

PCS officers end strike

The meeting went on till 2.30 pm. After the meeting, Venu Prasad and association president Rajat Oberoi announced that the protest has been called off.

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

The Punjab Civil Service Officers' Association called off its strike and resumed office on Wednesday afternoon after a meeting with additional chief secretary to the chief minister, A Venu Prasad, and the constitution of a committee under Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Janjua to formulate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for corruption cases.

The meeting went on till 2.30 pm, beyond the deadline given by the Chief Minister. After the meeting, Venu Prasad and Association president Rajat Oberoi announced that the protest has been called off.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had directed the officers to return to work by 2 pm, failing which they were to be suspended.

The PCS officers had been on mass



casual leave from Monday to protest against the Vigilance Bureau arresting their colleague Narinder Singh Dhaliwal, posted as Regional Transport Authority (RTA), Ludhiana, for alleged corruption.

As the CM's deadline neared, a six-member delegation of PCS Officers Association reached the CMO.

Oberoio said they were calling off the protest for a week. The Chief Minister has

EARLIER IN THE DAY, CHIEF MINISTER BHAGWANT MANN HAD DIRECTED THE OFFICERS TO RETURN TO WORK BY 2 PM, FAILING WHICH THEY WERE TO BE SUSPENDED.

set up a committee to formulate an SOP in corruption cases so that innocent officers are not arrested and maligned, he said.

The PCS officers had also demanded action against Vigilance officials responsible for arresting RTA Tarsem Chand, who was found not guilty after a special investigation team had probed his case.

Oberoio further said they are happy with the assurance given by the CM that no injustice would be meted out to any person.

The government has agreed to make an SIT to decide if the action against PCS officer Narinder Dhaliwal was according to procedure.

Another committee will be constituted in the case of registration of a case against an IAS officer. The committee will have officers from both the civil and police sides. The committees will be formed and announced by the Chief Secretary.

Prasad said the anti-corruption drive would continue and the Association had promised that they would not shield the corrupt officers. He added that the protest has been called off but the case registered would not be quashed.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Revenue Officers Association also resumed work. The PCS officers had received support from staff of allied services, engineers and clerks. All work had come to a standstill in all districts for the past two days.

Flights across US grounded after system failure

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW YORK, JANUARY 11

Hundreds of flights across the United States were hit after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) suffered a catastrophic technical glitch with a computer system in an unprecedented disruption leading to travel chaos for thousands of passengers, international media reported on Wednesday.

All flights in the US were grounded following the incident, NBC News reported, quoting a source.

Flight tracking website FlightAware reported about 1,200 flights within, into or out of the United States had been delayed as of 7 am US Eastern Time. An additional 100 flights were also cancelled.

The US FAA said it has asked airlines to pause all domestic departures until 9 am US Eastern Time and is working to restore a

system that alerts pilots to hazards and changes to airport facilities and procedures that had stopped processing updated information.

In an advisory, the civil aviation regulator said its NOTAM (Notice to Air Missions) system had "failed". There was no immediate estimate for when it would be back, the website showed, though NOTAMs issued before the outage were still viewable.

Passengers on social media reported flight delays and outages across the United States, from Hawaii to Washington. Airports from Texas to Pennsylvania confirmed flights were impacted across the country, reported The Washington Post.

Aviation expert Parvez Damania called it a "shocking and unheard-of situation".

"I don't recall the last time when the entire airspace of the country was closed. Maybe during 9/11. This is going to cause unbelievable disruption," he told NDTV over the phone.

Bharat Jodo Yatra about spreading love: Rahul

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
FATEHGARH SAHIB, JANUARY 11

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi started the Punjab leg of his nationwide mass connect march Bharat Jodo Yatra by paying obeisance at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib on Wednesday morning.

Sporting a turban and wearing his trademark white half-sleeved T-shirt, Gandhi was accompanied by senior party leaders Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, MP Manish Tewari, Leader of Opposition Pratap Singh Bajwa, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, former Haryana CM Bhoopinder Hooda among others.

