

## Capt Amarinder reiterates demand for withdrawal of Pak's proposed 'Jizya' on kartarpur visitors

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### INVC NEWS

Dera Baba Nanak,

Comparing it with 'Jizya' (Jazia), a tax imposed in earlier times on non-Muslims in Muslim countries, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Thursday reiterated his demand for immediate withdrawal by Pakistan of the proposed facilitation charges on visitors to the historic Gurdwara Sri Kartarpur Sahib.

Pointing out that Emperor Akbar had abolished the controversial and regressive tax during his rule, the Chief Minister said the proposed Pakistani service/facilitation charge of \$20 a visitor was against the basic spirit of Sikh ideology of allowing 'Khulle Darshan Deedar' of the Gurudwara Sahibs which remained in Pakistan after partition.

In informal media interactions at Dera Baba Nanak, where he reviewed the progress of the Kartarpur Corridor construction work, the Chief Minister pointed out that he already sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to pressurise Pakistan into withdrawing its proposed service charge. Captain Amarinder had suggested that the Minister of External Affairs take up the matter in the bilateral meetings subject for early resolution.

The Chief Minister expressed the confidence that the work on Kartarpur Corridor on the Indian side would be completed by 30th October, though he expressed concerns about the pace of progress on the Pakistani side. In response to a question on the security threat along the Corridor, he underlined the need to remain on constant guard.

Asked about the differences with the SGPC on the celebration of the 550th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, the Chief Minister said talks were progressing cordially and his cabinet colleague Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa had met them on Wednesday to resolve all issues amicably. The Chief Minister once again urged one and all to rise above petty politics to celebrate the historic event in unison.

Captain Amarinder also reiterated his plea to the people to uphold the tenets of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji to conserve water and air.

Describing his visit to Dera Baba Nanak as a special occasion, the Chief Minister recalled that he had served in the Army in the border area during 1965 Indo-Pak War. It was a matter of great pride and honour that the valiant Indian soldiers were defending the nation's borders from external as well as internal aggression, but the frequent sacrifices they had to make was painful and disturbing.

Asked to comment on Navjot Singh Sidhu's absence from the review meeting, the Chief Minister pointed out that it was a Cabinet review and Sidhu was no longer a minister in his cabinet.

With regard to the case against LIP leader Simarjit Bains, Captain Amarinder refused to comment since the matter was sub-judice.

On the issue of the enhanced fines under the amended Motor Vehicles Act, the Chief Minister said since the central government had left the final decision to the states, the concerned Punjab minister was looking into the matter.

To a question on the achievements of his government, particularly with reference to the problem of unemployment, he pointed out that 9 lakh youth had been provided jobs/self-employment opportunities in four Job Melas so far, with the fifth ready to offer another two lakh jobs. Besides, he had recently ordered filling up of 19000 vacancies in government jobs on priority, he added.

In response to another question, Captain Amarinder said Rs 2.50 Crores had already been allocated for the upgradation of the Government Hospital at Dera Baba Nanak.

Responding to a query about the issues concerning journalists, he noted that his government had already extended the health insurance cover to all accredited and yellow card holding journalists.

Earlier, the Chief Minister chaired a meeting of his Council of Ministers. He also paid his respects at Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Dera Baba Nanak, during his visit.

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