

Congress MP Santokh Singh dies during Bharat Jodo Yatra

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

Congress MP from Jalandhar Chaudhary Santokh Singh died on Saturday of heart attack during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Punjab's Phillaur. He was 76.

Singh was walking along with Rahul Gandhi in the yatra when he suddenly felt unwell as his heartbeat increased.

The two-time MP collapsed and was rushed to Virk Hospital in Phagwara in an ambulance, where he was declared brought dead. Rahul Gandhi left the Yatra and reached the hospital after receiving the news. The yatra has been suspended for the day.

Congress leaders Rana Gurjeet Singh and Vijay Inder Singla confirmed the news of Singh's death.

The cremation of Singh, who was a former Punjab minister, will take place tomorrow at 10.30 am at his native Gakhlan Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said the Yatra has been suspended for Sunday as well.

"Yatra is suspended for today. Tomorrow, last rites will be held. I haven't spoken to Rahul Gandhi yet but we all feel that after last rites we'll start the Yatra," he said.

Leader of Opposition Pratap Singh



Rahul Gandhi consoling Chaudhary Santokh Singh (inset) wife.

Bajwa said Santokh Singh had no previous ailment and he was healthy. He said, "Santokh Singh was not sleeping well for past three days because of his excitement and perhaps he had pressure of Bharat Jodo Yatra."

He further added that even doctors advise people not to go for walks early at age of 65 or more. "He had no past ailments. He would get his check-up done every three months," added Bajwa.

Meanwhile, expressing his condolences, Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "stunned with the sudden demise of Santokh Singh Chaudhary." He later met the family of Santokh Singh and paid his last respects in Jalandhar.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, expressed his condolences in a tweet: "Pained by the passing away of MP Shri

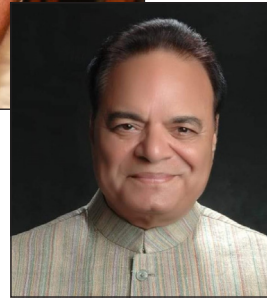
Santokh Singh Chaudhary Ji. He will be remembered for his efforts to serve the people of Punjab. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti."

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann tweeted: "I am deeply saddened by the untimely death of Congress Member of Parliament from Jalandhar, Santokh Singh Chowdhury.. May God rest his soul in peace."

Former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh wrote on Twitter: "Extremely saddened to hear about the sudden demise of MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary ji due to a heart attack today. My heartfelt condolences are with his entire family in their time of grief. May Waheguru Ji grant eternal peace to the departed soul."

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, too, condoled the demise of Singh.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister SS Chouhan tweeted: "An outstanding leader, who could still have given a lot to this nation, has left us. I offer him my respect and respect on behalf of the people of MP. May his soul rest in peace and may God give strength to his family, supporters and loved ones in this hour of grief."



Thick fog engulfs region

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

A thick blanket of fog continued to grip Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan on Saturday, throwing normal life out of gear.

Bathinda was the coldest place in Punjab where the minimum temperature was recorded at 0.6 degrees Celsius, followed by Amritsar at 1.2 degrees Celsius on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday.

The minimum temperature in Chandigarh was recorded at 11.4 degrees Celsius. It was 1.2 degrees Celsius in Amritsar, 9.6 degrees Celsius in Ludhiana, 4.8 degrees Celsius in Faridkot, 4 degrees Celsius in Gurdaspur and 5.2 degrees Celsius in Moga.

In Rajasthan's Fatehpur the lowest minimum temperature at minus 3.5 degree Celsius.

The officials of the Meteorological department warned that fog is likely to continue at most places of the state in the next five days.

The fall in minimum temperatures by 4 to 6 degrees Celsius in the next 3 days is expected in the state and dense fog will continue till January 18, the official added.

Weather department has warned that the dip in mercury in the region is likely to be record breaking.