Gandhi had on Tuesday offered prayers at the Golden Temple in Amritsar after concluding the Haryana leg of the march in Ambala district.

He reached Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib on Tuesday evening and stayed overnight. Braving the harsh weather conditions, a



large number of party workers and supporters gathered for the yatra.

As per the schedule of the Punjab leg of the yatra, it will pass through Mandi Gobindgarh, Khanna, Sahnewal, Ludhiana, Goraya, Phagwara, Jalandhar, Dasyua and Mukerian after starting from Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib.

The Haryana PCC president handed over the flag to Punjab PCC president ahead of the start of the Yatra.

Turbaned Rahul walks barefoot

Earlier in the day, a turbaned Rahul Gandhi was seen walking barefoot after a visit to Rauza Sharif Shaikh Ahmad al-Faruqi al-Sirhindi Dargah on the Sirhind-Bassi Pathana road before formally starting his Punjab leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra in 4 degrees Celsius temperature. Behind him was Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring who was also walking barefoot.

Warring assured Rahul that Punjab would accord a rousing reception to the yatra and it would break all records as Punjabis are known for their hospitality. He urged Punjabis not to sleep for eight days as this yatra is to save Constitution. He compared it to the Dandi March undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi.

Hooda said the yatra is to save the nation and Rahul Gandhi had become the voice of every section of the society.



CBI arrests DGM, searches 50 locations in region

Cracking a whip on alleged corruption in the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the CBI arrested a deputy general manager on Wednesday and conducted searches at 50 locations across Punjab, Haryana and Delhi.

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CM announces stadium, road in name of cop

Chief Minister Mann on Wednesday announced that a stadium will be constructed and a road will be named after constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa of Punjab Police who sacrificed his life in Phagwara.

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New Rahul Gandhi born after 'killing' old Rahul

During one of his interactions with the media along the sidelines of his Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul Gandhi made a strange statement that "Rahul Gandhi was long dead" as he (Rahul) had himself killed him.

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3 soldiers die after falling into gorge in Kupwara

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 11

Three soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer (JCO), died after they slipped into a deep gorge during patrolling along the LoC in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, the Army said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Machil sector when they were on a regular operation task in the forward area.

"Incident Chinar Warriors in Machhal Sector. During a regular op task in forward area, a party of 01 JCO & 02 OR slipped into a deep gorge, when snow on the track gave way. Mortal remains of all the three brave-hearts have been retrieved," Indian Army's Srinagar-based Chinar Corps tweeted.

Truck kills six people standing at roadside tea stall in UP

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 11

Amid a thick blanket of fog engulfing the region, a truck mowed down six people, aged between 33 and 74, standing at a roadside tea stall in Rae Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday morning. Four others were injured in the accident that took place on the Banda-Bahraich highway.

According to the police, the truck ran over the villagers gathered at the tea stall and rolled down into a ditch.

The accident took place near Khagiyakheda village under Gurbaksh Ganj police station around 6 am when the truck was going towards Lalganj from Bachhrawan.

There was dense fog in the area at the time of the accident, police said.

Corruption in FCI

CBI arrests DGM, searches 50 locations

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 11

Cracking a whip on alleged corruption in the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the CBI arrested a deputy general manager on Wednesday and conducted searches at 50 locations across Punjab, Haryana and Delhi.

As per reports, the role of FCI officials from technical assistants to executive directors and state government employees is under the agency's scanner.

The searches started after a DGM in the FCI was caught taking a bribe of Rs 50,000. The CBI said the operation is spread across multiple cities in Punjab, Haryana and two locations in Delhi.

The agency has started the operation against an "unholy nexus of corruption" in the FCI involving a chain of officers, rice mill owners, grain merchants etc., engaged in the procurement, storage and distribution of food grains, PTI quoted sources as saying. According to sources, the investigating agency has been working on gathering intelligence for the last six months after it received numerous complaints of corruption in the FCI.



THE SEARCHES STARTED AFTER A DGM IN THE FCI WAS CAUGHT TAKING A BRIBE OF RS 50,000. THE CBI SAID THE OPERATION IS SPREAD ACROSS MULTIPLE CITIES IN PUNJAB, HARYANA AND TWO LOCATIONS IN DELHI.

