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# MS Gill backs int'l gurdwara corridor demand

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Tarn Taran: Union minister of state for sports and youth affairs Manohar Singh Gill expressed his support for an international access corridor to Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in Pakistan on Tuesday. He said that Indian Sikhs dreamt of walking to the gurdwara or travelling to Nankana Sahib or Dera Sahib in Pakistan and returning on the same day after paying obeisance.

Guru Nanak Dev had breathed his last at Kartarpur, which is situated just four kilometres from the international border near Dera Baba Nanak in India.

Sikhs here have been demanding that an international corridor be constructed that makes the gurdwara accessible to Indian devotees in such a way that they can walk up to the gurdwara and return on the same day. At present, devotees have to gather on the Indian side of the border and offer prayers by looking at the gurdwara on a clear day.

Gill stated that it was due to his letter written to external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee regarding the corridor that he had planned to himself visit Dera Baba Nanak during his last visit to Amritsar. He said Nankana Sahib-Amritsar bus could justify its role only if there was a visa centre at Amritsar.

"Obtaining a visa from Amritsar, boarding the bus from there and returning on the same day after paying obeisance is every Sikh's dream," he said.

He expressed satisfaction over the Indian performance at the Beijing Olympics.

He said it was after a long time that three participants had won individual medals. He said while India had enormous sporting talent, there were some organizational problems due to which the country's players failed to win at the international sports events.

Laying emphasis on education and economic independence of women in the society, Gill suggested that states should provide hostel facilities in government schools and colleges to encourage higher education among rural girls.

Gill announced the provision of an Astro Turf track for the Government Senior Secondary School, Kairon, whose student Mandeep Cheema had participated in the Beijing Olympics. He said he would visit the school to meet Mandeep and encourage her. He also announced plans to spend another Rs 3 crore for the relaying of the Hockey Astro Turf at Guru Nanak Dev University. Earlier, Gill paid obeisance at the Golden Temple in Amritsar.