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*Dear Prime Minister*

The Sikh community appreciates the efforts and political courage that the Government of India as well as the Government of Pakistan has displayed in coming to an agreement that will finally allow Sikh devotees free access to the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib (Pakistan) from Dera Baba Nanak (Punjab), to pay obeisance. No doubt it is a bold initiative and required considerable political capital in the face of the fact that New Delhi was dealing with a country that has often betrayed an inimical stance towards our nation.

However, at a time when this long cherished dream is about to become a real possibility, beating seemingly insurmountable odds and negotiating a hostile terrain of relationship, it becomes absolutely pertinent to point out how essential it is for the entire venture to not stray away from the philosophy of Guru Nanak, whose 550th Parkash Purab, we are about to mark with this international corridor.

Burdened with the onerous responsibility of leading the people in observing the 550th Birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, you would no doubt be keen that nothing should happen, not even inadvertently, that is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of the teachings of Guru Nanak.

It is in this context that I must point out that the plans to install 300 feet tall flagposts and hoist the Tricolour on the Indian side of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor hardly fit into a paradigm of religiosity, spirituality and universal brotherhood that the Sikh Gurus sought to imbue this land with.

A National flag is certainly a symbol of sovereignty, and no doubt any citizen looks at it with a sense of pride. Also, we live in a world of aggressively competing sovereignties. A 300 feet flagpole is likely to be matched by a 301 feet high crescent and moon fluttering across the border. Both India and Pakistan have already locked themselves into a daily display of aggressive militaristic machismo kicks, jibes, shouting and stomping at the Wagah border, an alternative to the times when the two countries are not actually engaging each other on the peaks of Siachen or exchanging artillery fire across the LoC. Why do we need one more platform for the display of how hard can our soldiers stomp their foot?

Mr Prime Minister, I believe you have studied the great Indian classical texts, and, therefore, it hardly behoves anyone, much less me, to point out that you would already be well aware of how little this display of sovereign egos, mounted to the tune of calls of the bugle and drumbeats of the soldiers, would be aligned with the wafts of sublime Gurbani.

A large number of Indians tread the difficult terrain to pay obeisance as part of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, and pilgrims actually enter the Chinese territory as part of the yatra. They are even required to sign a Consent Form for cremation of mortal remains on the Chinese side in case of death. But never has any Indian leader proposed raising a huge hundreds of feet tall Tricolour on the border — and rightly so, since such a pilgrimage is hardly an occasion to stress territorial sovereignty.

Would you, Mr Prime Minister, want the great Indian Tricolour, and the very possible competing crescent & moon flag of Pakistan, to become a symbolic irritant, unnecessarily vitiating the serenity of the sublime atmosphere along this corridor of faith that is coming into being partly because of your own political courage?

Both India and Pakistan are undoubtedly two sovereign nations, and neither country needs to prove this fact to the other or to the world community as they both and the world concede that much. Both, New Delhi as well as Islamabad has shown remarkable magnanimity in accepting the long cherished demand of the Sikh community to open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for the followers of Guru Nanak Dev to pay their obeisance unhindered. You have gained a remarkable, once in a lifetime opportunity to take a decision that Kartarpur Sahib Corridor will not be allowed to be used as a place for the display of hubris.

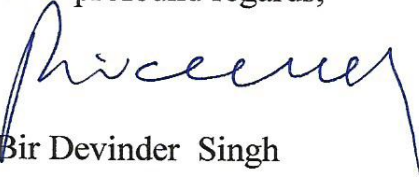
India and Pakistan share 3,323 kilometres long clearly demarcated international border, a stretch long enough for both of them to plonk enough flagposts and hoist enough national flags, if they so desire. The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor is the place where Guru Nanak subsumed his soul with the Eternal Being after disseminating his message of love and peace and a glorious vision of universal brotherhood where all humankind could coexist. We all have much to do to live up to that message. Let us ensure that at Kartarpur Sahib, the spirit of coexistence would take precedence over the embittered display of sovereign's egos.

Let us develop the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, a mere 4.7 km long stretch, as an 'equatorial line of interfaith understanding' in South Asia, an essential frontier exemplifying the humankind's capacity to dream big to achieve mutual love and peace.

Let us not miss this opportunity to rediscover an undiscovered avenue of peace, walking on this Guru-blessed route, with an unflinching faith. It is my fervent plea that you should take the initiative and abandon the idea of raising flag-posts and hoisting a giant Tricolour at Sri Kartarpur Sahib, a step that would be in keeping with the grandeur of Guru Nanak's philosophy and preaching's.

Looking forward to affirmative and resolute action in the matter,

With profound regards,



Bir Devinder Singh

**Sh. Narinder Modi Ji**  
**Honourable Prime Minister of India**  
**New Delhi**