Haryana to give ownership rights to villagers holding 'common use' land

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

A day after announcing a new arrangement of financial powers for Panchayati Raj institutions, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday announced the state government's plans to enact a "new law" to give ownership rights to villagers who possess tracts of land meant for common use.

The decision was taken by Khattar while

chairing a meeting with the delegation of the Bhartiya Kisan Union.

"In a big relief for Jumla Malkan, Mustraka Malkan, Shamlat Deh, Jumla Mustraka Malkan and Abadkar, Pattedar, Dholidar, Butmidar Mukrirdar and Kashtkar (a variety of common land created during consolidation after applying a pro-rata cut on the holdings of proprietors under the Consolidation Act), the state government has decided to introduce a new law to give ownership rights to people

holding such land," Khattar said.

"This work is in the final stage. Soon a Bill will be brought in the Vidhan Sabha. The advocates of the Kisan Union can also give suggestions for the draft of this law to the committee," Khattar added.

The Opposition Congress had been pressurising the state government to come out with a legally-tenable solution so that the villagers who had been cultivating the land for years should be given the ownership rights of the land.

New district jails to come up at Fatehabad, Charkhi Dadri

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

The committee for the purchase of land through the e-Bhoomi portal headed by Haryana Chief Secretary Sanjeev Kaushal today accorded approval for the purchase of land for construction of new road from Nangal Mala to Dhauli in Mahendergarh District. The committee also accorded approval for sending two new projects - construction of new district jails at Fatehabad and Charkhi Dadri.

In the meeting, discussions were held regarding the purchase of land for a total of 7 projects, out of which the Chief Secretary accorded approval for one and gave recommendations to send 2 projects for final approval from the High-Power Land Purchase Committee.

Public health SDE held taking bribe

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

Haryana State Vigilance Bureau has caught a Sub Divisional Engineer (SDE) of Public Health Engineering Department red-handed for demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 16,000 in lieu of releasing pending bill payment.

Sharing the information here today, the Bureau's spokesperson informed that arrested accused Sub Divisional Engineer has been identified as Deepak Kumar posted in Fatehabad.

The complainant, a resident of village Mehuwala, district Fatehabad, alleged that the accused SDE and Tarun Garg, Executive Engineer of Public Health Engineering Department were demanding bribe money of Rs 28,000 and Rs 20,000 respectively in lieu of releasing the pending bills of the work which has already been executed.

Dense fog continues to prevail in North India

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

A thick blanket of fog continued to cover several parts of north India today with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an orange alert for Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

Several flights and trains were delayed due to the fog. The weather department also predicted "cold day to severe cold day conditions" in Delhi, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh.

Visibility was reduced to 100 meters in



Delhi's Palam on Wednesday morning.

According to IMD, Punjab's Bhatinda saw a visibility of zero meters, Amritsar

recorded 25 meters and Ludhiana saw 200 meters. Hissar, Ambala and Bhiwani in Haryana recorded a visibility of 25 meters

each; Karnal, Safdarjung and Ayanagar (Delhi) 200 metres each.

Around 45 flights, including Delhi-Shimla,

Delhi-Kathmandu, Delhi-Chennai, Delhi-Jaisalmer, Delhi-Bareilly, Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Varanasi, Delhi-Srinagar, Delhi-Jaipur, Delhi-Guwahati were delayed on Wednesday morning due to fog and cold weather in the national capital, reported news agency ANI citing sources. There was no flight diversion reported till 8 am, they added.

As many as 26 trains were running late in the Northern Railway region due to fog.

Meanwhile, according to IMD, the cold wave conditions have abated from the plains of northwest India and no cold wave is likely over North India during the next 4 days.

PUNJAB

Stadium, road in name of cop killed in Phagwara

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
SHAHPUR (GURDASPUR), JANUARY 11

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday announced that a stadium will be constructed and a road will be named after constable Kuldeep Singh Bajwa of Punjab Police who sacrificed his life in Phagwara while fighting anti-social elements.

