

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

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- 15th February 2015 South region meeting took place
- 17th February 2015 Sikh Council UK representatives attended launch of Sikh Press Association at Ernest and Young Head Office in London
- 26th February 2015 Representatives of Sikh Council UK attended the Parliament launch of the Sikh Manifesto 2015-2020 at Portcullis House.
- 27th February 2015 a meeting was held with the young adults and Executive Members Sikh Council UK to discuss their proposals relating to satkaar of SGGSJ. The meeting was well attended and the following actions were agreed:
 - Surinderpal Singh Executive Member to be main contact person for Sikh Council UK
 - Younger Sikhs to send Sikh Council UK a project plan, with timescales and milestones
 - Sikh Council UK to provide support and advice with the delivery of the project plan, via

Above actions remain pending.

- Sikh Council UK supported Akaal Channel with arranging interviews with MP's and Sikh candidates in the forthcoming General Election as part of a new programme called 'Westminster Matters'
- Sikh Council UK Questions asked by Baroness Thornton in the House of Lords led to a debate on the requirement to wear safety helmets in place of turbans in leisure activities and sports. The current exemption for construction sites and the imminent extension to all workplaces throws up a significant anomaly whereby a turban wearing Sikh could be employed on a construction site to build a leisure or sports facility; he/she could be employed to run that facility including training and demonstrating the activity to others whilst wearing their turban; but he/she would be refused as a customer or service user from participating in the activity or sport unless he/she removed their turban and wore a safety helmet. The debate generated significant BBC radio coverage.
- Sikh Council UK took up concerns on the certification and showing of the controversial film made by Ram Rahim titled 'Messenger of God'. Letters were written to cinemas across UK where there were plans to show the film and to British Board of Film Classification.
- Following a number of workshops facilitated by the Home Office in looking at the difficulties Gurdwaras are experiencing when sponsoring Granthi, Kirtanis

and or Raagis to UK, Sikh Council UK continues to request specific cases that can be used to show actual issues faced with the complex and rigid process. As such one of the issues relating to Labour Market Test Question has been taken up by the Home Office with their counterparts in Delhi in advising them to accept resident labour market test information in a covering letter. Important note: However letter must be referenced in the CoS notes.

Queries

Query 1: A young girl who has been wearing a kirpan as an amritdhari since she was in year 4 has been stopped from wearing her kirpan when someone saw it on her in her secondary school, the school headteacher approached an established sikh organisation for guidance only to be informed that the young girl can be made to wear a kirpan around her neck as a symbol. The young girls father approached Sikh Council UK as they were due to meet with the school beyond half term holidays. However, the school agreed to allow for wearing of her kirpan securely under her garments as an interim measure.

Response: we attached the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidelines and emphasised that despite these the school may exercise their discretion as to whether to allow the wearing of a kirpan as this does not oblige school or any establishment to allow for the wearing of a kirpan by Sikhs, they are good practice equality guidelines offering an understanding of the importance of the mandatory Kirpan for a amritdhari Sikh.

Query 2: A warrant Officer from the British Army wrote to Sikh Council about the surname of one of his potential officers who was a sikh using a family surname at the end of his name and Singh as his middle name. The warrant officer asked out of courtesy to ensure that this is normal practice and how best to address the individual

Response: You are right in understanding that Sikhs usually have surname Singh (for Male) and Kaur (for Female). This helps to identify the person immediately as a Sikh.

In cases where a person also uses their family surname they will usually insert the surname Singh as their middle-name and their family name on the end. Hence; why the person you refer to will be known as xxxxxx 'Singh Johal' as correctly stated by you. We thanked the officer for his sensitive consideration to this matter.

Correspondence: Thank you letters were sent to all the representatives in India from a range of organisations that supported and assisted the Delegate of Sikh Council UK during his visit to india in relation to the Sikh Political Prisoner review campaign is clearly a complex, legal and political matter.