

Old pension scheme restored in HP

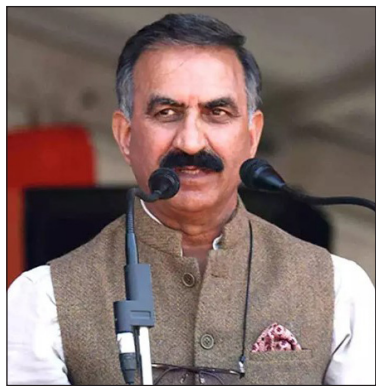
EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
SHIMLA, JANUARY 13

Himachal Pradesh has become the third Congress-ruled state to restore the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) after Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu fulfilled his party's election promise of restoring the OPS in the first Cabinet meeting held here on Friday. This will benefit over one-lakh government employees of the state.

Announcing the restoration of the OPS, Chief Minister Sukhu said: "We will provide the old pension scheme till the last breath of your life."

"We had promised to implement the OPS in the first Cabinet, and we have done it. Notification in this regard will be issued



today itself," he said.

On Thursday, Sukhu had said that the OPS was not only about giving monetary benefit but also instilling a sense of social security and self-respect among government employees.

11 cops suspended for negligence

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 13

The Delhi police suspended 11 cops for negligence over the death of a 20-year-old woman who died after being dragged by a car in west Delhi for 13 km on January 1.

The move came after the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed the Delhi Police to take disciplinary action against the police personnel who were on duty on that fateful night.

The MHA also directed the police to serve show-cause notices to the supervisory officers of the PCR vans and police pickets deployed on the night for their alleged dereliction of duties.

The ministry directed the Delhi Police to suspend all the personnel posted in three

PCR vans and two pickets immediately as they failed to respond to calls informing them about the hit-and-run Kanjhawala incident.

The MHA has directed the Delhi Police to ensure stringent possible punishment to the accused persons, who were involved in the incident and investigate the case taking into all aspects including that of murder charge, a senior official said on Friday.

The MHA official said: "The police have been directed not to desist from, including the murder charges (under Section 302 of the IPC) against the accused persons given the gravity of the crime and available evidence in the case and investigate the matter accordingly and file a charge sheet soon to ensure punishment as early as possible."



Entire Joshimath may sink, warns ISRO

Satellite images show town sank 5.4cm in just 12 days

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 13

Uttarakhand's Joshimath saw a rapid sinking of 5.4 cm in just 12 days, according to a report by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

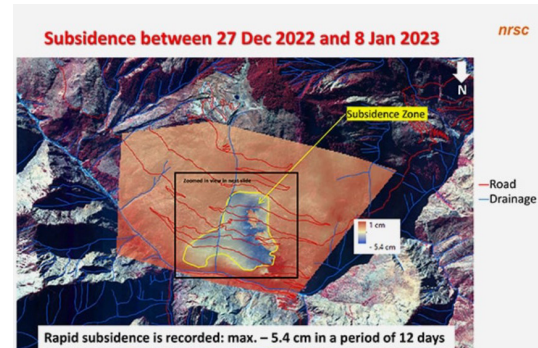
Satellite images released by ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre show the holy Himalayan town sank 5.4 cm between December 27 and January 8.

ISRO's preliminary report released on Thursday shows that the entire town may sink. The report, quoting witnesses, said the massive soil sinking occurred due to "a rapid subsidence event that was triggered on January 2, 2022."

"The rapid shifting of soil occurred in the central Joshimath, in the region around an Army Helipad and a temple. "The crown of the subsidence is located near Joshimath-Auli road at a height of 2,180 metre," ISRO's report said.

The space agency also found that the sinking rate was much lower in the previous months. Between April and November last year, Joshimath sank by 9 cm.

"Slow subsidence up to 9 cm within



the Joshimath town is recorded over a period of 7 months, between April and November 2022," the report said.

The pictures have been taken from the Cartosat-2S satellite.