The Chief Minister, who visited the house of the martyr here at his native village, handed over cheques worth Rs 2 crore, including Rs 1 crore ex gratia by state government and Rs 1 crore of life insurance by HDFC bank, to the distressed family as a mark of respect for Bajwa's supreme sacrifice.

Mann said that this initiative of the state government is in recognition of the immense contribution of this son of soil



towards maintaining law and order in the state.

The Chief Minister said that it is the duty of the Punjab government to help the families of the soldiers who sacrifice their life at the altar of the motherland. He announced the construction of a stadium in the village in the name of martyr Kuldeep

Singh Bajwa with an ultra-modern athletic track.

Mann expressed hope that the youth of the region will judiciously use this stadium for training to join the Punjab Police and Armed Forces.

The Chief Minister also announced that the road leading to the village of the martyr will be named after Kuldeep Singh Bajwa.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that this healing touch of the state will go a long way in helping the aggrieved family and also encourage the youth to join the armed forces and Punjab Police to serve their motherland.

Mann described the residents of border areas as 'true patriots', who have made immense contributions to safeguard the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country.



Minister kick-starts Road Safety Week

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

Giving clarion call to all stakeholders concerned to initiate vigorous efforts for reducing road accidents mortality rate, Punjab Transport Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar on Wednesday said that the concerned departments, NGOs and especially commuters should play their role responsibly and dedicate themselves to road safety throughout the year instead of just for a week.

Kick-starting the Road Safety Week from January 11 to 17 being organised by the Punjab State Road Safety Council, the Transport Minister said that most of the major and fatal accidents occur during the foggy season between December to February. He directed the traffic police officials to challan heavy vehicles parked along the roadside, which are causing accidents during the foggy season.

The Cabinet Minister informed that as per the Punjab Road Accident Report-2021, about 4,589 people died in road accidents in the state, which is 13 people daily. He said it is found that 72% of total road accidents occur on national and state highways, while 60% of road accidents occur in rural areas. It is also estimated that about 70% of people die in road accidents are in the age group of 18 to 45 years. He said that the district Ropar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Mohali contributes a maximum number of accidents

TRANSPORT MINISTER DIRECTED THE TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICIALS TO CHALLAN HEAVY VEHICLES PARKED ALONG THE ROADSIDE, WHICH ARE CAUSING ACCIDENTS DURING THE FOGGY SEASON.

in the state, while Jalandhar and Ludhiana cities are the worst hit.

He said the NGOs and individuals involved in road safety and saving accident victims' lives will be honoured on Republic Day. Bhullar said various activities will be conducted by the departments in collaboration with NGOs during the road safety week.

He said that the traffic police will conduct bicycle/ two-wheeler rallies, install reflectors on vehicles, organise health check-up of drivers, campaign against over-speeding, drunk and drive, awareness campaign about seat belts and helmet wearing, installation sign boards etc.

State Transport Commissioner and Health Department will jointly conduct health and eye check-up camps for truck operators and traffic employees, PWD and NHAI will install signboards on black spots and accident prone areas, Punjab Mandi Board and PWD will launch cleaning campaign of the link roads.

Rotary Club celebrates Dheeyan di Lohri

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 11:

Under the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" initiative, the Lohri Mela of 101 new-born baby girls was celebrated by the Rotary Club of Ludhiana Midtown and Malwa Sahbyacharak Manch Punjab at an open air auditorium of the Punjabi Bhawan, Ludhiana.

The Malwa Sahbyacharak Manch Punjab Chairman KK Bawa and RCLM President Inderbir Singh Nanda were also present.

These 101 girls were also honoured and given Shagun and toys by the Manch along with shawls to every mother.

Prominent people from different walks of life were honoured by the manch, which included Malvika Sood, Dr Preet Kamal Kaur Cheema, Charan Kaur, G.S. Peter, Gurpreet Singh and Indra Grewal. Renowned Punjabi Singers Daler Punjabi,

Khushi Sidhu, Sarabjit Kaur and many others enthralled the audience with their soulful voices

Project Director Dharmender Joshi said it was the need of the hour as well as our duty to ensure that the social evil of female foeticide is stopped completely.