According to the India Meteorological

Govt bodies, experts get gag order on Joshimath

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

A day after an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) report revealed that Uttarakhand's Joshimath saw a rapid sinking of 5.4 cm in just 12 days, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has barred government institutions from interacting with the media and sharing data on social media regarding ground subsidence. It said the organisations' "own interpretations" of data are creating confusion.

"It is observed that various government institutions are releasing data related to the

subject matter in social media platform, and also they are interacting with media with their own interpretation of the situation. It is creating confusion not only among affected residents but also among citizens of the country," the NDMA letter said, adding that the issue was highlighted during a meeting chaired by Union Home Minister on January 12.

Pointing out that an expert group has been formed for assessment of ground subsidence at Joshimath, the disaster management agency requested several institutions, including ISRO, to "sensitise their organisation" about this matter and refrain from posting anything on social media



platforms until the final report of the expert group is released by it.

Satellite images, taken from the Cartosat-2S satellite and released by ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre, showed that Joshimath sank 5.4 cm between December

27 and January 8.

The report, quoting witnesses, said the massive soil sinking occurred due to "a rapid subsidence event that was triggered on January 2, 2023." The gag order came under immediate criticism from Congress with its president Mallikarjun Kharge asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi "not to shoot the messenger".

General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh too targeted the government in his tweet: "They make one Constitutional institution attack another. Now, the National Disaster Management Authority tells ISRO to shut up. But how can satellite image lie? This is New India where only one man

knows everything, and will decide who will speak on anything."

Buildings in Joshimath, considered a holy town as it's a gateway for Hindu and Sikh shrines, developed deep cracks in December last year, triggering panic and swift rescue operations. Around 4,000 families have been evacuated following a satellite survey.

For years, environmentalists and locals have warned about indiscriminate construction in sensitive towns like Joshimath. Ignoring many of these calls, the government has widened roads, and built dams and power plants, besides allowing hotels and multi-storey buildings to mushroom.



Future of Punjab safe only in Akali hands: Sukhbir

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday said the future of Punjab was safe only in the hands of the Akali Dal which had ushered in record development, besides ensuring peace and communal harmony.

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Main accused in constable's killing held in encounter

The main accused in the killing of Punjab Police constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa was arrested on Saturday. Gangster Yuvraj Singh Jora was arrested by the Punjab Police's AGTF late on Saturday

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An avoidable loss of a gentleman politician

In the sudden and shocking death of Jalandhar MP Chaudhary Santokh Singh due to a massive heart attack early Saturday morning Punjab has lost a prominent leader and representative of people.

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Future of Punjab safe only in Akali hands: Sukhbir

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
MUKTSAR, JANUARY 14

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday said the future of Punjab was safe only in the hands of the Akali Dal which had ushered in record development, besides ensuring peace and communal harmony.

He appealed to Punjabis to strengthen the SAD as it was the true heir to the rich cultural heritage of Punjab, even as he announced the party would continue to strive to remain true to its core principle of 'Sarbat Da Bhala'. Badal was a mammoth gathering at the Maghi Mela here.

"In stark contrast, you are witnessing a government which has presided over both collapse of law and order as well as potential financial ruin of the state," he said, adding that the Punjabis had already seen how the previous Congress government had made false promises to them which were not fulfilled. He said Punjabis could not hope to much from the Bharatiya Janata party which was instigating them to fight with each other.

Calling upon Punjabis to think before



taking decisions, Badal said they had been swayed by the slogan of 'Ek Mauka' earlier. He said the last eight months had shown that this slogan was hollow. "Never before have Punjabis suffered so much.

Snatching, robberies and extortions are affecting the common man. Industry is migrating out of the state. All development works have been stopped. Even promises made to people including Rs.1000 per

month to women and jobs to youth have not been fulfilled," he said.

Badal also asked Punjabis to think before welcoming Rahul Gandhi in their midst. He said the Congress and Gandhi family

had done the most damage to Punjab and the Sikh community. He said Indira Gandhi ordered the attack on Darbar Sahib while her son Rajiv engineered the genocide of Sikhs in 1984.

