

Pak chose to politicise pious moment: MEA

Govt rejects invite to SAARC summit, says no dialogue till Pak stops anti-India terror activities

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Reacting strongly to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan raising the issue of Jammu & Kashmir during the inauguration ceremony of Kartarpur corridor on Wednesday, India termed it as “deeply regrettable” and asserted that he chose to politicise a pious moment.

The Ministry of External Affairs said J&K is an “integral and inalienable” part of India. “It is deeply regrettable that the Prime Minister of Pakistan chose to politicise the pious occasion meant to realise the



Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal walk in the Indian side of the border at Attari on Wednesday AP

long pending demand of the Sikh community to develop Kartarpur corridor by making unwarranted reference to Jammu & Kashmir, which is an integral and inalienable part of India,” the Ministry said.

The MEA also said Pakistan must fulfill its international obligations and take effective and credible action to stop providing shelter and all kind of support to cross-border terrorism from territories

under its control.

Meanwhile, a day after Pakistan said it will invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the SAARC summit, India on Wednesday rejected it saying there will be no dialogue unless Pakistan desists from terrorist activities against India. Making this point, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said the Kartarpur corridor initiative was not linked to the dialogue process with the neighbouring country.

Reiterating New Delhi’s stand on resumption of dialogue, Sushma said at a Press conference in Hyderabad, “That invitation has already been given. But, we are not responding to it positively. Because, as I said, that unless and until Pakistan stops terrorist activities in India, there will be no dialogue and we will not participate in SAARC.”

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Army Chief General Bipin Rawat too echoed similar sentiments when asked about the presence of Khalistani Gopal Chawla along with Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa during the Kartarpur corridor inauguration there. Rawat said, "Everybody talks about giving peace a chance. You see what the Government said today. This (Kartarpur corridor) is to be seen in isolation. It should not be linked to anything else."

Noting that Pakistan promoting terror activities in India came in the way of resumption of talks, Sushma said, "I have already visited Pakistan and this was me only who started the comprehensive bilateral dialogue. But what happened after that? Pathankot, after that Uri. So, we have to take a big picture."

She, however, declined to comment on Punjab Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu visiting Pakistan for the event.

As regards Sidhu giving credit to Imran Khan for the corridor initiative and the latter saying it happened due to efforts of the cricketer-turned-politician, Sushma said the Government of India,

whichever Government was in power, sought Kartarpur corridor.

"It happens G (government) to G (government). Any one individual can't take decision with any Government. They were also telling him that you write. You speak. Such decisions happen Government to Government. Not through any one individual," she said.

On reports about Sidhu going to Pakistan against the advice of Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh following the recent grenade attack in Amritsar that claimed three lives, Sushma said the Chief Minister said he was told by the Minister that it was a private visit. She also said details related to Kartarpur corridor, including whether it would be visa-free, among others, are yet to be decided.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who represented the Indian Government at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kartarpur corridor in Pakistan, said the corridor was anchored in hope and goodwill but there is need to be conscious of ground realities, PTI reported from Amritsar\Chandigarh.

Puri, along with Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, crossed over to the neighbouring country through Attari-Wagah land route in Amritsar to attend the ceremony.