



Kartarpur Corridor

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The Union cabinet has approved the construction of a ‘corridor’ **linking India with the historic Kartarpur gurdwara on the banks of the Ravi river**, in Pakistan.

- Kartarpur gurudwara is the **revered shrine** across the border where **Guru Nanak Dev**, the founder of Sikhism **spent the last 18 years of his life**.
- The corridor will connect the holy shrines of **Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in Gurdaspur** district of Punjab in **India** with **Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur** in **Pakistan**.
- The length of the corridor is about 4 km (2 km on either side of the international border).
- The Pakistan government has also decided to open the corridor.
- The corridor will **commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev**.
- Pilgrimages between India and Pakistan are governed by the **1974 Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines**, which includes a list of shrines in Pakistan and India open for visitors from the other country, and for which **visas are required**.
- The Kartarpur Corridor, which will **provide visa-free access to the shrine** when it becomes ready on both sides, may need a separate treaty.

Significance

- The Kartarpur Sahib corridor was **first proposed in 1999** when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took a bus ride to Lahore.
- The Kartarpur corridor will be implemented as an **integrated development project with Government of India funding**. The development comes ahead of the 550th Prakash Purab or **550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in 2019**.
- It will allow Indian devotees to visit Kartarpur shrine located 2 km inside Pakistan in Narowal district.
- Until now, most Indian devotees have had to contend with a darshan using binoculars installed at Dera Baba Nanak Sahib.

- India has also asked Pakistan to develop the corridor with suitable facilities in its territory from the International Border to facilitate easier access of Indian pilgrims.
- The forward movement on the Kartarpur corridor can be considered a **big development since despite the India-Pakistan deadlock in talks**, both New Delhi and Islamabad have been able to form a **consensus on the issue**.

Additional Information

- Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti is observed on the full-moon day in the month of Katak to celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), who is the first of the 10 Sikh Gurus and the founder of Sikhism.
- He advocated the '**Nirguna**' form of bhakti.
- He rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, austerities and the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims.
- He organised his followers into a **community**. He set up rules for **congregational worship** (sangat) involving **collective recitation**.
- He appointed one of his disciples, **Angad**, to succeed him as the preceptor (guru), and this practice was followed for nearly 200 years.
- The fifth preceptor, **Guru Arjan**, compiled **Baba Guru Nanak's hymns** along with those of his four successors and other religious poets like **Baba Farid**, **Ravidas** (also known as Raidas) and **Kabir** in the **Adi Granth Sahib**.
- These hymns, called '**Gurbani**', are composed in many languages.
- In the late seventeenth century the tenth preceptor, **Guru Gobind Singh**, included the compositions of the ninth guru, **Guru Tegh Bahadur**, and this scripture was called the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- **Guru Gobind Singh** also laid the foundation of the **Khalsa Panth (army of the pure)** and defined its five symbols: uncut hair, a dagger, a pair of shorts, a comb and a steel bangle. Under him, the community got consolidated as a **socio-religious and military force**.