

Meetings/Events

2nd February 2017 Representatives of Sikh Council UK attended 350th Prakash utsav of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji event in Parliament hosted by Ramgahria Council UK and Lord Suri. Jagtar Singh - Secretary General Elect- took the opportunity on stage to thank the host and address the attendees.

Over 8 members and associates of Sikh Council UK participated in an very important testing of safety face mask equipment. The revolutionary equipment is considered as Critical Life Safety Systems that will have huge impact on career choices for Sikhs in the future. Test Subjects Southampton travelled from Birmingham, Southampton and London.

Media/Publications

Sikh Council UK attended a live show on Akaal TV with Dr Gurnam Singh. Topics included Equality act 2010 as well as accessibility into Gurdwaras by disabled people, Woolwich incident, Mixed marriages issues etc.

Sikh Council UK issued a statement in response to several matters being brought to its attention during the past couple of months. Taken collectively these are matters such as reports of violence within Gurdwaras, police entering Gurdwara premises, contentious programmes, inflammatory speeches, threats of self-immolation, threats of violence, the raising of differences in doctrinal views in provocative terms, fake news social media postings, footage of ritual slaughter of animals and other such matters bringing the community into disrepute, exposing internal differences for others to exploit and endangering community cohesion. Moreover: Sikh Council UK does not and will not tolerate or condone criminal violence or intimidation or the incitement of the same by anyone in the name of promoting any one view on Sikh doctrine however sincerely that view is held. It is important for all of us to take responsibility to work towards panthic'ekta and harmony.

Sikh Council UK offered its congratulations in a public statement to Jagraj Singh for the Points of Light Award he was honoured with from the Prime Minister in recognition of his voluntary work with the Basics of Sikhi and Everything's 13 organisations which he founded.

Sikh Council UK called for comprehensive and urgent action by the next Punjab Government following the leak of the findings of the Justice Zora Singh Commission. Background: The Commission was established in October 2015 by the Punjab Government following the 'desecrations' of the holy Sikh scriptures the Guru Granth Sahib in Punjab and the subsequent killings of unarmed Sikhs who had gathered to protest against the 'desecrations'.

The principal findings and recommendations of the Commission were that: -

- > The investigations by the Punjab Police into the incidents of the desecrations of Guru Granth Sahib at villages Burj Jawahar Singh Wala and Bargari were flawed and improper
- > Punjab Police officers fired rifle bullets at Sikhs protesting the desecrations at Kotakpura Chowk injuring seven including Ajit Singh grievously
- > The Punjab Police subsequently failed to provide CCTV footage to the Commission in relation to the events at Kotakpura Chowk giving inconsistent reasons why it was not available
- > Punjab Police officers fired rifle bullets from point blank range of approximately a yard out at unarmed Sikhs who were sitting on the floor peacefully protesting at the desecrations at Behbal Kalan killing Gurjeet Singh and Krishan Bhagwan Singh and injuring six others some grievously
- > The firing upon 'defenceless protestors' sitting on the floor at Behbal Kalan was 'absolutely unwarranted' and 'beyond comprehension' and not in self-defence as alleged by the Punjab Police; the Punjab Police officers interviewed provided inconsistent and false testimonies to the Commission in relation to the events at Behbal Kalan
- > The Punjab Police failed to undertake any alternative crowd control measures in the courses of policing the protests at Behbal Kalan such as loud speaker warnings or use of water-cannons, tear-gas, latti charge, firing in the air, use of rubber bullets etc.
- > The Commission recommended a criminal investigation is undertaken to identify the police officers responsible for the firings including reviewing the complicity of the SSP in charge Charanjit Singh Sharma and that charges are laid against the offenders before a court of law within 6 months

Sikh Council UK circulated information about an opportunity that had arisen with the MET police services where the MET were urgently seeking volunteers to assist in the MPS internal Promotion Processes. Our definition of a community assessor is someone who is a valued member of the community, who has a long-standing relationship with the Police in a community capacity not a police officer or police staff capacity. A payment was offered on a daily basis to the successful candidate. interested individuals were requested to make direct contact.

During this month Sikh Council UK have had to deal with 2 separate very unfortunate cases

1. Secretary general of Sikh Council urgently intervention following An alleged incident of attempted desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by an individual at Gurdwara Sahib, Woolwich. Gurmel Singh maintained liaison between the Gurdwara Reps, police and managed media enquiries. The police were made fully

aware of the gravity with which any incident of desecration of holy Sikh scriptures is viewed by the community. Moreover, Sikh Council UK is continuing to make requests for calm from the community while the investigation is underway. Furthermore Gurdwara managements' have been requested to be vigilant and make provisions to prevent any incidents of this nature. Case continues

2. Sikh Council UK were alerted to an incident where Gotka Sahibs, Pothis Sahibs and other Sikhi sacred scriptures were discovered thrown into a skip. The employees of the Skip company made the discovery when the full skip arrived back at depot. Police were called to the site and an investigation has been pursued in which Sikh Council UK urged the police to ensure this matter is thoroughly investigated as a 'hate incident'. The sacred items (21 of them) were taken to a Gurdwara sahib, there were also 10 other items such as Bhagvat Githas' and Ramayan so the local mandir were also alerted. case continues

Further casework

- Following intervention by Sikh Council UK a Sikh employee was permitted to wear the Kirpan in the workplace of an international telecommunications company based in the City in London having initially being refused to right to wear it on ostensible security grounds.
- In a separate case Sikh Council UK successfully assisted with the wearing the kirpan in the workplace by two individuals. The two Sikhs employees were initially being stopped for wearing kirpans at airside of a large international airport based in the South-east. The airport has now adopted a policy around the wearing of the kirpan by employees in the workplace in consultation with the Sikh Council UK.
- Sikh Council UK assisted Hounslow primary school in developing their policy for wearing of the kakkars at school by staff and pupils.
- Sikh Council Assisted a student at Manchester university students to raise awareness of the significance of the Kirpan to a Sikh, the request following a young student who had recently taken Amrit and felt that his lecturers and fellow students didnt fully appreciate what this means.
- Sikh Council UK received an inquiry by Manchester Police investigating an allegation against a granthi where they required clarification what can be classed as an appropriate physical contact when an individual is offering a blessing to another person. Sikh Council clarified in its response There are no religious traditions of imparting hugs and blessings as such, but culturally not uncommon for elders to bless children known directly to them or through family networks. This is regardless of their formal position. However; this is generally acceptable with others (adults) present and is irrelevant where. This may be in a form of a light short hug (usually side to side), and/or



hand placed on the head of the recipient and/or entirely verbal. It can include some religious terms/utterances. Once again it is not known or accepted by unknown persons to offer even cultural blessings moreover; where there is no other adult present.