

Vigilance case against IAS officer

Punjab CM orders probe, seeks report with 24 hrs

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday directed Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Janjua to check if the government’s permission was taken before the Vigilance Bureau booked IAS officer Neelima for allegedly transferring an industrial plot to a real estate company. He directed Janjua to submit an action report within 24 hours.

The Chief Minister also asked Janjua to direct Vigilance Bureau not to violate provisions as mandated under the law in the future.

Neelima was booked by the Punjab VB on January 5 along with former minister Sundar Sham Arora and nine others government officials.

Earlier today, a delegation of 50 Punjab IAS officers, including deputy commissioners of various districts, met the Chief Minister and informed him that proper procedure was not followed while registering the case against Neelima.

It may be recalled that the Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) had on Thursday registered a criminal case against former minister Sunder Sham Arora and 10 govern-



ment officials, including Neelima for transferring/ bifurcation of an industrial plot to a realtor company and allowing it establish township by cutting plots.

Neelima was part of the departmental committee set up by Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation (PSIDC) to examine the matter.

The VB said that the committee members, including Neelima and Arora, colluded with each other and misused their official positions to give unfair advantage to the owners/ directors of Gulmohar Township Company Jagdeep Singh, Gurpreet Singh and Rakesh Kumar Sharma.

With the IAS, PCS and Revenue officials of Punjab protesting against the “excesses of the Vigilance Bureau”, the government machinery on Monday came to a standstill. The PCS and Revenue officers of the state went on a five-day mass leave in protest against the arrest of RTA Narinder Singh Dhaliwal of Ludhiana in a corruption case by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau. Work at transport, revenue and administrative offices in all towns of Punjab was affected.

PCS officers submit demands to CM; to continue on mass leave

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

The Punjab Civil Services (PCS) Officers’ Association will continue to remain on five-day mass protest leave over the arrest of Narinder Dhaliwal, RTA, Ludhiana, by the Vigilance Bureau on January 6. A decision in this regard was taken today after a meeting of the PSC Association with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann failed to find a resolution.

Association president, Rajat Oberoi, informed as many as 235 PCS officers across the state have gone on mass casual leave from today.

Members of the PSC Association who met Mann informed that the delegation gave a charter of demands to the CM and will continue their protest leave.

The association alleged that procedures under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act were not followed and wanted the government to constitute a committee to investigate Dhaliwal’s “illegal arrest”. They demanded the report by Friday.

In the two-page resolution, the association said the committee should include IAS officers of principal secretary rank and a PCS officer besides representatives of the transport department. The resolution said

further course of action will depend on a review of the situation on January 14.

The delegation also demanded Dhaliwal’s release from VB custody and registration of an FIR against the officers of the Bureau who framed PCS officer Tarsem Chand. The delegation further demanded that the VB sleuths be arrested immediately and placed under suspension.

They also demanded a concrete undertaking that SOP in matters of inquiries and registration of FIRs would be done within a week and all inquiries lodged by the Vigilance Bureau against all government officers irrespective of departments will be reviewed.

The PCS officers also demanded that a timeline with regard to the quashing of the FIR against Narinder Singh Dhaliwal be given. Meanwhile, work at transport, revenue and administrative offices in Ludhiana and other towns of Punjab were affected because of the strike.

The Vigilance Bureau had on Friday said that during the investigations of a complaint lodged through the chief minister’s anti-corruption helpline on November 18, it was found that Dhaliwal was indulging in collecting bribes through some private persons from different transporters on a monthly basis in Ludhiana for not issuing challans against their vehicles.

International drug syndicate busted in Ludhiana, 2 Afghans among 16 held

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

The Chandigarh zonal unit of the Narcotics Control Bureau has busted an international drug syndicate operating from Ludhiana and arrested 16 people, including two Afghanistan nationals.

The NCB said action against the syndicate smuggling heroin started on November 15 last year following the arrest of a person and recovery of contraband.

During follow-up raids and searches, the NCB busted an entire chain of this international drug syndicate, Deputy Director General (Northern Region) of the NCB Gyaneshwar Singh told reporters.