"The Gandhi family is responsible for allocating Punjab river waters to Rajasthan in violation of the Riparian principle," Badal said, adding that Indira Gandhi got the work started on the SYL Canal, and had it not been for resistance by the SAD, Punjab would have lost further water to Haryana leading to a catastrophe in the state.

Asserting that Punjab had witnessed unprecedented development during SAD tenure, Badal said: "We developed the state systematically. We first developed the state's irrigation network coupled with mandis for smooth procurement of foodgrains." He said the SAD was also responsible for making Punjab power surplus besides building world-class roads and airports.

Badal also said the power sector had been strengthened during the SAD tenure but no new thermal plant had come up in the state in the last six years. He said this was already resulting in power outages and the situation was likely to get worse in the coming summer.

Man dragged on car's bonnet in Delhi for half-a-km

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

Just two weeks after the shocking hit-and-drag killing of a 20-year-old woman in the national capital, another similar incident has come to light in which a man was dragged for half a kilometre on the bonnet of a car speeding through a crowded West Delhi neighbourhood on Thursday.

The incident took place in Rajouri Garden. According to witnesses, it was a case of road rage that started as a heated argument between the victim and the accused over honking.

The incident was captured on the CCTV nearby and the video has gone viral on social media.

According to the police, the altercation started when victim Harvinder Kohli's friend Jayaprakash, who was driving a car, honked from behind and overtook the accused's car.

In retaliation, the accused blocked their path. The two parties engaged in a heated argument that quickly turned violent. Kohli, who attempted to intervene, was struck by the accused.



As per reports, when the squabble waned, the accused's father allegedly suggested hitting Kohli with the car.

The accused then rammed his car into Kohli, who landed on the hood of the car but managed to grab hold of the windshield wipers. He clung on to them as he was dragged on the hood of the accused's vehicle for nearly 500 metres. Other vehicles chased down and cornered the accused's vehicle. But the accused fled the scene.

The police said a case has been registered and that the accused has been identified. He is currently being interrogated, the police said.

J&K hit by multiple avalanches after heavy snowfall

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

Avalanches were reported on Saturday in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora and Sonmarg districts, which have been witnessing moderate to heavy snowfall over the past few days. The avalanche in Sonmarg is the second to hit the district in two days.

The avalanche, captured on camera, struck near the barracks of a construction company and has caused a massive panic among the workers.

Harpal Singh, General Manager of the construction company building Zojila tunnel, said that all workers are safe.

A video of the incident doing the rounds on social media shows massive clouds of snow hurling towards the barracks where people, terrified by the sight, rush into the building, screaming. The tsunami of snow completely engulfs the barracks as the people wait it out. As the avalanche passes, the area is smothered in a dense fog of snow with high winds. People are asked not to open their doors as the avalanche appears to peacefully pass through. At the end of the video, the roofs of the barracks are completely covered in snow.

Another avalanche hit Jurniyal village in Gurez sector of Jammu and Kashmir's



Bandipora district, but there was no loss of life or damage to property, officials said. An avalanche warning has been issued for 12 districts including Bandipora after moderate to heavy snowfall a day before, they said.

The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) on Saturday issued a 'high danger' avalanche warning for Kupwara district of north Kashmir and a 'medium danger' warning for Bandipora, Baramulla, Doda, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi districts.

"Avalanche with high danger level is likely to occur above 2,000 metres of Kupwara district in the next 24 hours.

Avalanche with medium danger level is likely to occur above 2,000 metres over Bandipora, Baramulla, Doda, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi districts in the next 24 hours," SDMA officials said.

They said an avalanche with a low danger level is likely to occur above 2,000 metres over Anantnag, Kulgam, and Rajouri districts in the next 24 hours. People have been advised to take precautions and avoid venturing into avalanche-prone areas.

Earlier on Tuesday, two labourers from Kishtwar died when an avalanche hit the work site of a construction company in Ganderbal district's Sonmarg.

PUNJAB

Main accused in constable's killing held in encounter

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
MOHALI, JANUARY 14

The main accused in the killing of Punjab Police constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa was arrested on Saturday.

