

Kartarpur corridor site plans shared with Pak.

Land acquisition for 100-yard highway and checkpoint to be fast-tracked by Punjab govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has shared with Pakistan coordinates of the 'zero point' along the border in Punjab's Gurdaspur district where the 100-yard corridor, leading to the Kartarpur Sahib shrine, will be built.

"The notification to acquire land for an Integrated Checkpost (ICP) will be issued on Wednesday. The Punjab government has assured that the land will be made available for both projects [the highway and ICP] by mid-March," said a senior Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) official.

Sikh groups have been pe-



Crucial link: A view of Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib. ■ AFP

tioning governments in New Delhi and Islamabad to build a pilgrim corridor over the border from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur to Kartarpur in Pakistani Punjab's

Narowal province. The plan is to complete the project by November 23, 2019, the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

On January 19, Pakistan

announced that it had shared the draft of the agreement, to be signed by the two governments, for "facilitation of (Indian) Sikh Yatries to visit the Gurudwara, Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Narowal, Pakistan".

A high level meeting was held on Tuesday by the Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba to fast track the project. It was attended by Punjab chief secretary Karan Avtar Singh, Border Security Force DG R.K. Misra, Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad Ajay Bisaria and senior officers of other agencies. "The meeting discussed land acquisition for the high-

way and for the Integrated Check Post (ICP). It was informed that the preliminary notification for land acquisition for the highway had already been issued," the MHA official said.

A detailed plan of the ICP is expected to be finalised within the next few days, said the official. "The meeting was informed that coordinates of zero point have been communicated to Pakistan," he added.

After the meeting, Mr. Singh told reporters, "India will give draft agreement on Kartarpur to Pakistan and the modalities will be over within a month."