The "sinking" temple town, known to be the gateway to popular pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Sikh holy shrine Hemkund Sahib, is on the verge of a disaster with massive cracks appearing in buildings and roads. Nearly 4,000 people have been moved to relief camps after a satellite survey.

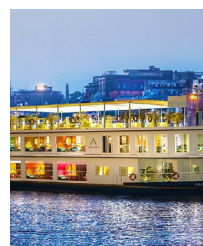
Besides hotels and business establish-

ments, 678 homes are in danger, the Uttarakhand government has said.

Residents and experts blame the crisis on unplanned and chaotic infrastructure projects in the region, especially a power plant that involved blasts and drilling in the mountains.

Meanwhile, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who visited Joshimath and held meetings with locals and experts on Thursday, said: "For now, Rs 1.5 lakh will be given to each affected family. This is only a temporary measure. We are still working on compensation rates," he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah also led a high-level meeting to review the situation with Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, RK Singh, Bhupendra Yadav and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and senior government officials at his home.



PM flags off 'world's longest river cruise' from Varanasi

PM Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off the Ganga river cruise from Varanasi. The 51-day cruise, being pitched as the world's longest river cruise, is expected to reach its final destination on March 1.

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Callous, insensitive: Sukhbir on helmets for Sikh soldiers

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal today appealed to PM Modi to personally intervene against the implementation of the reported move of the Government to make helmets mandatory for Sikhs in armed forces.

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Ishar Singh, The hero of Waziristan

In 1921, Sepoy Ishar Singh of the 28th Punjab was awarded the Victoria Cross for exceptional valour during the Waziristan Campaign.

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PAGE 1 PLUS

PM flags off 'world's longest river cruise' from Varanasi

Express India News Network

CHANDIGARH, January 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off the Ganga river cruise from Varanasi. The 51-day cruise, being pitched as the world's longest river cruise, is expected to reach its final destination — Dibrugarh in Assam — on March 1.

"The beginning of the world's longest river cruise service on river Ganga is a landmark moment. It will herald a new age of tourism in India," Prime Minister Modi said, while flagging off the cruise virtually via video conference. He added that the cruise service will boost tourism and create new job opportunities.

Addressing the foreign tourist undertaking the maiden voyage of the cruise, the PM said: "India can't be defined in words, it can only be experienced from heart."

Set to sail from Varanasi, the cruise ship, MV Ganga Vilas, will cover 3,200 km over 51 days, crossing 27 river systems and several states before ending its journey at



Dibrugarh. The voyage is packed with visits to 50 tourist spots, including World Heritage spots, national parks, river ghats, and major cities like Patna in Bihar, Sahibganj in Jharkhand, Kolkata in West Bengal, Dhaka in Bangladesh and Guwahati in Assam.

It will make pit-stops to cover the famous Ganga Arti in Varanasi, the Buddhist site of Sarnath; and even Majuli, the largest river island in Assam. The travellers will also visit the Bihar School Of Yoga and Vikramshila University. The cruise will traverse through the Sunderbans in the Bay

of Bengal delta, as well as the Kaziranga National Park.

The vessel has three decks, 18 suites on board with a capacity of 36 tourists, with all the luxury amenities. The maiden voyage has 32 tourists from Switzerland signing up for the entire length of the journey.

THE CRUISE WILL TRAVERSE THROUGH THE SUNDERBANS IN THE BAY OF BENGAL DELTA, AS WELL AS THE KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK.

It will cost approximately Rs 25,000 per person per day. While it will be managed by private operators, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), under the Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways (MoPSW), has supported the project.

Highlighting the need to develop river cruise tourism in the country, Union Shipping and Ports Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said that the sector would generate employment opportunities in the hinterland. He said the river tourism circuits will be developed and integrated with the existing tourism circuits for maximum exposure and rapid development of this sector in the country.

Dense fog in Punjab, Haryana today

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast dense to very dense fog in some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi; in isolated pockets over Uttar Pradesh and Bihar on Saturday.