Project Coordinator Jasminder Singh said organising such functions sent a good message to the society.

President of the Club Inerbir Singh Nanda, said, "In today's time, respect for relationships is very important.

Nanda thanked all the members, who included Rtn Vikas Gupta, Rtn Arun Goel, Rtn Chaianya Parkash, Rtn Anil Aggarwal, Rtn Chandan Verma, Rtn Om Parkash Bijlwan, Rtn Naresh Paul, Rtn Manoj Sood, Rtn Vijay Mittar, Rtn Pardeep Malik, Rtn Gurinder Singh Matta, Rtn Pritpal Singh Dua, Rtn Rajan Aggarwal, Rtn Ashok Jindal, Rtn Satyapal Singh Kalsi, Ranne Parkash Kaur and others.

Chairman of Punjab School Education Board resigns

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

Punjab School Education Board Chairman Dr Yograj has resigned from his post. According to the information, Dr Yograj sent his resignation to the Punjab government yesterday which was accepted today. He has been asked to continue working as the chairman of the Punjab School Education Board until further orders.

University, college teachers to boycott exam duty on Jan 16

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 11

Punjab Federation of University and College Teachers' Organisations (PFUCTO) has given a call for the suspension of evaluation work and boycott of exams on January 16, in protest against the Punjab Government's notification on adopting the UGC pay scales.

"The teachers of the universities and colleges of Punjab were in for a rude shock when the Punjab Government notification adopting the UGC pay-scales that was issued on September 29, 2022 after over 5 years of inordinate delay. It led to major confusion because some of its clauses are contradictory in nature and are contemptuous of the existing constitutional framework," said Dr Jagwant Singh, general secretary, PFUCTO.

He said that the major issues are those arising out of the contradiction in clauses 11 and 13 of the notification, especially the reduction in the age of superannuation and the partial adoption of the UGC Regulations 2018. Further, the Department of Agriculture has also not issued the revised pay commission notification of PAU and GADVASU, he said.

"All the issues arising out of the notification have been brought to the notice of the government several times, but it has failed to respond to the legitimate demands of the teachers. Therefore, we have been forced to start an agitation to

make the government appreciate our concerns and take remedial action at the earliest," Singh informed.

"On Jan 16, all evaluation work will be suspended and the conduct of the examination will be boycotted. This will be followed by campus dharnas on January 18. Further course of action will be decided later," he informed.

The PFUCTO said conditions of service of teachers of universities and non-government colleges are part of the respective University Acts right from the inception of the universities.

"These specify that the age of retirement of teachers and non-teaching staff is 60 years. The respective University Acts, being the acts of the Legislature,



EDITORIAL

The Express India NEWS

Well done, Mr Chief Minister

Punjab Chief Minister, Bhagwant Mann has done well by asserting his authority in making the Punjab Civil Services officers call off their strike. It was a categorical message from the Chief Minister to the officers that they must join their duties by 2 pm on Wednesday or they would face suspension. The message went across well and the association called off the strike. The message has also gone well across the state among people that the government was not prepared to broker any compromise on the issue of corruption. The PCS Officers' Association was protesting against the arrest of one of their colleagues by Punjab Vigilance Bureau on the charges of corruption. The association has been maintaining that due procedure was not followed by the Vigilance Bureau as prior permission from the competent authority was not taken. The Vigilance Bureau on its part has maintained that there was no prior permission needed in such a case under which the PCS officer was arrested.

This was quite unprecedented that the entire PCS cadre had gone on strike. The PCS officers were joined by the revenue department officials also in their strike. Some more employees' unions had also announced their support for the strike. This was getting anarchic. It is good that the government decided to nip the "revolt" in the bud. Moreover, the protest was grossly for wrong reasons. The strike, as the Chief Minister described, was sort of a blackmail to defend an accused in a corruption case. The PCS Association would have done well by taking legal recourse and defending its colleague legally. After all, the Vigilance Bureau is not the final arbiter. The matter will eventually be decided by the court. The PCS Association should have faith in the judiciary instead of resorting to strike, which was not only unprecedented, but also uncalled for.

