

INDIA, PAK. SIGN KARTARPUR PACT

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Pakistan

Officials of India and Pakistan after signing an agreement on the Kartarpur Corridor in Gurdaspur on Thursday.PTI

India and Pakistan on Thursday signed an agreement to operationalise the Kartarpur corridor that will facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.

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.

S.C.L Das, Joint Secretary in the Union Home Ministry, signed the pact with Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal at the Kartarpur zero point along the border.

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

The agreement said pilgrims would be allowed to carry a maximum of Rs. 11,000 and a 7-kg bag that could contain drinking water, and they would not be allowed to venture beyond the shrine. They would travel in the morning and return the same day.

“Do's and don'ts”

According to the “do's and don'ts” issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), children below 13 years and persons of about 75 years and above will have to travel in groups.

“Eco-friendly material, preferably cloth bags, should be used during the pilgrimage and the surroundings should be kept clean,” the agreement said.

“All pilgrims who propose to visit Sri Kartarpur Sahib in Narowal district of Pakistan, will have to necessarily register online at prakashpurb550.mha.gov.in. in advance and the applicant is required to register himself/herself in advance of proposed date of travel. Registration does not confer a right to travel.”

“An Electronic Travel Authorization will also be generated that pilgrims need to carry along with their passport, when they arrive at the passenger terminal building [PTB],” the MHA said.

Pilgrims would be allowed to carry kirpans (dagger), one of the five articles of faith worn by Sikhs. Smoking, drinking and use of tobacco are not allowed inside the PTB complex at Dera Baba Nanak.

Pilgrims have been advised not to touch any unattended article and inform about anything suspicious to the authorities. Playing loud music and taking photographs without permission would also be not allowed.

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