Dense fog in isolated pockets over Jammu division, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha is also expected with cold day conditions very likely in isolated pockets over Bihar.

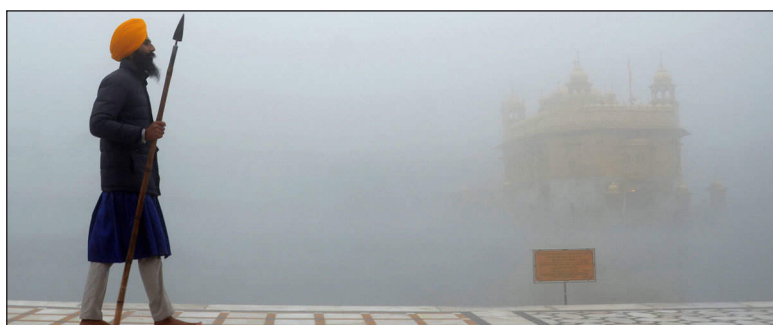
"Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions very likely in some parts of north Rajasthan and cold wave conditions in isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh," the IMD said.

On January 15, the IMD expects dense to very dense fog likely in some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi;

in isolated pockets over Uttar Pradesh. Dense fog in isolated pockets over Jammu division, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, north Madhya Pradesh and Bihar is also expected with cold day conditions likely in isolated pockets over Uttar Pradesh on January 15.

Meanwhile, many parts of Haryana and Punjab received light rains with the minimum temperatures hovering close to normal limits on Friday, the Meteorological Department said.

Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a minimum temperature of 9.2 degrees Celsius. In Haryana, Narnaul recorded a low of 9.5 degree C, Karnal 10.6 degree C, Rohtak 11.2 degree C and Ambala 11.3 degree C, according to the MeT department. In Punjab, Patiala recorded a low of 8.9 degree C, Ludhiana 9.5 degree C, Faridkot 10 degree C and 10.2 degree C each in Pathankot and Mohali.



Winter break in Haryana schools extended till January 21

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

The Haryana Government on Friday extended winter break in government and private schools of the state till January 21. The schools will reopen on January 23.

Directorate School Education, Haryana Government, issued a notice in this regard. However, owing to the board exams, Class 10 and 12 students will have to continue going to the school.

Haryana VB nabs SI taking bribe

CHANDIGARH: Haryana State Vigilance Bureau caught a sub-inspector of the police department, red-handed while accepting a bribe worth Rs 30,000 in Nuh district.

Sharing the information in this regard here today, a spokesperson of the Bureau said that accused SI Bharatpal posted at Pinagwa police station in Nuh district has been caught after a complaint of corruption was filed against him.

The accused was demanding bribe from the victim's father in lieu of arresting the accused involved in a case.

10 NABL accredited labs in Hry soon

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala stated that 10 NABL accredited labs and quality marking centres will be set up to test the quality of the products across the states. He directed the officers to prepare a proposal in this regard.

The Deputy Chief Minister was presiding over the review meeting of the Industries and Commerce Department here today.

Chautala directed the officers to implement the policies of Industries and Commerce Department related to rural areas on priority basis. He said that farmers should be given detailed information about agriculture and agro-based industries and businesses so that they can benefit by adding value to their products.

The Deputy Chief Minister was informed that a total of 57 applications were received under 'Agri-Business and Food Processing Policy 2018', in which 42 applications were found to be correct and their projects have been approved. These projects are now receiving investments totalling about Rs. 570 crores, of which a grant of Rs. 120 crores have been approved. The Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers that after studying the projects of the applicants, their subsidy should be issued at the earliest so that they can start their production on time.



CHAUTALA DIRECTED THE OFFICERS TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICIES OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE DEPARTMENT RELATED TO RURAL AREAS ON PRIORITY BASIS.

