

Global Sikh Council
Meeting 24 – 26 March 2017
Vistana Hotel
9 Jalan Lumut, Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Summary of Minutes

Present at the meeting:

S Jagir Singh (Malaysia)
S Harcharan Singh (Malaysia)
S Gulbarg Singh Basi (USA)
S Kirpal Singh Nijher (USA)
Lady Kanwaljit Kaur (UK)
S Satnam Singh (UK)
S Gurpreet Singh (India)
S Surjit Singh (India)
S Ajmer Singh (Australia)
S Bawa Singh Jagdev (Australia)
S Gurdeep Singh (Switzerland)
S Balwant Singh Rahal (Indonesia)
S Harbant Singh (Indonesia)
S Noratam Singh Narang (Thailand)
S Balbir Singh Sachdeva (Thailand)
S Ramesh Singh (Pakistan)

Apologies:

Ramesh Singh (Pakistan)
Bangladesh
Italy
Dubai
Spain
Portugal
Germany

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1. S Jagir Singh ji, the host, welcomed all guests. He shared his concerns facing Sikh community worldwide and the need to make GSC a stronger force.
2. Approval of minutes of meeting held in Paris, 18 – 20 March 2016. As the members did not have time to look at the minutes prior to this meeting, this item was postponed to next year's AGM. All 5 members present (who were also present at the Paris meeting) accepted this decision.
3. President's Report – S Gulbarg Singh shared the background of GSC and his vision with new members. He informed the gathering about the problems created by the Jathedar Iqbal Singh's video about Dasam Granth at the meeting in Kenya. Some concerns were raised by members that S S Sidhu's presentation on "Sikh Religion Inclusive/exclusive" was not received in good time before the meeting.

Proposal was made by S Surjeet Singh and seconded by S Ajmer Singh to let S Gulbarg Singh finish his report before discussing any issues arising from the report.

After the delivery of S Gulbarg Singh's report S Harcharan Singh made the following comment:

You S Gulbarg Singh went to India before Paris meeting to appoint some advisors and did not mention in the meeting. Subsequently you (S Gulbarg Singh) went to Patna Sahib and attended an event and then went to India again and attended an event organised by Kesh Sambhal as a their guest. No mention of these visits have been made in your report. S Harcharan Singh asked S Gulbarg Singh to clarify why he didn't mention this in his report and comment on how these visits benefit the GSC.

In response S Gulbarg Singh stated that he went to Patna Sahib with the help of S Gurpreet Singh and the purpose was to make people there aware of GSC. He mentioned that he did do a presentation there titled "Sikhs – Love for All". 'Kesh Sambhal' was going to launch a book and invited S Gulbarg Singh and Nitesh Kumar. He stated that he went there on his own expense and as a result GSC got recognition.

S Harcharan Singh pointed out that his point was that you (S Gulbarg Singh) failed to mention the visit in your report. S Gulbarg Singh apologised for failing to mention these visits in his report. S Bawa Singh mentioned that he was also invited to Patna Sahib because their president could not go and when he went back to Australia, he sent a 3 page report to S Gulbarg Singh and Australian Gurdwara Council members.

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4. Halal Issue – S Bawa Singh (Australia) informed the members that they wrote to ministers and Principals of schools asking them why they are imposing Halal meat on our children. They all agreed that it should not be imposed. They also went to hospitals. Interestingly, they found that the lady responsible for food in hospitals, being herself a Sikh, did not know that Sikhs are not supposed to eat Halal meat. They asked them to serve Halal meat to only those who ask for it.

He also reported that the Australian Knife Legislation 1988 was also amended to reflect the right to wear Kirpan. Board members appreciated the efforts of Australian Council for taking these steps.

Lady Kanwaljit Kaur informed that in UK they are also fighting that the non-halal meat should also be available.

5. How we can promote Sikhi

S Balbir Singh (India) – Punjabi is important to learn in order to propagate Sikhi to our children. S Gurpreet Singh supported that Punjabi must be our priority.

Resolution – GSC should promote Punjabi speaking in families.

S Balwant Singh Rahal suggested that to propagate Sikhism we must get involved in Interfaith within our countries.

S Gurbans Singh (India) – Punjabi is regarded by some as a backward language to halt the spread of Guru Granth Sahib's message. We should promote Punjabi and make our official language.

S Balwinder Singh Sagar – We should hold regular camps and present Punjabi a proud heritage. He thanked Malaysia Gurdwara Council and S Jagir Singh for hosting the conference and requested members to send comments on their presentations.

S Gurbans Singh and S Balwinder Singh promised that they will support any country who invite them to propagate Punjabi. They are willing to go and render their services.

S Gurdeep Singh asked S Gurbans Singh and S Balwinder Singh 4 modules in Punjabi to be made available to GSC and he will take the responsibility for the costs.

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6. S Gulbarg Singh stated that 1a should be used effectively by us all. 1a should be known as Sikhi Nishan rather than Logo.

Resolution: 1a should be used as a Sikhi Nishan, proposed by S Gurdeep Singh and seconded by S Surjeet Singh.

S Manmohan Singh presented a hand written 1a.