At the same time, the message must have gone across the IAS Officers' Association also that it cannot take the government for a ride either. The IAS Association is also up in arms over the registration of an FIR against one of their colleagues for the illegal transfer of PSIEC land in Mohali. This raises a question whether the PCS and IAS officers are justified to resort to collective protests, strikes and pressure. The IAS and the PCS officers are supposed to be the leaders and they are not like workers and labourers that they would resort to "unionism" and bring pressure on the government. And that too when the issue they had taken up was related to the corruption charges against their colleagues. At their level such protests are really unheard of. Hope better sense prevails among everyone that they do not adopt a confrontational approach with the government. There are some of the best officers both in the IAS and the PCS who should take the lead and call spade a spade. One thing is for sure, they are vested with so much unbridled power, that for them resorting to strikes and protests sounds silly and strange.

New Rahul Gandhi born after 'killing' old Rahul Gandhi?

BY RAJEEV PANDIT

During one of his interactions with the media along the sidelines of his Bharat Jodo Yatra, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi made a strange statement that "Rahul Gandhi was long dead" as he (Rahul) had himself killed him (the old Rahul Gandhi). The statement did sound strange. But the way Rahul Gandhi insisted and emphasized saying "that" Rahul Gandhi had gone and he did not exist except for in the minds of people, particularly the BJP. On the face of it, the statement sounds philosophic, rather spiritual, that you have killed the self and have become part of greater self and your soul has merged with some 'super soul' and now you are part of that super soul only.

Or the other interpretation is that the Rahul Gandhi, on whom the opposition, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party used to crack jokes at, and even dismiss him derisively as "Pappu" is gone and here is a new Rahul Gandhi, who is very much challenging their might and authority. It is a fact that Rahul Gandhi has shown complete change in his person and persona during the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra. During the last four

months, he has already walked about 3000 kilometers, literally and is likely to walk at least 600 kms more as the Yatra concludes in Srinagar in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir on January 30.

As this newspaper has been repeatedly saying that Rahul may have declined the Congress presidency, but he has not declined the Congress leadership. He no doubt is the most "powerful" and the most "influential" leader in the Congress right now as his mother Ms Sonia Gandhi has been gradually restricting her role in the party affairs, having almost completely withdrawn. More so after she handed over the baton of party presidency to Malik-arjun Kharge. Rahul realizes

that he continues to hold that powerful position even if he is not the president and even if Kharge is an "elected" president. Kharge also realizes it himself that no doubt he was "elected" as the president of the grand old party, it was all due to the blessings of the Gandhi family only.

Rahul during his four-month yatra has met thousands of people from cross the country. It is obviously his biggest pub-



lic outreach as he walked and talked along with all and sundry. Before the beginning of the yatra, Rahul indeed was a different person. Whether anyone admits to it or not, he has indeed made a difference. He has single-handedly mobilized the party

across the country. He has walked through eleven states so far right from the South to West and now in the northern part. He has been received well everywhere. He has carved an image of a "challenger". Apparently this is the message he wanted to send across to everyone, to his "friends" amongst the opposition parties and the "foes" in the government that he is no longer the same Rahul Gandhi about whom you could be derisively dismissive.

Philosophical and spiritual interpre-

tations of his statement about having "killed Rahul Gandhi", apart, Rahul has even changed his personal appearance as well. The uncut and untrimmed beard has given a completely different look to his personality. Added to it is the "saffron" turban he has been tying for the last two days in Punjab. Anyone not following him closely will find it difficult to recognize him. So much has his personality changed, at least in appearance. But Rahul by his own assertion would like us to believe that he has changed from inside out by killing his "earlier" self, nobody except him knows which self he was talking about.

Of course everything will unfold and come out, in the aftermath of the Bharat Jodo Yatra after it concludes in Srinagar. Rahul's leadership and the "new personality" will be tested then. He has already made a mark during the yatra. Now he will have to capitalize on it and reap the harvest. And before that he has already said it loud and clear that he is no longer the old Rahul. It is completely new Rahul everyone will have to deal with. The old Rahul has been "killed" and he has been "killed" by Rahul Gandhi himself, that is what he said during a press conference in Haryana just a few days ago.