Chautala reviewed in detail the 'Haryana Enterprises and Employment Policy 2020', 'Logistics, Warehousing and Retail Policy 2019', 'Electric Vehicle Policy 2022' and 'Haryana Enterprises Promotion Centre' of the department. He asked the officers to speed up the work in the year 2023.

While reviewing the progress regarding various schemes of MSME, he said that the small industries being set up under the said schemes should be given complete support as per the rules so that the employment opportunities for the youth can be increased in the state.

PUNJAB

Callous, insensitive: Sukhbir on helmets for Sikh soldiers

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal today appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to personally intervene against the implementation of the reported move of the Government of India to make helmets mandatory for Sikhs in the country's armed forces.

Describing the move as "provocative and insensitive in the extreme" Badal said that it was not just unprecedented in history but also defied all logic as Sikh soldiers had always remained in the forefront of the country's defence without ever feeling the need for such helmets in the past.

"If details emerging from various sources including newspaper reports are indeed true, then we are surprised that the government has shown such callous disregard for the time honoured and established Sikh tenets, norms and practices on a matter of



such critical emotional and religious sensitivity. It concerns 'Sikh Marayada' which no one has a right to tinker or trifle with," said Badal in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He, however, hoped that the PM would look into the matter and order that necessary action be taken to stop any proposal in this regard.

"Not even the British had forced such a decision on the Sikh soldiers. Sikhs are a fiercely patriotic people and have led from

the front in 1948, 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars as also in all other military operations including Kargil. Why this sudden development when no Sikh had ever felt the need for such a protection?" asked Badal, adding that he still hoped that the reports in this regard are not true.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Badal also drew Modi's attention to the serious concern expressed by Akal Takhat Jathedar Harpreet Singh over the reported move of the Ministry of Defence in this regard.

Badal was referring to reports in a section of the press which said that the Ministry of Defence had already placed orders for bulk purchase of 1.59 lakh of these so-called "specially designed helmets" for the Sikh soldiers. He said that the Sikh tenets forbade the wearing of any covering material over their turbans and in all combat operations, including the two World Wars, the Sikhs have neither asked for nor been forced to wear any such headgear over their turbans."

6,000 ad hoc workers to be regularised

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday announced that 6,000 ad hoc employees working as education volunteers and motivators in the state education department for the past several years will be regularised soon.

These 6,000 employees were recruited by the previous governments state under various central schemes.

Last year, the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP



government in Punjab had regularised 8,000 employees in the education department and brought in a policy to regularise employees.

In the first phase, the adhoc/ contractual employees in the Education Department are being regularised.

The Punjab government has claimed that ever since Aam Aadmi Party's Bhagwant Mann came to power in March, 2021, over 25,000 persons have been employed across various government departments.

Military Lit Festival in Patiala on Jan 28, 29

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
PATIALA, JANUARY 13

The royal city of Patiala will host the prestigious 'Military Literature Festival' for the first time on January 28 and 29. This was disclosed by the Deputy Commissioner, Sakshi Sawhney here yesterday. She said that Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Maan had announced plans to expand the scope of the Military Literature Festival (MLF) at Chandigarh on December 4, 2022.

The fest will commemorate the sacri-



lices of the brave soldiers who fought on the country's borders.

Ms Sawhney said that this historical ceremony is going to be organized at Khalsa College, Patiala on January 28 and 29 and is a part of the 'Patiala Heritage Festival'. The festival will become an eternal mem-

ory for Patialvis.

The Chief Minister had also announced that the MLF will be organised at the district and university level across the state. In view of that the Patiala district administration has taken a special initiative to organise 'Military Literature Festival' at the Royal City, she added.

To conduct the Military Literature Festival, the Deputy Commissioner held a meeting with Lt. Gen. Chetinder Singh, Lt Gen (Dr.) Jagbir Singh Cheema, and Lt Col PS Grewal of the Military Literature Festival Association.

Pak embassy staff accused of indecent behaviour

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 13

A college professor from Punjab has accused senior staff members of the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi of indecent behaviour.