7. Think Tank – It was decided unanimously that we need to establish a Think Tank to look at Sikh values, practices and Gurbani.
8. Parcharaks – It was proposed that GSC should promote good qualified Parcharaks and have a unified syllabus. GSC should promote the idea of good salary for Parcharaks and Granthis.

S Balwinder Singh Sagar informed that they run appropriate training for Parcharaks and Granthis but we (Sikh Community) need to raise the status of Granthis so that we can attract good calibre candidates.

S Gurbans Singh informed that they run training up to Master level and they have their trainees working in Dubai, Canada, America etc. They have established the project but they need help.

S Jagir Singh pointed out that there are different laws in different countries governing the appointments of certain professionals i.e. in Malaysia the preacher has to be at least 40 year old and a musician at least 35 year old.

S Kirpal Singh pointed out that GSC has its limitations to run this project and proposed the following resolution.

Resolution – GSC can have a list of intellectual, bilingual certified Parcharaks on their website and member organisations can access that information to decide on suitability of Parcharak for their organisation. Resolution passed unanimously.

9. At the beginning of afternoon session S Gulbarg Singh asked members whether they want EC to resign now or just before selection process for new EC members. It was decided unanimously to carry on with the agenda items of amendments and approval of new members. Current EC should resign after that.

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10. Amendments to GSC Constitution - Proposed amendment, "2: Goals: Define "SIKH" in the "to serve Sikhs worldwide" statement"

It was decided that adequate definition exists in clause 1 (Objectives) and therefore there is no need to amend clause 2.

It was felt that a number of amendments to constitution are required. S Jagir Singh, a lawyer, volunteered to revise the existing constitution and draft a new version.

The following motion was proposed by S Ajmer Singh and seconded by S Gurdeep Singh:

Motion: Meeting gives power to S Jagir Singh to look at the existing constitution and bring the revised draft constitution to the GSC board for approval. This will be done in 2 months and will be approved in the next AGM. The motion was accepted unanimously.

11. S Bawa Singh raised a point that in the past there has been objection on a representative to GSC from Australia who was clean shaven. He proposed that if a person representing a member organisation is not in full Sikhi Saroop, they should be accepted by GSC.

S Gurpreet Singh opposed the representation of a member organisation by a person who is not in Sikhi Saroop. He felt that if we have representatives who are not in Sikhi Saroop it gives wrong impression to general Sikh Jagat.

S Balbir Singh also added that if we are not abiding by Sikh Uniform then we are not part of the institution we claim to belong to.

S Kirpal Singh expressed that we are trying to make GSC a top level organisation. If there is a country where there is no Sikh in Sikhi Saroop, we should persuade them to embrace Sikhi Saroop and if any logistic problems occur to that individual, GSC should help to resolve the difficulties.

S Col Manmohan Singh quoted Mahan Kosh saying that the representative of institution if Udasis should be a bearer of 5 Ks.

As new draft constitution is to be drafted, no decision was taken on this matter.

12. S Ramesh Singh (Pakistan) had to leave early. He thanked the host Malaysian Gurdwaras Council, S Jagir Singh and GSC for holding a good and informative meeting. He invited GSC to hold next meeting in Pakistan and said that they will be delighted to host.

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13. Application for new membership:

- a) Bangladesh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee – Approved
- b) Indonesia Gurdwara Council – Approved
- c) Thailand Guru Nanak Centre Association – Approved
- d) Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee – Approved after S Gurdeep Singh clarified that this is a membership managed committee.

All 4 applications approved unanimously.

14. S Gurpreet Singh proposed that GSC should reiterate that all organisations shall follow Nanakshahi Calendar 2003. The proposal was accepted unanimously.

15. S Gurpreet Singh proposed that GSC should create a Dastar Fund to support international travellers. When someone is refused travel because of their dastar, there should be one number to call and any financial loss should be borne by community i.e. GSC.

S Gurdeep Singh offered to talk to Swiss insurance companies to incorporate insurance against delays due to Dastar. Boarding passes can be stamped with the reason for refusal to board i.e. security reason.

16. Selection of new EC members

S Jagir Singh moderated the election process and after the election process S Jagir Singh announced the new EC members as follows:

- a) President – Lady Kanwaljit Kaur (UK)
- b) Vice President – S Ajmer Singh (Australia)
- c) Secretary – S Gurdeep Singh (Switzerland)
- d) Joint Secretary – S Harcharan Singh (Malaysia)
- e) Media and Public Relations Officer – S Gurpreet Singh (India)
- f) Mr Gulbarg Singh Basi Executive Member, responsibility to be decided.

S Gurdeep Singh thanked everyone and S Gulbarg Singh in particular. He requested S Gulbarg Singh to remain active in GSC.

Lady Kanwaljit Kaur also thanked S Gulbarg Singh Basi for his hard work during the past 3 years. She thanked all the candidates, presenters and sevadars who came to Malaysia for the cause they believe in. Thanking and praising the host Malaysian Gurdwara Council and S Jagir Singh she addressed the meeting, and committed herself to do her best for the uplift of Sikh community throughout the world.

The meeting was closed at 5:30 pm on 26th March 2017.