Gangster Yuvraj Singh Jora was arrested by the Punjab Police's Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) late on Saturday after a brief exchange of fire in Dhakoli area of Zirakpur town in Mohali district.

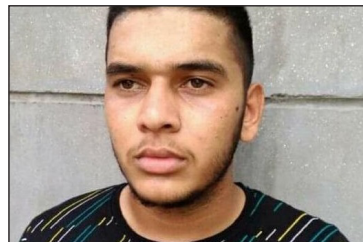
DGP Gaurav Yadav tweeted that Jora was involved in the shootout in which police constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa was killed in Phillaur during a car-jacking incident on the night of January 8.

Jora was staying at a hotel in Zirakpur on a fake identity, according to police.

After tracing his location, an AGTF

DGP GAURAV YADAV TWEETED THAT JORA WAS INVOLVED IN THE SHOOTOUT IN WHICH POLICE CONSTABLE KULDEEP SINGH BAJWA WAS KILLED IN PHILLAUR DURING A CAR-JACKING INCIDENT ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 8.

team cordoned off the area. The gangster fired at the police party during a raid at the hotel when he was asked to surrender. Three shots were fired by him, one of which hit AGTF AIG Sandeep Goel's bulletproof vest after which there was a cross firing in which the gangster sustained two bullet injuries and was later



Gangster Yuvraj Singh Jora

taken to a hospital. One cop also received injuries in the encounter.

Three shells, two live rounds, and two pistols and mobile phones have been recovered from the spot.

DIG Gurpreet Bhullar said, "The suspect had taken a room on the fake ID of Ramzaan Malik today only. An attempt to murder case was registered against him

earlier. Forensic team has reached the spot to investigate the matter further."

Kuldip Singh Bajwa, a Punjab Police constable, posted as gunman with the Phagwara (City) SHO, was shot dead in an exchange of firing between a police party and armed masked robbers near Kot Grewal village late Sunday night. The critically injured constable was taken to Gandhi Hospital in Phagwara where doctors declared him brought dead.

Three suspects, Ranjit Singh Jeeta, Vishal Soni, and Kulwinder alias Kinda were arrested but suspect Yuvraj Singh, alias Jora, had fled the spot.

AGTF DSP Bikramjit Singh Brar said, "We had inputs that Yuvraj had checked in Dhakoli hotel. The technical intelligence team confirmed the location. He was warned but he fired on the cops."

Armed Forces Veterans' Day Rally held

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

Armed Forces Veterans' Day Rally was conducted at Air Force Station Chandigarh on Saturday.

This day is celebrated every year on January 14 to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice by veterans. The occasion is also used to resolve the issues faced by the veterans and their next of kin (NoK).

The purpose of the event at Chandigarh was to enhance the satisfaction level related to various issues pertaining to pension and welfare among the veterans of the three services and their NoK, a statement from Chandigarh Administration said.

The occasion provided an opportunity to the veterans for face-to-face interaction with Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA), representatives of Directorate of Air Veterans (DAV), Air Headquarters New Delhi and Zila Sainik Board (ZSB). The rally was inaugurated by Banwarilal Purohit, Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Union Territory Chandigarh.

Air Marshal Pankaj Mohan Sinha Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Air Command delivered the welcome address.

Subsequently, Representatives of CGDA, DAV and ZSB discussed pension and welfare related aspects with the veterans. Their queries were addressed at the respective stalls.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT WAS TO ENHANCE THE SATISFACTION LEVEL RELATED TO VARIOUS ISSUES PERTAINING TO PENSION AND WELFARE AMONG THE VETERANS OF THE THREE SERVICES AND THEIR NOK

Punjab Govt transfers 10 IAS officers

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

The Punjab government transferred 10 IAS officers on Saturday. Aashika Jain has been posted as Deputy Commissioner, Mohali, in place of Amit Talwar who has been given the charge of director, Sports and Youth Services.