A senior professor and head of a department at a university in Punjab, the woman said she had booked an online visa appointment with the Pakistan High Commission.

She alleged that when she had visited the embassy to apply for a visa to travel to Pakistan in 2021, some senior staffers made sexual advances towards her and asked her objectionable questions.

The professor alleged that a staffer asked her personal questions, which made her uncomfortable.

"On March 15, 2022, I had a visa appointment at the High Commission which I had booked online over the website. I reached there around 9.45 am and entered the complex around 10 am. I was asked to wait for an hour and a half in the waiting lounge. I was asked a few general questions about my visit and then later asked to go to a room where I waited along with some officials for a few minutes before the visa officer arrived. He asked me the purpose of my visit. I explained that I wished to visit Lahore, photograph the monuments and write on them and then visit Abbottabad University for a lecture at the university. In less than two minutes he told me that the visa cannot be granted," she was quoted by ANI as saying.

She alleged, "The employee asked me, 'Why am I not married? How do I live without marriage? What do I do for my sexual desires?'" ANI quoted her as saying.

THE PROFESSOR ALLEGED THAT A STAFFER ASKED HER PERSONAL QUESTIONS, WHICH MADE HER UNCOMFORTABLE.

"I was asked whether I supported Khalistan. Or could I write on Kashmir issues?" the woman said.

When she was about to leave, another staffer arrived and allegedly started asking her personal questions, which made her uncomfortable.

The professor claimed the official persisted with his questions despite her attempts to change the topic.

In her complaint to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, she has asked for the matter to be looked into.

According to a WhatsApp chat screenshot which the victim, it is alleged that the Pakistan diplomat asked her to write against the Government of India and offered her handsome remuneration. She said she refused to do so, ANI said.

The woman said that she went public with the incident as no one was paying heed to her case and she wanted "Indian women visiting the Pakistan High Commission to know their intentions".

The woman had, in the past, filed a complaint at a Pakistan portal and even written to the country's foreign affairs minister, Bilawal Bhutto. She also sent screenshots of the WhatsApp chat with the Pakistan High Commission staffer to the foreign minister.

Arsh Dalla's aide nabbed from Ferozepur

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
FEROZEPUR, JANUARY 13

The Ferozepur police on Friday arrested an aide of Canada-based gangster Arsh Dalla near Talwandi. The arrested gangster has been identified as Gurpiar Singh.

Ferozepur DIG Ranjit Singh Dhillon said Gurpiar Singh, an aide of declared terrorist Arsh Dhalla, who is involved in several major crimes in Ferozepur district, had demanded ransom from Chauhan Jeweller, a resident of Talwandi, in the past.

When he refused to pay the ransom money, the gangster people fired at his house and fled.

The police intercepted him near Talwandi when he was fleeing on his motorcycle. Gurpiar Singh then opened



fire at the police and tried to escape.

He was injured in the retaliatory fire by the police. He was then arrested and admitted to a hospital at Zira.

The police said Gurpiar Singh was involved in several major crimes, which are being probed.

The DIG said that Gurpiar Singh had plans to carry out some big crime and could even kill someone.

EDITORIAL

The Express India NEWS

Banning floor-wise ownership in Chandigarh?

The judgement of the Supreme Court of India banning the conversion of residential units into multi-story apartments in elite sectors has come as a shock to many, although a section of people has also welcomed it. The Supreme Court in one of its recent judgements banned the conversion/bifurcation/trifurcation of residential units in sectors, 1 to 30 called Phase-I, observing that “legislature, the executive and the policy makers at the Centre as well as the State levels take note of the damage to the environment on account of haphazard developments and take a call to take necessary measures to ensure that the development does not damage the environment”.

But how will the decision make any “significant” difference? The judgement only prevents the sale of separate units but not the construction itself. Anybody, if s/he wants, can construct three floors, ground, first and second, besides the basement. That rule remains unchanged. Only the floors cannot be sold separately now. That way how far the judgement can go to save the heritage status of the city and its environment, only time will tell. Besides, there has not been any change in the floor area ratio. It has remained the same.

