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## **President of London's largest Sikh Gurdwara secures £160,000 libel success against London-based Punjabi newspaper over false child abuse allegations**

Gurmail Singh Malhi, the President of London's largest Sikh Gurdwara (Sri Guru Singh Sabha) - which comprises the largest Sikh community in Europe - has succeeded in his libel complaint against Des Pardes Weekly (which describes itself as the UK and Europe's first and most popular Punjabi newspaper), as well as its Editors, Mr GS and Mr SS Virk.

Mr Malhi's complaint related to the publication by Des Pardes Weekly, in September 2014 and on the eve of the Gurdwara elections, of a number of advertisements submitted by third parties, which would have been understood to suggest that Mr Malhi is a child abuser and paedophile who posed a serious threat to children.

These allegations were, and are, completely false and, given their gravity and in the absence of any sensible engagement by the newspaper, Mr Malhi was left with no other choice than to commence libel proceedings in the High Court through his solicitors, Carter-Ruck, and Counsel, Jacob Dean of 5RB.

Faced with those proceedings, Des Pardes Weekly and Messrs Virk have now accepted that there was and is no basis whatsoever for these false allegations and have published a full half-page apology in the newspaper, both in English and Punjabi.

In further recognition of the seriousness of the matter, the publishers have also paid Mr Malhi £160,000 by way of damages and legal costs.

Speaking today, Mr Malhi said: *"I am delighted that, after months of intransigence and repeated failure to face up to the enormity of what they had done, Des Pardes Weekly and its Editors have accepted that there was no basis whatsoever for the publication of these grotesque and false slurs against me and have acknowledged that they should never have been published. It is difficult to over-state how distressing the publication of these false allegations has been for my family and me (not least given my work in the Gurdwara and my wider community and charity work) and I am delighted that the record has now been set straight."*

**Note to Editors:** The Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha is the largest Sikh Temple in London. Mr Malhi has been its president since October 2014.

As well as being President of the Gurdwara, Mr Malhi plays leading roles in numerous community and charity projects; for example, he was involved in

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the founding and running of GHG Academy School in Punjab, India; he is also a trustee of the Unity of Faiths Foundation.

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