Rajesh Dhiman has been appointed as Deputy Commissioner, Ferozepur, replacing Amrit Singh who has been given the charge of Director, Tourism and Cultural Affairs, and in addition chief executive officer of Punjab Heritage Tourism Board, according to an official order.

Senior IAS officer Sarvjit Singh has been posted as additional chief secretary, Parliamentary Affairs, relieving Anurag Agarwal of the charge while special secretary, Revenue and Rehabilitation Amritpal Singh has been given the additional charge of department of Higher Education (colleges).

Babita will be director, Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities while Sagar Setia has been appointed as additional deputy commissioner (general), Kapurthala.

Ravinder Singh has been posted as ADC (general), Ferozepur.

Besides, three Punjab Civil Services officers Bikramjit Singh Shergill, Ismat Vijay Singh and Balwinder Singh have been given new posting orders.



Aashika Jain appointed new Mohali DC

'Resume flights at Adampur airport'

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday asked the officials to ensure that domestic flights from Adampur (Jalandhar) airport are resumed by March end.

Chairing a review meeting of the Civil Aviation department here today, the Chief Minister bemoaned that the stopping of flights from the airport has caused a lot of inconvenience to the people of the region especially the NRIs.

The Chief Minister said that this resumption of flights from the airport

will provide direct air connectivity to the region with the rest of the globe. He further said that besides saving time, money and energy of the people from the region, this airport will give further boost to the economic growth, medical tourism and industrial development in the state.

The Chief Minister directed the officers to complete the ongoing work for construction of civil air terminal at Halwara within three months. He said that the state government has already released Rs 50 crore for early completion of the work at civil air terminal.

The Chief Minister bemoaned that the

work on this ambitious project has been hanging fire for the last few months. However, Mann said that after assuming the charge of office, his government has put the work on this project in fast-track mode adding that any sort of inordinate delay in work is unwarranted and undesirable. He also asked the PWD to complete the work of construction of approach roads to these airports at the earliest.

On the occasion, Cabinet Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO, Principal Secretary Civil Aviation Rahul Bhandari, Secretary PWD Rajat Aggarwal, Director Civil Aviation Sonali Giri and others were also present.

Punjab to get 400 new Aam Aadmi Clinics

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said on Saturday that taking a leap forward towards imparting quality health services to people, the state government will dedicate more than 400 new Aam Aadmi Clinics to people of state on January 27, thereby enhancing the total number of functional clinics to 500.

Chairing a meeting to review the arrangements for the mega event to be held at Amritsar on January 27, the Chief Minister said that in order to provide quality and timely health services to the people 100 Aam Aadmi clinics were already dedicated to the people on 75th Independence Day.

He said that these clinics are offering 41 health packages with nearly 100 clinical tests free of cost to the people. Mann said that these clinics are acting as a



cornerstone in the revamp of the healthcare system in Punjab.

The Chief Minister said that it is a mat-

ter of great pride and satisfaction that the Government of India (GoI) has also lauded this path breaking initiative of the

state government to deliver health services to people. He said that now with the opening of more than 400 Aam Aadmi Clinics Punjab will script a new success story in the healthcare sector by functioning of 500 such clinics.

Mann said this revolutionary initiative will rejuvenate the healthcare system in state, adding that he has directed the officers to ensure foolproof arrangements for the mega events.

The Chief Minister said that setting up of these clinics is a humble effort by the state government to transform Punjab into a healthy and disease-free state by imparting quality health services.

Mann envisioned that the residents of the state will no longer have to shelve huge money in hospitals for getting treatment and diagnostic facilities. He said that patients can avail the medical services by stepping into the clinics or can avail facility of online appointment.

EDITORIAL

The Express India NEWS

Helmets for Sikh soldiers, beware

The defence ministry is reported to have proposed to purchase specially designed ballistic helmets for the Sikh soldiers. The helmets, according to media reports, will cover the entire head including the turban. These are aimed at providing foolproof security to the soldiers without compromising their identity. The helmets are designed in such a way that they can wear these over their turban. However, the proposal has run into rough weather, with the Akali Takhat, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal opposing the move and alleging that this amounted to an attack on the distinct Sikh identity.