It is good to preserve the environment as well as the heritage status of a city like Chandigarh. At the same time, there is a need to take a pragmatic view on development. Given the rapid increase in population and given the importance of Chandigarh city, approach has to be pragmatic. It is a fact that multiple ownership of a single unit, maximum three, will definitely lead to an increase in the number of people residing in that particular unit, but that does not mean one cannot construct three floors and the basement.

Chandigarh houses two state capitals and a union territory. Shortage of space is a serious problem. And moreover, if no environmental hazard was caused till now, why should it be assumed that multiple-ownership will lead to any damage to the environment now. Housing remains an issue in India and it is still very difficult for a middle class family to own its own residence. With limited space, the vertical growth of cities is a fact and a reality. It cannot be avoided and postponed for a long time.

Those who have been aggressively pursuing the case for preventing multiple ownership of dwelling units, may be well intentioned and environment-friendly people, but they would be better off if they felt some empathy for others as well. It is not necessarily the “building mafia” that has been promoting the “multiple-ownership” practice, it is the need of the hour. The Haryana government has also introduced this concept of floor-wise ownership in Panchkula and it has been received well. Population is an issue which cannot be wished away and housing will naturally be an issue. Isolating parts of Chandigarh and dividing it between two parts, Phase-I and Phase-II is discriminatory.

Why Doordarshan Hisar shouldn't be shifted?



BY AJEET SINGH

Closure of the Doordarshan Kendra (DDK) Hisar is not only an issue of loss of some regular and some casual jobs for the locals or the loss of a medium that provided agricultural tips to farmers from the local experts of Haryana Agricultural University. It is also very much an issue of loss of a significant indicator of identity.

Haryana was the last state in the country to have a Doordarshan Kendra in 2002. Just 20 years later, the state is the first to lose its only Kendra at Hisar. It would be shifted to Chandigarh on 15th of January this year. The eight-acre prime location Doordarshan office and staff colony complex with its studios and costly digital equipment will be locked as no use has been announced so far.

Economy drive by the Prasar Bharati (the administering body of Doordarshan) is the prime reason for closure of the Hisar DD Kendra. The

move has invited strong protest from most sections of the society that consider the move as an attack on their identity.

Most states have their regional channels like DD Punjabi, DD Rajasthan, DD Bihar etc. DD Hisar had been christened as DD Haryana about two years ago for its international exposure. This is being written off now.

First the All India Radio and later the Doordarshan has contributed immensely in promoting and propagating regional cultures throughout the country beside educating farmers about the latest technologies of agriculture and allied areas like horticulture and dairy farming.

Hisar is privileged to have two well established universities, one for agriculture and another for veterinary sciences that provided resource persons to AIR and Doordarshan.

Haryana has been the playground of Indian history. Battles right from the Mahabharata to three battles of Panipat and the 1857 uprising are the milestones of India's history raised in Haryana. Folksingers have carried the sagas of bravery and sacrifices in these battles through oral medium from generation

to generation inspiring the youth to take up jobs in armed forces where Haryana is the biggest contributor in the ratio of its population.

It is the issues like this that need serious consideration with a long term view regarding the impact of denial of motivational input to youth through the mass media like Doordarshan, Hisar.

The argument that the shifting of DD Kendra from Hisar to state capital Chandigarh is only an exercise in consolidation of resources doesn't hold much water. Chandigarh is a modern urban settlement with no established culture of its own. It is a seat of three governments and a city of serving and retired government employees.

As Jalandhar is the cultural capital of Punjab, so is Hisar of Haryana. Jalandhar has contributed a lot in preservation, promotion and propagation of Punjabi culture and continues doing so. Closure of DD Kendra at Hisar would deny Haryana this impetus. It needs to be recognised that AIR and DD have emerged as significant indicators of identity of most regions in the country since independence.

