

India Pakistan sign Kartarpur pact

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: In the heated environment of India Pakistan relations the kartarpur pact is a sign of peace. Though it cannot be a stand alone question it can be an important part of the answer on the confidence building measures taken up by India.

In news: India, Pakistan has signed the Kartarpur pact

Placing it in syllabus: India and neighbourhood relations

Dimensions:

- What is the pact?
- What is the entire project about?
- How does it help promote relations?

Content:

What is the pact?

- India and Pakistan recently signed a pact to operationalise the Kartarpur corridor that will facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the **Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.**
- The pact was **signed at the “zero line” on the border,** indicating that both sides wanted to keep the signing low key.
- The gurdwara, **situated on the bank of the Ravi,** can be seen from the international border.
- The agreement is **valid initially for five years.**
- India will hand over the **list of pilgrims to Pakistan 10 days in advance** and those granted permission to go may

be informed only four days before the proposed date of travel.

- The agreement will allow **5,000 Indian pilgrims daily** to visit Gurdwara where Guru Nanak spent the last 18 years of his life.
 - Islamabad will be charging **\$20 service fee/pilgrim** which the Indian government is asking to reconsider.
 - The pilgrims would be allowed to carry a maximum of Rs. 11,000 and a baggage upto 7 kgs that could contain drinking water and would not be allowed to venture beyond the shrine.
 - They would **travel in the morning and return the same day.**
 - According to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, children below 13 years and persons of about 75 years and above will have to travel in groups.
 - The people need to carry their **passports and an electronic travel authorization** they receive if their registration for the pilgrimage is deemed successful.
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- **Registration does not confer a right to travel.**
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- **People of Indian origin** holding the passport of another country will need to **carry their Overseas Citizen of India card.**
 - Pilgrims would be **allowed to carry kirpans (dagger)**, one of the five articles of faith worn by Sikhs.
 - There would be **no reverse flow of visitors**, meaning, only those who enter from the Indian side would be allowed to return via the same route.
 - **Attari (India)-Wagah (Pakistan) will continue to be the only official border point** through which people with valid documents will be able to enter India.

What is the entire project about?

The Kartarpur corridor is being built to **connect Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur, Punjab, India with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur**, in Narowal district of Pakistan, the **final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak**, to commemorate his **550th birth anniversary** celebrations on November 12, 2019.



- The gurudwara complex which is spread across 42 acres is located 4km (2.5 miles) from the border with India.
- The corridor, which **will be open to the public on 10 November, 2019**, leads from the border straight to the gurdwara.
- The corridor will also feature a **bridge that will allow visitors to cross over the Ravi river**, which flows between the international border and the shrine.
- The **expansion includes** a new courtyard, museum, library, dormitories, locker rooms, an immigration centre and an embankment to protect the temple in case of floods.
- Officials have said that the corridor will be able to **accommodate up to 5,000 pilgrims per day, and up to 10,000 will be able to visit the shrine every day.**
- About 575 pilgrims will be visiting the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara via corridor, to be inaugurated on November 9.
- The Sikh community in India has long demanded access to the corridor. Previous Indian governments first discussed in 1998 and then again in 2004 and 2008, but these talks never led to anything concrete.

Significance of the shrine:

- The present shrine was built in 1925 after the original one was destroyed by floods.
- This was later restored by the Pakistani government in 2004.
- The shrine was built to commemorate the site where Guru Nanak spent the last 18 years of his life.
- It is considered to be the second holiest site for

Sikhism after Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Pakistan, which was built at the site where Guru Nanak was born.

How does it help promote relations?

- The corridor is coming up at a time when few avenues for India-Pakistan relations exist. In the past few years, not only has all official dialogue ceased but other exchanges by actors, artists, authors, academics, media and musicians have all but ended.
- Religious pilgrimages by Sikhs and Hindus to shrines in Pakistan and by Muslims to Sufi shrines in India see a reduced number of visas, and the corridor will be an exception where large numbers will be able to travel visa-free.
- Leaders on both sides have termed it as corridor of peace.
- It stands apart for its potential to further other such exchanges, as well as in promoting dialogue between the two neighbours.
- It has been described as a confidence building measure by the analysts.