars in the vibhag.



# FROM SMALL ACORNS...

“ We can clearly see the positive changes this last year has brought in us swyamsevaks /sevikas. It has instilled a sense of responsibility towards our Samaaj and developed a sense of awareness towards Hindu Dharma.”

## HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY - SHANKARACHARYA SHAKHA

This shakha was only few sessions old when lockdown happened and here we now are celebrating our first Birthday! Apart from running e-shakha consistently since March 2020. We actively joined Vargs and participated in national programs like Raksha Bandhan, Suryanamaskaar Yagna, Parliament week, Sewa Day Food Bank, 3-Peaks Challenge, Vaikhari Pratiyogita and many more such initiatives.

We can clearly see the positive changes this one year has brought in us swyamsevak/ sevikas. This one year has instilled a sense of responsibility towards our Samaaj and developed a sense of awareness towards Hindu Dharma. Many more years of this glorious journey await. The continuous guidance we receive from senior HSS (UK) swyamsevak/ sevikas is overwhelming, without them travelling this journey wouldn't have been possible.

We learn together and we grow together - we are Shankaracharya Shakha.

## SUMAN PANDEY



“ By the end of the shakha, [we] felt refreshed and energised, both physically and mentally ”

# CREATIVITY

“We also held a kite making workshop for all children and parents. They all produced beautiful and colourful kites”

## A FIRST FOR LEAMINGTON BG

A very new Balgokulam of Leamington Spa celebrated Makar Sankranti Utsav as part of their BG on 15<sup>th</sup> January, which happened to be the Makar Sankranti day itself - how auspicious! The session was joyfully attended by 30 members of our BG including 15 baal. Our BG Saha Karyawaha Vaishaliben gave an interesting Baudhik on the significance of Makar Sankranti with colourful pictures and story. She also held a kite making workshop for all children and parents. They all produced beautiful and colourful kites. Happy Makar Sankranti!



## UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

Birmingham Eklavya Shakha were set a challenge to take on a set of research projects over the holiday season. They included climate change and Bharats contribution in several topics. The swayamevaks and sevikas pulled out all the stops with detailed posters, speeches and articles! A super effort!



“We were set a challenge to take on a set of research projects covering climate change and India’s contribution to the world”

## #AND I WILL WALK 580 [E]MILES

Throughout November - December 2020 shakha's across the country paired up and had joint shakhas. The national initiative provided an opportunity to do something different, meet our fellow swayamsevaks/ sevikas that we usually would've seen in person at vargs and shibirs, and learn something new from each other. Over 30 shakhas/nagars participated in this initiative and it was a great success. If you really enjoyed it, then feel free to continue with this and join other shakhas around the UK in your own time.

### LEICESTER & SLOUGH

*'On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December from 10am to 11.45am Shiv Shakti Shakha held a samilit Shakha with Abhminyu and Sita Shakha from Slough. It was great to work with the Slough Karyakarta team and put a plan/ timetable for the day in place. Our aim was for each Shakha to take shareerik, khel, baudhik and even to go as far as everyone from all the shakhas doing a parichay, all this on Zoom. A true example of Sanghthan. The total sankhya was 85.'*

**Rakeshji Patel, Karyawaha of Leicester Shiv Shakti Shakha**

### LIVERPOOL & SUTTON

*'Our samilit shakha was held with Liverpool and it was a great success! We celebrated Geeta Jayanti and the entire shakha activities were all based around this theme. We had around 18 shikshaks/shikshikas in all areas as well as a small team of organisers who ensured the shakha ran smoothly. The kids presented an astonishing amount of knowledge by creating drawings, presentations and speeches on the Geeta. We achieved many goals within the session and most importantly knowledge on the Geeta was spread. The total sankhya was over 55 participants.'* **Naiyajji Gandhi, Karyawahika of Sutton Chanakya Shakha**

### WOOLWICH & READING

*'Woolwich Pannabai Shakha and Reading Durga Shakha's samilit shakha was excellent and it was refreshing to see new ideas and great to interact with each other virtually. We had a total sankhya of 59 and we split the timetable amongst both shakhas so that we could learn from each other and we also had a chance to interact informally by breaking out into small rooms at the end of shakha.'* - **Anjanaben Patel, Karyawahika of Woolwich Pannabai Shakha**