Two heroin processing laboratories in Ludhiana were busted which were being operated by Afghan nationals, who have been arrested.

The international drug syndicate is spread across various countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc and different states across India. A special investigation team has been formed comprising investigating officers from various NCB zones.

Specialised financial investigation and technical investigation teams have also been formed in this case and more than 60 bank accounts relating to this group have been “debit frozen” and freezing orders under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act are under consideration, he said in a statement.

In November, the NCB seized 20.36 kg of heroin and arrested Sandeep Singh from Ludhiana.

According to the NCB, Sandeep Singh is one of the close associates of Akshay Kumar Chhabra, the arrested kingpin of this drug syndicate who allegedly had links in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The NCB official said Akshay Kumar Chhabra’s primary modus operandi was to import heroin/morphine from Afghanistan through cargo route and manufacture more heroin in Ludhiana itself.

The arrested Afghan nationals have been identified as Qari Hamidullah Yusufi and Hakim Salimi, a chemist and associate of Yusufi.

Punjab Revenue officers go on 5-day protest leave

CHANDIGARH: Expressing solidarity with the Punjab Civil Services (PCS) Officers Association’s protest against the arrest of a regional transport authority (RTA), Ludhiana, official, Narinder Singh Dhaliwal, for taking bribe, the state’s revenue officers on Monday also proceeded on mass casual leave till January 13, stalling revenue work in the state.

The Punjab PCS officers are already on five-day mass leave from today.

“Today a meeting of the Punjab Revenue Officers’ Association was held virtually to discuss excesses of the Vigilance Bureau to implicate administrative officers and acting contrary to mandatory pro-visions

of PC Act, 1988,” said president Gurdev Singh.

“One IAS officer and one PCS officer have been implicated in cases on pretext of inquiry without seeking prior approval from the competent authority,” Singh added.

“It is illegal to act contrary to mandatory provisions of PC Act, 1988 and to conduct inquiry or registration of an FIR without seeking prior sanction for investigation from competent authority,” Singh said.

He added that owing to the “irresponsible and extortionist attitude of the Vigilance Bureau, Punjab Revenue Officers’ Association has decided to support PCS Officers’ Association in all intent and purposes.”



Dhaliwal conferred with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

Darshan Singh Dhaliwal, a US-based businessman and a philanthropist, was on Monday awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, the highest honour given by the Indian government to its settlers in foreign countries.



Punjab cop shot dead by carjackers in Phagwara

A Punjab Police constable posted as gunman with the Phagwara (City) SHO, was shot dead in firing between a police party and unidentified armed masked robbers near Kot Grewal village late night.



Victoria Cross winner Badlu’s statue unveiled

Victoria Cross winner Risaldar Badlu Singh’s statue was unveiled in his village Dhakla in Jhajjar District of Haryana 01 Sep 2019. Badlu Singh belonged to 14th Murray’s JAT LANCERS



## PAGE 1 PLUS

# US-based Dhaliwal conferred with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**D**arshan Singh Dhaliwal, a US-based businessman and a philanthropist, was on Monday awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, the highest honour given by the Indian government to its settlers in foreign countries.

Dhaliwal was given the award during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas being held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 17th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention on Monday.

Dhaliwal belongs to village Rakhra in district Patiala. After migrating to the US, he turned into a successful businessman owning about 1,000 gas stations across the country.

His annual sales are believed to be about \$ 2 billion. He has employed thousands of people in his gas stations and other business establishments.

He is known for great philanthropy in the true spirit of Sikhism. He also encourages and helps Indians studying there and



helping them find work and settle in the US.

His brother Surjit Singh Rakhra is a senior Akali politician and has served as a minister also in the Badal government between 2012 and 2017.

In October 2021, Dhaliwal made head-

lines when he was not allowed to enter India and was deported from Delhi airport back to the United States because he had been organising 'langar' (free community kitchen) for protesting farmers outside Delhi border who were opposing three central farm laws.

## Three held for extortion from govt official

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**T**he Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) today arrested three private persons accused for blackmailing a government official with the motive to extort money amounting to Rs 1,50,000.

