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Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal cleans Kali Bein at Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala. FILE PHOTO

## Padma Shri awardee wanted eco issues in poll manifestoes

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Noted environmentalist Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal has been chosen for the prestigious Padma Shri award this year for his contribution to social welfare and environment conservation.

Having garnered international acclaim for his efforts in the conservation of the holy Kali Bein, Seechewal initiated the work to conserve the Bein in 2000.

While his "kar sewa" for the conservation of the Bein eventually translated into a movement in the villages along the Kali Bein, his work was first taken note of nationally when former President APJ Abdul Kalam visited his ashram at Sultanpur Lodhi in 2006. His water conservation model, now popular as the Seechewal model, is also a source of inspiration for the Central government to cleanse the Ganga of pollutants. Over 400 panches and sarpanches from 1,657 vil-

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Sant Balbir Seechewal, ENVIRONMENTALIST

lages along the Ganga have also visited Seechewal village to study it.

While the Seechewal model advocates re-use of waste water, accumulated in village ponds, for irrigation, the environmentalist has also ensured laying of sewerage in 100 villages in the state with the help of NRIs. He also sends over one lakh saplings from his nursery to be planted in various cities every year.

Among the Chief Ministers, who have publicly lauded and sought inspiration from Seechewal to clean the rivers in their states include Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Madhya Pradesh), Manohar Lal Khattar (Haryana) and Nitish Kumar (Bihar). Nitish had lauded the Seechewal model

during the 350th Parkash Utsav celebrations at Patna Sahib recently.

Seechewal, who also attended the UN Climate Change Conferences held at Copenhagen, had also recently sought environment to be included as a key issue in all party manifestos ahead of the 2017 elections.

He is one of the most vocal critics of the widespread apathy towards depleting water resources in northern India — of which Punjab is a prominent victim — as well as irresponsible dumping of industrial toxins in the state's rivers. Born on February 2, 1962, Seechewal was born to father Channan Singh and mother Channan Kaur. He had quit college studies midway for social concerns.

Terming the award a great honour, Seechewal said, “It is a great and humbling moment for us. I dedicate this honour to all people who have selflessly toiled to save the holy Bein for the past 17 years.”

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The Times of India (N.D.)	The Hindu	Indian Nation
Indian Express	Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)	Nai Durīya (Hindi)
Tribune	Deccan Chronicle	The Times of India (A)
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## गंगा सफाई पर छह फरवरी से रोजना सुनवाई होगी

नई दिल्ली। सुप्रीम कोर्ट से मिली गंगा सफाई से जुड़ी याचिका पर राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण छह फरवरी से रोजना सुनवाई करेगा। सुप्रीम कोर्ट से भेजी गई याचिका पर एनजीटी ने दिन संज्ञान लिया है। जस्टिस स्वतंत्र कुमार की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ ने मामले से जुड़े बरिष्ठ अधिकारियों को अगली सुनवाई में व्यक्तिगत तौर पर पेश रहने का निर्देश जारी किया। (प्र. सं.)