So far the Sikh soldiers have always resisted wearing helmets and have felt secure with their turban. The valour and gallantry of Sikhs and their fighting spirit in two World Wars, besides their repeated feats in wars with Pakistan are too well known. But the Sikh soldiers have never worn steel helmets and have instead trusted their turban. No matter how sincere the intentions of the government of India are (intentions are of course sincere since the helmets have been specially designed for those Sikh soldiers who wear turban to protect them) in providing such helmets, it will need to be cautious and careful as the matter is very sensitive.

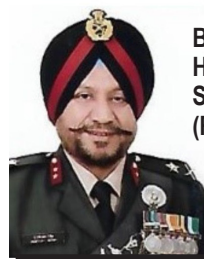
Moreover in today's times where vested interests rush at a lightning speed with their own motivated and biased opinions and spread conspiracy theories, the government will need to understand the sentiment of those for whom these helmets are meant. Ideally it should be the individual choice of the particular soldier whether he wants to opt to wear it or not. In fact it will obviously be an optional choice only as nothing is forced in defence forces against the will of the soldiers.

The Akal Takhat, the SGPC and the Akali Dal should have come out with more discreet and circumspect responses than pronouncing the proposal as an attack on Sikh identity. After all, it is not for the first time that such a proposal, if there is any, has been mooted. It is recorded history that the Chief Khalsa Diwan, apex body of various Singh Sabhas in Punjab, had during the World War-I recommended that the Sikh soldiers in British Indian Army should wear helmets. It is a separate issue whether the soldiers accepted the advice or not.

The issues of identity are always quite sensitive. Particularly when there are vested interests desperately waiting for an occasion to steal the opportunity to distort and misinterpret even the most well meaning and well intentioned moves of the government. As mentioned already, the intention of the government is of course the security of the soldiers, which must not be misinterpreted. Wisdom lies in providing an option to the soldiers whether they would like to wear such helmets over their turban or not. Unfortunately they will now be put in a dilemma after the move has so vehemently been opposed by various community institutions.

War in Ukraine:

The 'patriot', a show stopper or political



BY MAJ GEN HARVIJAY SINGH (RETD, SM)

Ukraine was hit by a wave of missiles on 29 Dec morning, with Russia unleashing more than 100 missiles, this was disclosed by a Ukrainian presidential adviser. This followed overnight attacks by Kamikaze Drones.

Why do these attacks continue; simply stated, Russia now controls the third and fourth dimensions, and Ukraine is helpless.

After the missile attack of 29 December, Zelensky, in a video address, urged Ukrainians to hug loved ones, tell friends they appreciate them, support colleagues, thank parents and rejoice with children more often. "We have not lost our humanity, although

we have endured terrible months," he said. "And we will not lose it, although there is a difficult year ahead."

Wonder what he means? Appears tired and low on confidence!

When the war began, Ukraine was attacking stalled Russian convoys. The flaming tanks and trucks of a botched up Russian assault made impressive propaganda. While the Russians were retreating, Zelensky was glowing in attention.

This surprise victory led to a devastating psychological

paralys, like a novice boxer he forgot all about defence. Even after 10 months of war Ukraine does not have a worthwhile Air Defence System to halt the Russian revival and dominance of the air and electromagnetic spectrum. This has kept the Russian airborne systems 'up' and the Ukrainian 'grounded'.

Big Brother US has done NO better for Ukraine. Although it has done well for itself in disposing off old stocks of ammunition and weapons and rejuvenated its Defence industry with over \$

900 Billion of Defence contracts.

Over the last few decades, USA in its wars against weak opponents and terror has started to believe that they are unbeatable in air and have no need for Short Range Air Defence systems. In contrast, Russia's air defence is all short, and medium-range missiles; good to kill low flying and slow drones.

Long period of 'No War' or only 'War against Terror' makes most Military Leaders to start believing that

Logistics, Communications and Air Defence will take care of themselves and they need to only think and sell dazzling loud bang ideas.