Disclosing this here today, a spokesperson of the state VB said accused - property agent Umardeen, Saleem and reporter of private channel Rupinder Kumar alias Dimple, all residents of Nabha, Patiala district - have been arrested from Nabha on the complaint of registry clerk, Nabha tehsil, Rupinder Singh. The complainant told the VB that Umardeen and his accomplices were blackmailing him and demanding Rs 5,00,000 from him.

The complainant told the VB that during a registry, he was taking back Rs 500 in exchange of notes handed over to a person. Umardeen was a witness in this registry and shot a video of the complainant taking back Rs 500 with his mobile phone with the intent of extorting money from him.

The complainant further alleged that

**THE COMPLAINANT TOLD THE VB THAT DURING A REGISTRY, HE WAS TAKING BACK RS 500 IN EXCHANGE OF NOTES HANDED OVER TO A PERSON**

Umardeen has already taken Rs 50,000 from him as a first instalment and the deal was struck at Rs 2,50,000.

A VB team from the flying squad Punjab laid a trap and accused Umardeen was arrested red handed while accepting extortion money amounting to Rs 1,50,000 from the complainant as a second instalment in the presence of two official witnesses.

The VB team has also recovered Rs 40,000 from him out of Rs 50,000 which he had taken earlier from the complainant as a first instalment. Subsequently, other co-accused in this case were also arrested from Nabha.

An FIR under various sections of IPC and section 8 of Prevention of Corruption Act has been registered. Further investigation in this case is on.

## Haryana govt orders transfer of 1 IAS, 4 HCS officers

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**H**aryana Government has issued posting and transfer orders for one IAS and four HCS officers with immediate effect.

Ashok Khemka, Additional Chief Secretary, Science and Technology Department has been posted as Additional Chief Secretary, Archives Department.

Manav Malik, Sub Divisional Officer (Civil), Radaur has been posted as Inquiry Officer, State Agricultural Marketing Board.

Amit Kumar-II, Joint Director (Admn), Tourism has been posted as Sub Divisional Officer (Civil), Radaur.

Mayank Bhardwaj, Estate Officer, HSVP, Kaithal and Kurukshetra has been posted as City Magistrate, Rewari.

Devendra Sharma, City Magistrate, Rewari has been posted as Sub Divisional Officer (Civil), Kalayat.

## 5 accused knew woman was trapped under car: Cops

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

**T**he five accused in the Kanjhawala case were aware that a woman was trapped under their car but did not try to rescue her because they were scared that someone might see them, police said on Monday.

The incident took place in the early hours of January 1 when a car hit a 20-year-old woman and dragged her for about 13 km

through the streets of west Delhi from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala. The woman suffered horrific injuries in the incident, her autopsy later revealed.

There accused were partying in the vehicle. One of them got down from the car before the incident took place, the police have said.

Minutes after their car hit the victim's

two-wheeler, the accused realised that she was stuck under their vehicle. However, they did not try to rescue her because they were afraid that if they step out of the car and pull out the victim, someone might see them, the police said.

During interrogation, the accused gave contradictory statements and kept changing their accounts of the incident. All the claims and statements are being verified and every angle is being investigated to get a clear picture of the exact sequence of events.

Initially, police arrested Deepak Khanna (26), Amit Khanna (25), Krishan (27), Mithun (26), and Manoj Mittal in connection with the accident.

Later, two more persons - Ashutosh and Ankush Khanna - were arrested for allegedly shielding the accused. Ashutosh is the owner of the car and Ankush is related to one of the accused.

### DELHI CAR HORROR

## Haryana panchayats get more power

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

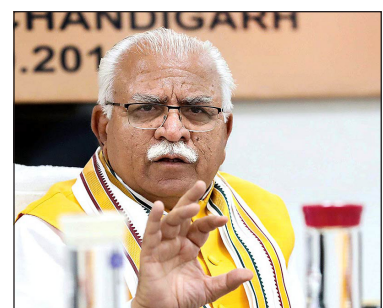
**H**aryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced the decentralisation of the powers of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and giving more autonomy to these small governments to speed up the development works being done in rural areas.