### BIRMINGHAM & WOOLWICH

*'Birmingham Draupadi and Vidula Shakha had a samilit shakha with the mahilas from Woolwich Pannabai Shakha - the combined sankhya was 34. The session included warm-ups, yoga, khel, kahoot quiz and geet. Madhuji Gowda delivered a bauddhik on Swami Vivekananda's rock memorial. All mahilas enjoyed the e-shakha and will try to have another one in the new year'* - **Nishaji Shah, Karyawahika of West Midlands Vibhag**

### AMERSHAM & BRADFORD

*'Thanks to Corona outbreak, it gave an opportunity for Amersham and Bradford Nagars to come together. We had a really good Zoom session on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 with around 100 participants. The bauddhik was an interesting discussion on setting goals for the new year'*

**Ajitji Kale, Amersham Nagar**

# SHAKHAS ON TOUR

*“ it was refreshing to see new ideas and great to interact with each other virtually ”*



# KEEPING TRADITIONS

“COVID won't stop Rugby Shakha”

## RUGBY – BALL OF TREASURE

With restrictions in place throughout December we were trying our best to keep our Rugby Sangh Parivar busy and engaged. We had two programs in place during the month.

### Treasure Hunt around Rugby Town Centre

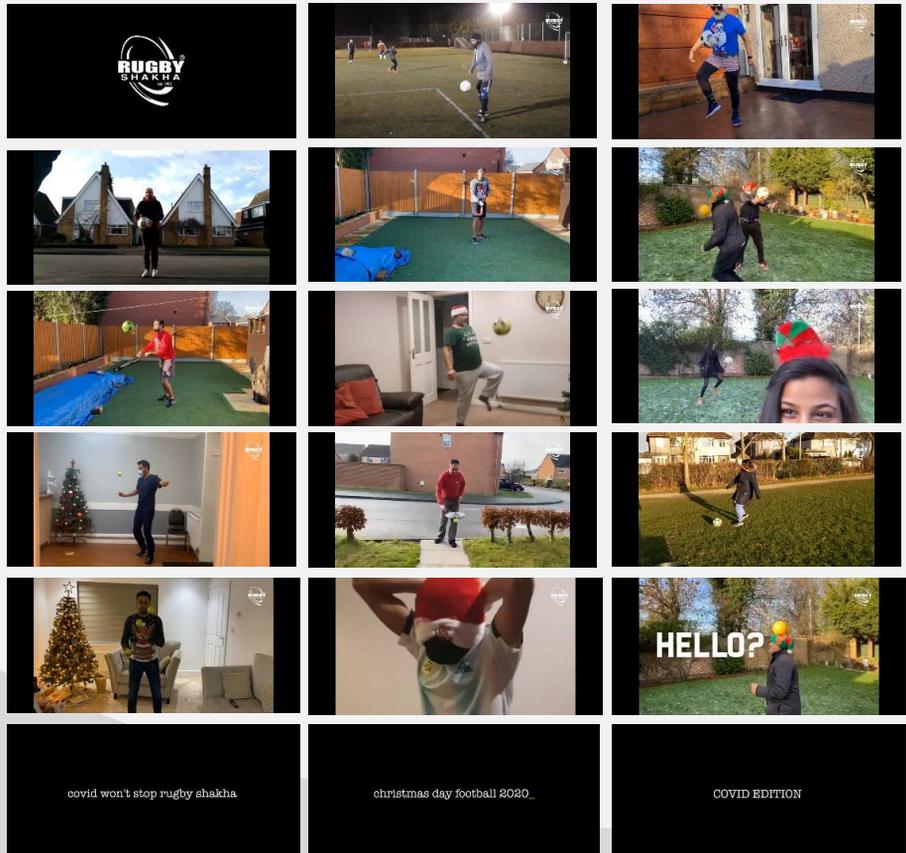
Physical and mental challenges were set around Rugby landmarks and the participants had to record the proof and send it via WhatsApp to the 'Command Centre'. It was a great activity to get people out and about around Rugby. Covid protocols were emphasized for this activity.



