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Punjab Government Pledges New Flood Drains and Urban Projects for Nankana Sahib

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In a recent tour of Nankana Sahib, Punjab's Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced a slate of infrastructure and urban development initiatives, including the construction of two new flood drains. The projects are aimed at mitigating future flood damage and improving the quality of life in the area, but some residents remain skeptical about long-term execution given past delays in similar promises.

Chief Minister Sharif, during a two-and-a-half-hour visit to flood-hit areas and surrounding villages, declared that the two flood drains would help protect residents from the kind of water damage they've endured in recent monsoon seasons. While flood control is a critical need, some observers noted the timing and political backdrop of the announcement, raising concerns about whether these plans will survive beyond photo ops and media coverage.

During her tour, Sharif emphasized speeding up road reconstruction and pending development schemes across the district. She demanded a full beautification plan for Nankana Sahib within two weeks, instructing authorities to release necessary funding immediately. While aesthetically focused projects like city beautification often earn political points, local infrastructure experts argue that drainage and road quality should take precedence over cosmetic upgrades.

The visit also included new promises of expanded public transportation. The chief minister committed to increasing the number of electric buses operating in the region as part of a broader pledge to transform Nankana Sahib into what she called a "model city." That said, critics have questioned the prioritization of electric buses in areas still lacking reliable road systems and basic amenities.

Sharif also ordered local authorities to install traffic safety features, such as zebra crossings and road signage near schools, and to regulate bread prices, a common point of concern amid Pakistan's ongoing inflation issues. Although price controls are often announced by provincial leaders, they are rarely enforced in rural markets, where regulation tends to be lax.

Additional measures included the deployment of more mobile health clinics, labeled “clinics-on-wheels,” to serve underserved communities, and an upgrade of the city’s main entry points. Service lanes along the major roads will also be constructed to ease traffic flow. As part of broader rural inclusion efforts, she announced that Dafar Khokhran and surrounding villages will now be part of the provincial Model Village Scheme, a program aimed at providing essential facilities like clean water, schools, and healthcare to rural areas.

The chief minister concluded her tour by visiting flood-affected homes and farmlands in Jaslani Mor. Images of her walking through damaged properties were widely circulated by the government’s media wing, sparking criticism from opposition voices who accused the administration of focusing more on optics than on sustained relief.

Despite these sweeping promises, many locals and political analysts remain cautious. While government plans to modernize rural and semi-urban districts like Nankana Sahib are welcome in principle, previous administrations have left similar projects incomplete or forgotten after initial announcements. Whether this round of promises translates into action will depend heavily on follow-through, oversight, and transparency.