Khattar further announced that from now onwards, the sarpanches, chairman of panchayat samitis and zilla parishads can accord administrative approval for the development works up to Rs 2 lakh at their level. No tenders will be floated for all such works, said the CM.

He informed that junior engineers can give technical approval for works up to Rs 2 lakh. Similarly, SDO can give technical approval for works ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 25 lakh. Short-term tenders will be floated for these works through Haryana Engineering Works Portal.

Likewise, XEN will give technical approval for works ranging from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 1 crore. The technical approval for the works ranging from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2.5 crore will be given by the Superintending Engineer and the approval of the works above Rs 2.5 crore will be given by the Chief Engineer, informed Khattar.

He said that gram panchayats also have fixed deposits. Out of these deposits, up to Rs 50 lakh in a year or 10 percent of the deposits, whichever is higher, can be released by the Deputy Commissioner, for any required developmental works to be



executed in the villages.

"If more than this amount is to be released from these deposits, then the Deputy Commissioner will refer the matter to the state government," informed the CM.

He added that if any PRI falls short of the amount in executing their development works, then the additional amount of Rs 25 lakh given by the state government will be directly released to them. However, Rural Development Department will get all the works done above Rs 25 lakh.

The Chief Minister further informed that administrative approval for the development work ranging from Rs 2.5 to Rs 10 crore will be given by the concerned minister, while the technical approval will be accorded by the chief engineer.

He said that administrative approval for the works above Rs 10 crore will be sent to the Chief Minister for final approval, while the technical approval will be given by the chief engineer.

The Chief Minister informed that with this new system, the execution of development works will be done at a faster pace.



## PUNJAB

# Punjab cop shot dead by carjackers in Phagwara

The police managed to nab three carjackers who were identified as Ranbeer, Vishnu, and Kulvinder.

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
PHAGWARA, JANUARY 9

**A** Punjab Police constable posted as gunman with the Phagwara (City) SHO, was shot dead in firing between a police party and unidentified armed masked robbers near Kot Grewal village late Sunday night. Constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa was critically injured and rushed to Gandhi Hospital in Phagwara around 11 pm where the doctors declared him brought dead.

The encounter took place when a police party was chasing carjackers who fled after snatching Phagwara resident Avtar Singh's Creta car from Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar on Dosanjh Road. Avtar Singh was in the car with his



friend Shekhar Bhanot when five armed assailants snatched the car and fled towards Dosanjh Kalan.

The victim immediately called up the police and informed that the GPS tracker

## CM announces Rs 2 cr aid to family

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday expressed grief over the killing of Punjab Police Constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa in line of duty at Phagwara, and announced Rs 1 crore ex-gratia to be given by the state government and Rs 1 crore insurance cover to be paid by HDFC bank.

system of his car was still active and showing the location of his vehicle near Kot-Grewal village under Goraya police station.

The police chased the snatchers who

opened fire when confronted. The police also fired upon the assailants. Constable Kuldeep sustained a bullet injury and was rushed to hospital.

The police managed to nab three carjackers who were identified as Ranbeer, Vishnu, and Kulvinder. All three sustained bullet injuries and are under treatment in a hospital. One of the carjackers managed to escape.

The police reportedly recovered a huge cache of arms from the accused.

Meanwhile, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav said in a tweet, "Salute to martyr Ct. Kuldeep Singh who has laid down his life in the line of duty. Three criminals have also been injured with gunshot injuries. Punjab Police looks after its martyrs and their families."



## 9,917 drug smugglers held; 565 kg heroin seized in 6 months

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**P**unjab Police have arrested as many as 9,917 drug smugglers including 1447 big fish in the last six months. A total of 7,533 FIRs have also been registered since July 5, 2022 of which 852 are related to commercial quantity.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Headquarters Sukhchain Singh Gill, who was addressing his weekly press conference here on Monday said that the police teams have recovered 418.44 kg heroin from across the state after carrying out cordon and search operations in drug-affected areas besides laying nakas at vulnerable routes across the state. Additionally, 147.5 kg heroin was recovered by the teams of Punjab Police from seaports of Gujarat and Maharashtra, taking the total effective recovery of heroin to 565.94 kgs in just six months, he said.