Responding to Zelensky's pleas, US has NOW announced the 'Patriot (Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target) Air Defense Missile System' in aid for Ukraine.

The US muscled response to Russian drones and missile assaults therefore is a small number of \$4 Million each Missiles with a \$ 10 million launcher (each launcher can fire four missiles)

to strike a \$20,000 Drone or a \$100,000 cruise or ballistic missile. Will this costly, bulky, and a limited number of missiles turn around this changed winter tide of the war. Without any qualms, the answer is NO.

The system includes a powerful radar, a control station, a power generator, launch stations and other support vehicles, and is operated by a large crew of trained soldiers. Training programmes take several weeks. A tough call for a nation most of whose young people are already engaged in war for 10 Months now.

"Cruise missiles and drones have largely characterized the air war in this war and not combat aircraft. It is doubtful how the Patriots will be useful in such a situation. Their transfer holds more political symbolism than actual military utility," says Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retd), Director General of the Indian Centre for Air Power Studies.

Political leaders who play obsessively to the gallery are dangerous and will do anything to keep their larger than life image alive. Zelensky has mastered this art of political symbolism well. deva

An avoidable loss of a gentleman politician

BY OUR POLITICAL EDITOR

In the sudden and shocking death of Jalandhar MP Chaudhary Santokh Singh due to a massive heart attack early Saturday morning Punjab has lost a prominent leader and representative of people. Chaudhary died in his boots. Immediately after addressing party workers he started walking along with Rahul Gandhi on foot along with several other leaders including his legislator son Vikramjit Singh Chaudhary. He collapsed after walking a short distance. He was declared brought dead by the doctors in the nearby hospital in Phagwara.

While nobody can be or should be blamed for the MP's death, it should serve as a lesson that health issues cannot be taken for granted that too in this cold weather. It was biting cold when he started walking along with Rahul. The entire north is under the grip of a severe cold wave. Particularly Ladhawal area, from where the Yatra started was much colder since it is an open space and is right on the banks of



river Satluj. Chaudhary spent some time there as he also addressed the workers drawn from his parliamentary constituency, before starting the route march along with Rahul.

According to doctors, although he was hale and hearty, fit and fine, Chaudhary should have avoided joining the yatra at such an early hour in such severe cold, at his age of 76. He would have turned 77 in June this year. Normally doctors advise everyone against going out in such biting cold. Elderly and senior citizens are strictly prohibited as it poses a health risk and

it proved fatal in Chaudhary's case. What is destined to happen will happen in any case, but there is always a regret that may be, if he had not gone out so early and walked in such severe cold, he would be very much alive. This will always remain a regret for the family, friends, followers and supporters.

The organisers of the Bharat Jodo Yatra must take lessons from this great loss. Although the Yatra is on its last leg as only the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is left

more after it completes Punjab on January 19, there are still 15 more days left. The organisers must ensure that senior leaders do not participate during early hours at least. The region is already under the grip of a severe cold wave. This will grow colder as the Yatra moves further upwards towards north in Jammu and Kashmir, where the temperatures hover around zero.

Chaudhary was a soft-spoken decent and dignified gentleman and had emerged as a prominent Congress

leader in Punjab, Doaba region in particular. IN parliament also he would present and put up his point strongly but without losing the grace and dignity he was always known for. No wonder, cutting across party lines everyone right from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann mourned his untimely loss.

He belonged to a family of traditional Congressmen. His father Master Gurbanta Singh was a prominent Congress leader

who had served as a minister in Paratap Singh Kairon and Giani Zail Singh's governments. In fact he was the member of Punjab Legislative Assembly before the partition representing Jalandhar as Unionist Party member. Chaudhary Santokh's brother late Chaudhary Jagjit Singh was also a minister who passed away a few years ago. While his son is an MLA from Philaur, his nephew Chaudhary Surinder Singh was an MLA from Kartarpur in the outgoing Vidhan Sabha. He lost in the 2022 assembly elections.