Some people argue that Delhi already covers Haryana's territory with high power AIR and DD transmitters. That is a big fallacy. The people who don't see or listen to their own people on radio and television, tend to feel as non-persons. They feel culturally subjugated.

Of course, there are issues of employment of local talent in programmes of DD at Hisar. Some of the fresh graduates from the local Guru Jambheshwar University, who found casual jobs in DDK Hisar, have in due course moved to established news channels at Delhi, Chandigarh and other places.

It is time the state government takes up the issue with the Centre to stop the shifting of DDK Hisar to Chandigarh. Current agitation on the issue has been gathering support from opposition parties, trade unions and farmers' bodies. If prolonged, it may also emerge as an issue in Lok Sabha and state assembly elections due next year.

(Ajeet Singh has been the founder News Editor of the regional news bulletin from DDK Hisar in January 2003. He later retired as the Director of News from Hisar in November 2006).

GUTS AND GLORY ON FOREIGN SOILS – X

Touching the Sky with Glory



BY MAJ GEN HARVIJAY SINGH (RETD, SM)

Indian Air Force was officially raised on 8 Oct 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire; though raised in ‘Colonial Times’, the Indian Air Force cannot be labeled ‘Colonial’ only because it was raised in 1932. Can it be? Or rather should it be?

On 1 April 1933, the IAF commissioned its first squadron, No.1 Squadron, with four Westland Wapiti biplanes and five Indian Pilots.

The first five pilots commissioned into the IAF were Harish Chandra Sircar, Subroto Mukerjee, Bhupendra Singh, Aizad Baksh Awan and Amarjeet Singh. A sixth officer, J N Tandon had to revert to logistics duties as he was too short. All of them were commis-

sioned as Pilot Officers in 1932 from RAF Cranwell.

Subroto Mukerjee later went on to become the IAF's first Chief of the Air Staff. Subsequent batches inducted before World War II included Aspy Engineer (2nd Chief of Air Staff), K K Majumdar, Narendra, Daljit Singh, Henry Runganadhan, R H D Singh, Baba Mehar Singh, S N Goyal, Prithpal Singh and Arjan Singh (3rd Chief of Air Staff, and, Marshal of the Air).

The IAF was baptised by fire in the rugged North West Frontier (now in Pakistan) in 1938 and won its first gallantry award. A bombing attack as part of Army cooperation was carried out by Flight Lieutenant Peter Haynes, with Hawai Sepoy (as airmen were then known) 1st Class (Later Wing Commander) Kartar Singh Taunque as bombardier.

While Peter Haynes flew level and steady over the rugged terrain, Kartar Singh switched on the bomb-sight, calculated and released the 112-lb bombs with pinpoint accuracy. This



daring bombing sortie required tremendous courage and presence of mind on the part of Taunque for calculating terminal velocity, feeding speed and heading on the compass on-the-fly, and releasing 112-lb bombs at the enemy targets with devastating impact; all this being done while the tribals unleashed huge volumes of gunfire at the flying machine.

His contribution in operational flying was quickly recognised and he

became the first person in the IAF to be Mentioned-in-Dispatches for Operations in Waziristan 1937-38. (Those Mentioned in Dispatches for an act of bravery do not receive a medal for their action, are nonetheless entitled to receive a certificate and wear a decoration on their campaign medal). Wing Commander Kartar Singh Taunque was the grandfather of Sergeant Uday Singh Taunque who won the Purple Heart and Bronze Star posthumously for gallantry in Iraq in 2003 as part of the US Army; bravery knows no bounds of era or territory.

Later Kartar Singh also served in Mesopotamia.

On 3 Sep 1933, the No.1 Squadron got its first Indian Commanding Officer, Subroto Mukherjee, and all British officers were withdrawn making it an all-Indian squadron for the first time.

The Indian Armed Forces stand tall among their global peers because of their rich battle-hardened heritage, high motivation and tough training.

TO BE CONTINUED.