Apart from seizing big-haul of heroin, the IGP said that police have also recovered 407 kg opium, 407 kg ganja, 233 quintals of poppy husk, and 33.88 lakhs tablets/capsules/ injections/ vials of pharma opioids from across the state. The police have also recovered Rs 7.72 crores of drug money from the possession of drug smugglers arrested in these six months.

The IGP said that in last one week, the police have arrested 311 drug smugglers/suppliers after registering 247 FIRs, including 19 commercial, and recovered 11.76 kg heroin, 9.87 kg opium, 6.37 quintals of poppy husk, and 32,118 tablets/capsules/injections/ vials of pharma opioids besides recovering Rs 2.88 lakh drug money from their possession.



## Army officer kills wife, commits suicide

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
FEROZEPUR, JANUARY 9

**A**n Army officer allegedly killed his wife in Ferozepur, Punjab, and then died by suicide by shooting himself on Sunday night. The deceased officer and his wife have been identified as Lt Col Nishant and Dimple.

According to Army officials, in his purported suicide note found near his body, the Lieutenant Colonel confessed to harm-

ing his wife.

The wife was also found dead at his residence, news agency ANI reported. The couple had marital issues and were undergoing regular counselling sessions, the officials said.

The Army and the Punjab police have initiated an investigation.

In December 2021, an Army Major allegedly died by suicide by shooting himself with an AK-47 rifle in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district.

## New sports policy to focus on para players: Meet Hayer

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**P**ara players will be given special attention in the new sports policy being prepared by the Sports Department, Punjab Sports Minister Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer said during a meeting with Paralympic medallist and Indian para powerlifting coach Rajinder Singh Rahelu and Silver medallist of World Powerlifting Championship Paramjit Kumar at his official residence here today.

Meet Hayer while congratulating Paramjit Kumar for winning a medal in the World Championships in Dubai recently expressed hope that he will shine for the country in this year's Para Asian Games and next year's Paralympic Games as well. The Sports Minister had held this meeting today to get inputs from the para powerlifters to give special priority to them in the new sports policy.



The minister said that in the new policy being prepared by the department, utmost priority is being ensured to the para sportsmen because, contrary to the circumstances, they bring glory to the country at the national and international levels. Hence, para sports are also being considered for cash prizes. He told them their suggestions are welcome and will be included in the sports policy. On this occasion, the sports minister also gave a patient hearing to the demands of the para-sportsmen and assured them resolution.

## Ludhiana-born Arsh Dalla designated 'individual terrorist'

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 9

**T**he Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) today issued a notification designating Canada-based Aarshdeep Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla as 'individual terrorist' under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act - UAPA for his alleged involvement in

targeted killings, terror financing and extortion in Punjab.

The MHA in the notification alleged that Ludhiana-born Gill is involved in trans-border smuggling of drugs and weapons on a large scale. He is associated with the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and runs terror modules on behalf of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a designated terrorist, it added.

Gill is the fifth individual to be desig-

nated as a terrorist within a week, as the total number of such individuals has gone up to 53. All these terrorists are based in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Canada.

Gill is an accused in various cases registered and investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), including targeted killing, extorting money for terror funding, attempt to murder, disturbing

communal harmony and unleashing terror in the minds of the people in Punjab.

"The central government believes that Gill is involved in terrorism and hence designated as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 by exercising the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35 of the Act," the notification read.

Earlier, on January 7, Punjab Police had

conducted massive raids across Punjab on suspected hideouts of persons linked with Dalla.

The simultaneous raids were conducted on residential and other premises linked to Arsh Dalla in all districts of Punjab in ongoing cases. The operation was aimed at disrupting the nexus between terrorists, gangsters and drug smugglers based in India and abroad.