### Annual Christmas Day Football Match

A poster was created and a message sent to all.

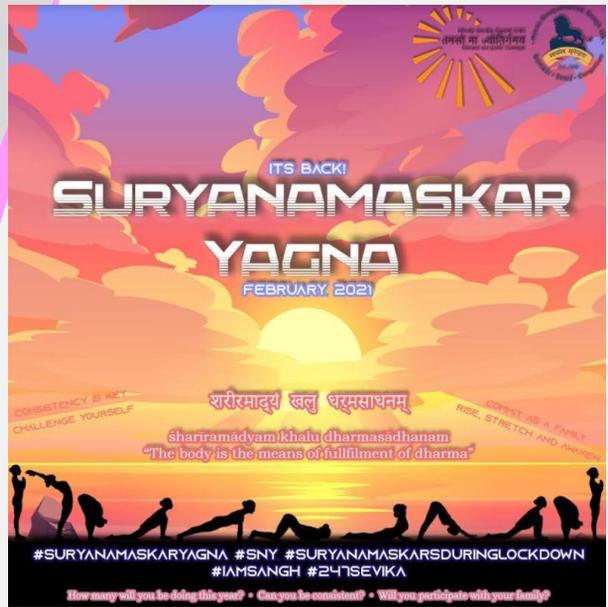
“Unfortunately, Covid has put paid Christmas Day Shakha this year but we still want to try and create that special feeling when irregular or those settled out of town meet likeminded people in Rugby. This year, even those that can't quite manage to wake up in time for the 8am kick off can get the feeling of Vasudeva Kutumbakum by participating. All you need do is record yourself performing a skill/ trick/ bouncing with a ball”. The response was brilliant and the video clip was shared on our WhatsApp group which put a smile on everyone's face. Bring on 2021. **KISHOR MISTRY**



# MOMENTUM

“ Word has spread about the great work that Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK have done”

Annie Waddington, Senior Education & Engagement Campaigns Office on HSS (UK) engagement with UK Parliament Week



Dear Dr Jani,

I am writing to thank you for your amazing contribution to UK Parliament Week 2020. It has been a challenging year for everyone and the way you and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh have adapted to engage so many people with UKPW is truly inspiring. Everyone who has worked on the campaign has helped make something positive out of a difficult situation.

This year, UK Parliament Week reached almost one million people. I think this is a number that should be celebrated throughout the nations. I am delighted to hear that your work with Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh contributed to over 50 activities, inspiring over 1,700 people and bringing their communities together to discuss what matters to them. I also understand you reached every region in the UK apart from Northern Ireland and the North East.

The UK Parliament Week team are immensely grateful for your contribution and ongoing support. We all look forward to working with you to make next year's UK Parliament Week bigger and better and with your help, I believe we will be able to do that.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP  
The Speaker of the House of Commons

The Rt Hon the Lord Fowler  
The Lord Speaker

## HSS (UK) & UK PARLIAMENT WEEK ENGAGEMENT ACKNOWLEDGED

I am delighted to share with you a communication from Education and Engagement team at UK Parliament [.. attached a letter from Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP Speaker of the House of Commons and The Rt Hon the Lord Fowler, Lord Speaker] acknowledging the achievements of HSS [UK] during Parliament Week 2020.

Lets build on the good relationships made and make sure that Parliament Week 2021 is an even bigger success and ensure that young participants becomes enthused about taking up office at the highest level in politics and government.

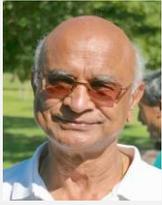
**Dr. Harsha Jani, HSS (UK) UK Parliament Week Lead**

Marking the occasion of Geeta Jayanti, HSS (UK) presented a special E-Samvād with Pujya Swami Swaroopananda, Global Head of the Chinmaya Mission, guiding us on the message of the Geeta for Karyakartas working to enhance 'Dharma' in the society.

