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Canadian minister meets Punjab cabinet minister to streamline migration

TOI | Nov 16, 2018, 07:00 IST

Chandigarh: In a bid to streamline the migration of youngsters from Punjab to Canada, Canadian immigration minister Christopher Kerr held a meeting with Punjab technical education, industrial training and employment generation minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Saturday.

Channi said a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed between Punjab government and the government of Alberta, Canada to streamline migration. application process for students on February 5, 2019. According to him, this will help save Punjab students aspiring for a foreign education from being cheated by commission agents.

Kerr, who looks after migration affairs of India, Nepal and Bhutan, was accompanied by Rahul Sharma, managing director, government of Alberta.

The Canadian delegation held discussions with the technical education minister in the presence of senior officials of the Punjab government, including secretary, technical education, director employment generation, director skill development and vice-chancellors of Indian Kumar Punjab Skill University, Technical University, Jalandhar and Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda. Issues discussed included setting up of a Punjab government portal for students and those interested in moving to Canada and to help with skill development for overseas employment.

Issues like programmes in Canadian colleges and universities and how the Canadian government would support initiatives in Punjab's skill development were discussed. Sandeep Kaur, advisor, Skill Development Mission, Punjab, took delegation members to a small-scale industrial cluster in Mohali and Kerr lauded the Punjab government's efforts to carry out skill development. Lineage of skilled manpower in different sectors in Canada was highlighted during the meeting. Delegation members also visited Golden Temple in Amritsar.

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Kartarpur: Bajwa backs demand for land swap

TOI | Oct 16, 2018, 07:52 AM IST

Chandigarh: Reacting to a resolution passed in the Punjab assembly on Kartarpur corridor, Congress Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa said that land swap would be a long-term solution.

"Punjab assembly on Saturday unanimously passed a special resolution regarding Kartarpur Sahib, advocating for a land-swap with Pakistan. This is an eminently appreciable step and would be the sort of long-term solution that an emotive issue such as this needs," said Bajwa.

He added that, "In 2011, I had raised this very proposal in the Lok Sabha. I proposed a land-swap deal, where the area around Kartarpur Sahib is transferred to India in return for an equivalent area's transfer by us. There are several instances of such land swaps in our history – in the years after Partition, again with Pakistan in 1962 and constitutionally, very recently with Bangladesh. Land swap is one of the principles any debate on its sustainability, any national security concern and therefore any uncertainty that must put to rest at such conferences, especially in matters of faith such as this. I also wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, reiterating my proposal," he said. "The CM, opposition leaders and all political parties have supported the land-swap deal," he added.

Following a negotiation by SAD president Sukhbir Badal, Punjab government's resolution appreciating the role of Centre on the Kartarpur corridor will also raise the demand for land swapping with Pakistan. The opposition to Congress easy access to Kartarpur Sahib was accepted by the House. There has also been a suggestion that Punjab should take up this demand with the government of India, offering over 15,000 acres of land in exchange for the part on which Kartarpur Sahib stands, on the banks of the River.

Till now, land swappings have been one of the suggestions to enable access to the gurdwara for devotees and those advocating it point out that it being a border area, a deal between the two countries would be possible.

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Punjab govt favours Chadha sugar mill, fails to collect total fine:Majithia

TOI | Nov 16, 2018, 07:00 IST

Chandigarh: SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia on Friday highlighted in the Punjab legislative assembly that the Punjab government was extending preferential treatment and safe passage to Chadha Sugar Mills in Batala even when it is owned by the family members of Paranjit Singh Sahna, chief minister Amarinder Singh's nephew, Jasdeep Kaur Chadha, owns the sugar mill at Kot Algana village in Batala. According to Majithia, though the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) had fined its Rs 10 crore for pollution, the Punjab government, the state government has not learnt Beas river, which had resulted in the death of thousands of fish and pollution, the state government has let the company escape the fine.

Sarna told TOI that the Punjab government has not favoured his nieces' mill in any way. They had deposited the remaining fine amount such that "not a penny of the dues remain functions," said Sarna. He added that if the mill shuts down, it would have an adverse impact on the sugarcane farmers. On the other side, according the molasses leakage incident as a natural calamity, Sarna said in such situation any government would help the industry, as industry's loss is ultimately loss to farmers.

The Akali leader had raised the issue during the call attention motion on Friday to highlight that even though the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had imposed heavy fine of Rs 50 crore on the Punjab government, the state government has not learnt any lesson. Majithia said the Congress government had thrown out people for protesting against the pollution caused by the sugar mill. Majithia said Congress minister Navjot Sidhu had tweeted that the NGT had directed that the state government had also removed noted environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal from the board of PPCB member for raising the right issues.

The water resources minister Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria told the assembly that directions have been issued to the sugar mill to install a resistant retaining wall around the effluent treatment plant to collect further molasses leakage. He also told the assembly that the irrigation department would give the final approval of the wall's design.

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