



**GLOBAL SIKH COUNCIL**  
VOICE OF SIKHS WORLDWIDE

# GLOBAL SIKH COUNCIL

International Voice of The Sikhs

20 September 2019

Dear All

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh

I am pleased to inform you that the next GSC AGM/ Conference will be held in Kampala, Uganda on 20, 21, 22 March 2020. The detailed programme and other information will follow soon.

Please find below a short summary of my visit to Lahore, Pakistan to attend the International Sikh Convention. The Executive Committee felt that I should personally go to find out the facts about Kartarpur Corridor and the maintenance of our Sikh heritage.

The International Sikh Heritage Convention was convened by The Governor of Punjab Pakistan, Chowdhry Mohammad Sarwar, on 30-1 September to address the preservation of Sikh Heritage in Punjab (which is almost 80 % of total Sikh Heritage). The Convention started with the Recital of Shabads from Guru Granth Sahib by Hazoori Ragi Jatha Nankana Sahib followed by the Kartarpur Sahib construction progress documentary. Punjab Governor assured all that he had the full support of the Prime Minister on this undertaking. Visit to Kartarpur indicated that the work is in progress and hopefully will be completed by the November 2019 to celebrate the 550 anniversary of Guru Nanak Sahib's parkash utsav.

The original gurdwara has been kept intact, but the building is not strong for people to go on the second and third floors. It is kept locked and was opened specially for us to have a look.

People from India will walk through the Corridor surrounded by sixty- three acres of fields believed to be Guru Nanak's. At the end of the Corridor, there will be a large marbled open space, a very large diwan hall, a langar hall, a museum, a sarovar, toilet facilities and 20 rooms for visitors. The Government officials are preparing for at least 25,000 people at any one time. I was told that about this number visit Nankana Sahib to celebrate Guru Nanak Sahib's parkash utsav every year. This land for building is 104 acres donated by the Pakistan government. This heritage preservation work will also bring the much-needed tourism business to Pakistan by the Sikh Diaspora and other tourists from around the globe.

**President:** Lady Singh (Dr Kanwaljit Kaur OBE)  
Tel: +44 (0) 7716 497376  
Email: [kaursingh3@aol.com](mailto:kaursingh3@aol.com)

**Secretary:** S Jagjit Singh LLB Hons Lon, CLP M'sia  
Tel: +60 12 658 7456  
Email: [GSCsecretariat@yahoo.com](mailto:GSCsecretariat@yahoo.com)

**Member Organizations From:**

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The three- day convention was attended mostly by the Sikhs from USA, Canada, UK, India and Pakistan. The Ministers and government officials from various departments such as Religious, Tourism, Foreign Services, ETPB (Evacuee Trust Property Board) attended the Convention. The agenda for the Convention was set by the Governor.

The Convention attendees were well looked after for all the three days. On the first day all were given an opportunity to talk about their expectations and views. The second day the speeches were by mostly Pakistan Ministers with one key note short speech by the Sikh speaker S Ajmer Singh Randhawa. Some of us were given the opportunity to ask questions and give suggestions. S Yashpal Singh Bains (GSC), and I spoke. The Governor appreciated my questioning and suggestions and openly thanked me and remarked, 'We always need to go to a woman for wisdom'. I will send the link.

On the final day five of the Sikh attendees were invited to speak for two to three minutes after the Governors and before the Prime Minister's speech. I was one of those five chosen. All the speeches are available on YouTube. The Prime Minister spoke about the importance of preservation of Sikh Heritage in Pakistan and look forward to the Sikhs visiting their heritage. He also addressed the concerns of Sikh attendees regarding Visa issues He gave an assurance that the visa process will be overhauled and streamlined to issue the multiple entry visas to the visitors right at the Pakistan entry port. He requested the convention attendees to go back to their respective countries and share their positive experience about Pakistan with others in their countries. Members wanting to visit, please make sure you apply for visa by 30 September 2019.

Important issues of identifying, securing, determining the condition of the sites, preserving and maintaining the sites were discussed with the Deputy Secretary and Secretary of ETPB. I attended the meeting along with Yashpal S Bains (Chair of Heritage Committee). This meeting was very constructive and productive. ETPB invited GSC to be part of the Advisory Board of the Heritage Committee. I agreed on behalf of the GSC that the President GSC will be a member and can appoint a representative as and when needed for consultation. I also requested the officers to sort out the current dispute over land so that it is restored to Gurdwara Biba Sahib in Peshawar. I was assured very enthusiastically that the matter will be sorted out soon. The Sikhs in Peshawar also told me that the court case against the ETPB in the Supreme Court is most likely be concluded in their favour because of the strong evidence of the land belonging to the gurdwara.

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Overall this convention played a vital role in developing a working relationship with the Pakistani officials and political leaders. S Yashpal Singh Bains Chair of sub -committee for Sikh Heritage and I had the opportunity to talk to ETPB officers responsible for all the Sikh Heritage in Pakistan. This is a historical mile stone for the Sikhs which is on its way to fulfil our daily Ardas "Sikhan noon gurudwarian de seva sambhal da dan bakhshna.'

Warm regards

Lady Singh Dr Kanwaljit Kaur OBE  
President Global Sikh Council (GSC)

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