Indo-Pak Gurdwara Corridor

Why in news?

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Pakistan plans to open a corridor to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan.

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What is the brief history of kartarpur Gurdwara?

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- The gurdwara in Kartarpur stands on the bank of the Ravi, about 120 km northeast of Lahore.
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- It was here that Guru Nanak assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539.
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- The shrine is visible from the Indian side, as Pakistani authorities generally trim the elephant grass that would otherwise obstruct the view.
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- Indian Sikhs gather in large numbers for darshan from the Indian side, and binoculars are installed at Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak.
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What is the significance of the gurdwara?

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- The gurdwara was opened to pilgrims after repairs and restoration in 1999, and Sikh jathas have been visiting the shrine regularly ever since.
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- There are no restrictions on visiting Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib once a pilgrim has entered Pakistan on a valid visa.
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- Sikh jathas from India travel to Pakistan on four occasions every year for Baisakhi, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, the death anniversary of

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev.
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- These Indian pilgrims are given access to all gurdwaras in Pakistan.
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What is the plan on Gurdwara corridor?

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- There have long been demands from pilgrims and political leaders to build a “corridor” flanked by barbed wire to allow pilgrims to cross over into Pakistan to visit the Kartarpur Sahib shrine, and return the same day.
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- A bridge will need to be constructed over the Ravi, and there shall be no need for passports or visas.
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- Most recently, the demand was placed before a Parliamentary Standing Committee that visited Dera Baba Nanak last year.
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- By which Pakistan plans to open a gurdwara corridor in Narowal district on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak next year.
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- The “corridor” would bring Pak infrastructure right up to the Indian border.
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What are the concerns with the plan?

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- Over the past year, gurdwaras in Pakistan have been used for a pro-Khalistan campaign.
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- Earlier this year, a gurdwara displayed posters and distributed pamphlets for the so-called “Sikh Referendum 2020”, and Pakistan denied permission to the Indian envoy and diplomats to visit it.
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- Pakistan’s intent also remains suspect, and Indian officials are wary of the corridor being misused by both state and non-state actors in that country
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Source: Indian Express

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