War in Ukraine: Electronic warfare the final game changer!



BY MAJ GEN HARVIJAY SINGH (RETD, SM)

The Russian Army marched into Ukraine on 24 Feb 22 high on confidence bordering on hubris. And, low on tactical skills bordering on disorder. This self-defeating behaviour made them lose sight of two valuable historical lessons:

- Disregard for Rasputitsa (Sea of Mud), it had during the World War II in 1942 prevented the Germans from reaching Moscow, and restricted the Russian counteroffensive in 1943.

- The logical and widely anticipated first assault in almost every military conflict since 1938 has been 'Air assault'. Despite a huge superiority in numbers of aircrafts with Russia, their Airforce was a no-show.

'Rasputitsa' and the 'Absent Airpower' made the Russian assault crawl at the speed of their trucks and tanks stalled and bunched up on narrow

roads. This 'Tactical Sloppiness', made them sitting ducks for shoulder fired missiles and drones. They also failed to deploy their very powerful and accomplished EW Systems.

Thankfully for them, the Russian Army rediscovered its bearings especially in the electromagnetic spectrum. Their Receivers, Direction Finders (DFs) and Jammers were eventually rescued from the confusing mass of vehicles withdrawing from Kiev and redeployed tactically; as they should have been in the first instance.

Once redeployed and integrated, they began knocking out Ukrainian strike drones and blinding their sharp and precise artillery powered by intelligence gained by small quadcopters. Of the thousands of drones the Ukrainians possessed in Feb, 90% were destroyed by summer- Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) analysts.

The punch was incisive, the average lifespan of a small quadcopter was reduced to three flights, and that of the bigger fixed-wing ones to six; suddenly the invincible drones were dying in hordes, others were grounded for 'force preservation'. The weapons making the kills:

- Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) Torn- MDM and SB-636 Svet-KU Systems pinpoint Ukrainian units by tracing their radio signals. They search, DF, analyse and record signals in frequency range 1.5-3000 MHz, of enemy emitters located in a 70 km radius. This information is used to target Command Posts and Gun Areas.

- RB-341V Leer-3s System combines soldier launched Orlan-10 UAV to extend ranges to detect and jam satellite navigation signals and 3G, 4G communications. Range can get extended to over 100s of Kms.

- R-934B Sinita radio-jammers and R-330Zh Zhitel – are smaller systems grouped with manoeuvre elements designed for detection, analysis, DF and jamming of satellite and cellular phone communication systems operating in the frequency range from 100 to 2,000 MHz over 10s of Kms.

- Murmansk-BN, a long-range system for detection and jamming of HF military radios.

- 1L269 Krasukha-2 and 1RL257 Krasukha-4 Systems to target S-band and X-band & Ku-band radars respectively on planes, drones, missiles, and low-orbit satellites.

At least three of Russia's five EW Brigades are reportedly engaged in Ukraine. Each of the Manoeuvre Brigade also includes an EW company of about a 100 personnel that is trained to support their operations using smaller systems.

For greater flexibility and mobility, the Russian army broke its 2,000-soldier Manoeuvre Brigades into smaller Battalion Tactical Groups (BTGs) of 300 to 800 personnel. Each of these BTGs also includes EW elements.

After the initial EW no-show, now, the BTGs operating in southern and eastern Ukraine are employing short-range VHF-UHF electronic attack systems like the R-330Zh Zhitel to disable Ukrainian drones ranging from Bayraktar TB2s to small DJI Mavics by jamming their GPS signals. They are attacking Ukrainian command and control communications using R-934B VHF and SPR-2 VHF/UHF jammers.

Although Ukrainian soldiers have SINCGARS radios, they still use Cell Phones and Radios without encryption; this war has established indisputably that the use of Civilian Service Providers Cell Phones in a battlefield is suicidal and has killed many commanders and soldiers on both sides.

Could EW be the final Game Changer?