# EDITORIAL

The Express India NEWS

## Beware! 'Touch me not'

The entire bureaucracy in Punjab is in revolt. Both the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Punjab Civil Service (PCS) officers are in a rebellious mood. In fact the PCS officers have gone for a five-day strike to protest against the arrest of one of their colleagues on the charges of corruption. The IAS officers are equally upset, annoyed and angry over the registration of an FIR against one of their colleagues by the Vigilance Bureau in connection with a scandal involving illegal and fraudulent transfer of land that, according to the Vigilance Bureau, has caused huge loss to state exchequer. In fact the particular IAS officer is one of the several others accused in the now much talked about PSIEC case. The IAS officers do not have any problem with the registration of FIR and arrest of others.

The IAS and the PCS officers have the grievance that "due procedure" was not followed in registration of the case (against the IAS officer) and the arrest of the PCS officer. Both the association delegations, of the IAS as well as the PCS, met the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. He promptly called for a report from the Chief Secretary as to whether the due procedure was followed in this case. After all the matter concerns an IAS officer.

Along with the PCS officers, the revenue officials across the state have also joined the stir across the state over Vigilance Bureau action against their colleagues. This simply amounts to "collective blackmail". Just because people are holding positions of power and influence and have direct access to the powers be, does not mean they can dictate terms. If there is nothing wrong in the Vigilance Bureau booking eight PSIEC officials, what is wrong about booking the ninth particularly when she was holding the top most position authorized to take any decision.

If bureaucrats are accorded such "strong immunity" against even the due process of law, then why hang others? Why not follow a similar "process of law and procedure" in case of former ministers also? After all, they are also public servants and in real sense, duly elected and are held to scrutiny every five years by the people. Leave aside a politician or any former minister, think of the common man, who faces such situations as a matter of routine. Can s/he ever be accorded such privilege to question even the due process of law? Shouldn't the law be the same and its application uniform for everyone? Why cry wolf even before the law has started taking its course?

**SHOULDN'T THE PROCESS OF LAW BE THE SAME FOR EVERYONE. IF THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN BOOKING 8 OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE PSIEC AND EVEN ARRESTING THEM, WHAT IS THE PROBLEM IN INVESTIGATING ALSO THE ONE WHO WAS AT THE HELM?**

BY VIMAL SUMBLY

The Bharatiya Janata Party is ruling the country now for nine years continuously. It continues to go sound and strong. Although it is too early to predict about the 2024 General Elections as who is going to be the winner, the party has a decisive edge over everyone else. The BJP remains a cohesive force across most parts of the country. It has ruled Uttar Pradesh continuously for six years now and also other states like Madhya Pradesh and Assam where Muslims have a significant presence. In all these states the BJP has a majority of its own. And of course at the Centre, it got an absolute majority of its own, both in 2014 as also in 2019.

The BJP is often accused of having ignored Muslims. It may look like so. There are not many Muslim MPs from the BJP. Rather there is one BJP Lok Sabha MP from West Bengal. Right now there is no Muslim in the union council of ministers after Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi's term as Rajya Sabha MP completed and he was not re-nominated. Muslims constitute about 12 percent of India's population. Ideally they should be duly represented in the union council of ministers. The BJP will need to think about it and in all probability and in all likelihood someone from the community might be inducted in the union council of ministers.

But who is to be blamed for all this? Certainly it is not the BJP alone that is to be blamed for the lack of representation. How many Muslims do vote for

# BJP and Muslims

**IT IS A FACT THAT THERE ARE VERY FEW MUSLIM BJP PARLIAMENTARIANS AND LEGISLATORS. BUT HOW MANY MUSLIMS DO VOTE FOR THE BJP? A SECTION OF MUSLIM LEADERSHIP GOES OVERBOARD APPEALING THE COMMUNITY TO VOTE "WISELY" TO ENSURE BJP GETS DEFEATED. THAT IS IN UTTER BAD TASTE. HIGH TIME BOTH THE BJP AND THE COMMUNITY FIND A MEETING GROUND.**

the BJP? Not that an overwhelming majority does not vote for the party, but some of the prominent Muslim leaders make it a point publicly asking their community to vote in a way so that the BJP gets defeated.