If you missed the eSamvad you can view the discourse here [https://youtu.be/ZNUloVyH\\_hl](https://youtu.be/ZNUloVyH_hl)



## OUR CONDOLENCES



**Shri Indravadan Dhayabhai Gandhi**, Coventry  
passed away 12 Nov 2020  
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti



**Shri Ramnikbhai L Shah**  
Birmingham, passed away 19 Jan 2021  
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti



**Shri Maganlal Lalji Dhorajia**,  
Birmingham, passed away 20 Jan 2021  
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti

**Shri Tulasibhai Daudia**,  
Leicester passed away 10 Jan 2021  
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti

**Shrimati Radiatben Zaverchand Shah**,  
Birmingham, passed away 30 Jan 2021  
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti

# AUM SHANTI SHANTI, SHANTI



*Our heartfelt condolences  
and prayers for eternal  
peace and sadgati to the  
departed soul.*

\*\*The festival dates have been obtained from the Rushi Panchang which calculates the dates based on the longitude and latitude of the UK.\*\*

HINDU FESTIVALS	
Date	Festival
13 January	Lohri
14 January	Pongal
15 January	Makar Sankranti
16 February	Vasant Panchami / Saraswati Puja
11 March	Maha Shivaratri
28 March	Holi Dahan
12 April	Gudi Padwa/ Ugadi / Varsh Pratipada / Chaitra Navratri
13 April	Vaisakhi
21 April	Rama Navami / Swaminarayan Jayanti
25 April	Mahavir Swami Jayanti
26 April	Hanuman Jayanti
26 May	Buddha Purnima
23 July	Guru Purnima
21 August	Onam
22 August	Raksha Bandhan
29 August	Krishna Janmashtami
10 September	Ganesh Chaturthi
21 September	Pitru Shraddh starts
7 October	Navratri Sthapana
13 October	Ashtami
14 October	Dussehra / Vijaya Dashmi
20 October	Sharad Purima
4 November	Diwali
14 December	Geeta Jayanti

HSS KARYAKRAM	
Date	Festival
15 January	Makar Sankranti Utsav
23 January	National Karyakarta Varg
March	National Pratiyogita
12 April	Varsh Pratipada Utsav
May	Balagokulam Shibir
June	Mahila Shibir / Varg
4-6 June	Jyeshtha Shibir
26 June	SSV Karyakarta Varg
23 July	Guru Purnima Utsav
24 July - 1 August	SSV
30 July - 1 August	Sangh Chintan Shibir
22 August	Raksha Bandhan Utsav
September	Tarun Shibir
14 October	Vijaya Dashmi Utsav
21 November	Pratinidhi Sabha
December	Shikshak Varg



## WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

To help in publication here are few points when submitting news items:

- Provide a summary - try to keep articles down to 100 words or less, but if you can't, be sure to include a summary. That way we ensure we don't miss out on the best bits.
- A picture tells a thousand words - it also provides that 'I wish you were here' moment!
- A thousand pictures on the other hand.... We have tremendous fun looking at your snaps, but if you can share the ones you'd suggest to include [from a google share for example], then we'll make sure that we get your best side
- Tell us who you are - its an opportunity to get to know one another; so include your name, location and responsibility [where relevant]. If you don't object - we'd also like to include your email address so others can get in touch for more information.

Other Key Dates	
Date	Festival
12 January	Swami Vivekananda Jayanti
12 January	Jijabai Jayanti
20 January	Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti
23 January	Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
26 January	Bharat Republic Day
8 March	Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati Jayanti
15 March	Ramakrishna Jayanti
28 March	Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Jayanti
31 March	Shivaji Jayanti
14 April	Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti
14 May	Basava Jayanti
17 May	Shankaracharya Jayanti
31st May	Ahilyabai Holkar Jayanti
13 June	Maharana Pratap Jayanti
21 June	International Yoga Day
15 August	Bharat Independence Day / Maharishi Aurobindo Jayanti
2 October	Gandhi Jayanti / Shastri Jayanti
20 October	Valmiki Jayanti / Meerabai Jayanti
28th October	Bhagini Nivedita Jayanti
19 November	Guru Nanak Jayanti
19th November	Jhansi ki Rani Jayanti

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