

Kashmiri Pandit Political Steering Committee (KPPSC)

A four day Global Summit Conference was held in London from June 18-21, 1997, to bring together KP organizations from India, Europe, Canada and USA. A major accomplishment of the meeting was the achievement of unity with a view to address collectively various political and social issues confronting the community in exile. The organizations and their representatives were: All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC) Jammu, Mr. A. N. Vaishnavi (President); Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS) Jammu, Mr. T. N. Khosa (President); Kashmiri Samiti Delhi (KSD), Mr. C. L. Gadoo (President); Panun Kashmir (PK) Jammu, Dr. K. L. Chowdhury (Vice-President); Panun Kashmir Movement (PKM) Jammu, Mr. Ashwani Kumar (President); Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA) USA, Dr. A. K. Raina (past-President); Kashmiri Pandit Association of Europe (KPAE) Mr. B. L. Kaul; Indo American Kashmir Forum (IAKF) USA, Dr. V. K. Sazawal (President); Indo Canadian Kashmir Forum (ICKF) Canada, Mr. V. Sumbly; Indo European Kashmir Forum (IEKF) Mr. A. Tikou (President) and Dr. P. Ganju, Mr. R. Kotwal and Dr. J. Rawal. Following intensive discussions leading to the formation of KPPSC, the following appointments were announced: Mr. Vaishnavi (President), Dr. Chowdhury (Director of Political Affairs), Mr. Khosa (Director of Cultural and Educational Affairs), Mr. Gadoo (Director of Finance, Press and Publicity), Mr. Ashwani Kumar (Director of Human Rights Affairs). Once KPPSC was formed the next move was to formulate a Common Minimum Political Program (CMPP). As a result the following Charter was formulated:

POLITICAL AGENDA:

Restore political empowerment. 1. Recognition of factors that lead to KPs becoming refugees in their own country. 2. KPs are determined to return to Kashmir with honor, dignity and safety. 3. KPs demand serious dialogue with the State and Central governments to expedite their return with constitutional, institutional and political guarantees on their terms. 4. KPs will continue the struggle in the National and International arenas until the demands of the safe return to the Valley are met. 5. Realization of our political demands in a co-ordinated and aggressive manner leading to a change from the past approach and culminating in the above CMPP implemented by the KPPSC.

SOCIAL AGENDA:

Revive KP identity. 1. Preserve and restore religious places in Kashmir. 2. Provide educational scholarships for needy students for primary, higher education and technical (vocational) training. Seek admission for students. 3. Build a Heritage Center in Jammu. 4. Provide medical assistance for needy people and monitor disease prevalence among the community. 5. Conduct a social and cultural survey and community census incorporating an International KP Directory. 6. Initiate programs for the welfare and development of women. The group planned a press conference and a demonstration in Jammu in mid July. The latest report is that KPPSC plans are on track and we expect it to be the collective voice of the community that will enter into political negotiations with both state and central governments.

MEETING WITH INDIAN PRIME MINISTER IN USA:

A delegation from Indo-American Kashmir Forum led by Vijay Sazawal, met briefly with Hon. I.K. Gujral, Prime Minister of India, in New York city on September 22, 1997. The delegation thanked Mr. Gujral for visiting the refugee camps in Jammu. In a memo given to Mr. Gujral, it was emphasized that the conditions of the displaced KPs is getting worse. He was requested to make urgent efforts for the safe return of KPs with honor, dignity and full security. He was also informed about the formation of Kashmiri Pandit Political Steering Committee (KPPSC), a united front of various KP organizations. The Prime Minister was requested that all dialogues, by both the state and central government, involving the future of KP community should be held with representatives of KPPSC.