This is "pathological collective aversion" towards a party, which has been repeatedly getting democratically elected at the centre and the states. The narrative built around the BJP is to "damn" it as "a communal and a fascist". A picture has been created as if the BJP is an enemy of the Muslims and the community is no longer safe in India under its rule. Some prominent intellectuals from within the community and also from among the non-Muslims have built up this "fascist" narrative where BJP is even equated with the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler.

Voting is a matter of personal and private choice. Everyone is entitled to vote "for" anyone or may be at times even "against" someone. But why

pronounce it from rooftops and loud-speakers that "vote wisely to ensure defeat of the BJP".

This not only antagonizes the party but its supporters also. BJP has been in power for a long time now and it should not be very difficult for anyone, particularly the Muslim community, to make an objective assessment about its policies and performance. Muslim intellectuals can do the community good by presenting a rational and reasonable picture instead of

postulating the "fascist" theory. Does that mean over 30 crore people who voted for the BJP are also "fascists"? The Muslim community as a whole and its leaders, particularly the religious leaders and the intelligentsia must take a pragmatic view of things and better build up bridges with the BJP instead of burning these.

The BJP today is treated by the Muslim community the way the Congress was treated by it (the Muslim

community) before the partition of the country. During the freedom struggle, the majority of the Muslim leadership, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bengal termed the Congress as a "communal Hindu" party. An overwhelming majority of Muslims in United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bengal and Hyderabad would vote for and support the Muslim League against the Congress as they considered Congress as a Hindu party. Leaders like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gafar Khan were rare exceptions.

The Muslim community may have certain grievances against the BJP for its open espousal of the Hindutva agenda. For this the BJP will need to allay the community's fears and apprehensions. Although the BJP now seems to have launched an outreach campaign towards the community, it will need to do it more proactively and more vigorously. It must address the alienation of the community, which is definitely there.

At the same time, it is not only the leaders from the Muslim community who have been spitting venom against the BJP, even non-Muslim leaders, from different political parties including the Congress area also doing the same for the obvious reasons to get the Muslim votes. The BJP will need to identify and encourage liberal voices among the community like the Kerala Governor, Arif Mohammad Khan and many others.

Both the BJP as well as the Muslim leadership in the country need to find a middle path of rapprochement. Both cannot afford to ignore each other for a long time.

## GUTS AND GLORY ON FOREIGN SOILS – VII

# Victoria Cross winner Badlu's statue unveiled



BY MAJ GEN HARVIJAY SINGH (RETD)

Victoria Cross winner Risaldar Badlu Singh's statue was unveiled in his village Dhakla in Jhajjar District of Haryana 01 Sep 2019. Badlu Singh belonged to 14th Murray's Jat Lancers, was attached with 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse) during World War I.

During World War I, the Arabs joined the British against the Ottomans.

29th Lancers landed in Egypt on 10 April 1918 and moved to Tell El Kebir, Kantara and finally to Belah on 27 April 1918 to join the 14th Cavalry Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division. The regiment was involved in frequent encounters with the Turkish forces in July and



Aug 1918. The regiment moved to Deiran (Palestine) and fought in the Battle of Megiddo.

On 23 Sep 1918 on the west bank of the River Jordan, Palestine, when his squadron was charging a strong enemy position,

Risaldar Badlu Singh realised that heavy casualties were being inflicted from a small hill occupied by machine-guns and 200 infantry. Without any hesitation he collected six other ranks and with entire disregard of danger he

charged and captured the position. He was mortally wounded on the very top of the hill when capturing one of the machine-guns single handed. Shaken by the charge, all the machine guns and infantry had surrendered to him before he died.

His valour and initiative were of the highest order.

Risaldar Badlu Singh is commemorated at the HELIOPOLIS (PORT TEWFIK) MEMORIAL which commemorates 3,726 Indians who served



during World War I in Egypt and Palestine. Panels bearing the names, erected in the entrance pavilions to Heliopolis War Cemetery, were unveiled by the Indian Ambassador to Egypt in Oct 1980.

The original memorial at Port Tewfik was damaged during the Israeli-Egyptian Six day War of 1967. It is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

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

The Express India NEWS