

# Veterans not being looked after: Captain

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CHANDIGARH: The veterans in the country are not at peace at a time when China is baring its fangs. And no army in the world can call itself war-ready if it can't look after its veterans, their families, and the disabled soldiers. This was the warning veterans sent out to the government as the maiden military literature festival drew to a close here on Saturday evening.

While dismissing the charge that the army is being politicised, Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh agreed that veterans are not being looked after. "The defence minister wants to cap the subsidy on education of their wards to save a mere Rs 3 crore. A man dies for his country; it's our duty to look after his family," he fumed.

When Vir Sanghvi, who was moderating the concluding session on the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, asked him if he would keep his word as a politician as well, Amarinder declared, "Yes," adding he would readily foot the bill of Rs 3 crore. He recounted how an injured soldier breathing his last had just one question for his officer, "Who will look after my children?" The officer replied, "Aap ke bache sarkar ke bache ho



■ Brig AJS Behl (ret), CM Capt Amarinder Singh, journalist Vir Sanghvi, Lt Gen SS Brar (ret), Brig GS Gosal (ret) and Brig DK Khullar (ret) in a session on the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, at the Military Literature Festival in Chandigarh on Saturday. SANJEEV SHARMA/HT

gaye hain." Earlier, Lt Gen SS Brar (ret) warned of the nation facing a 1962-like situation. "We are being told that we are ready for war on two-and-a-half fronts when we have gaps in our armoury; our army is short of 1,200 officers; and when we have only 33 squadrons against 45

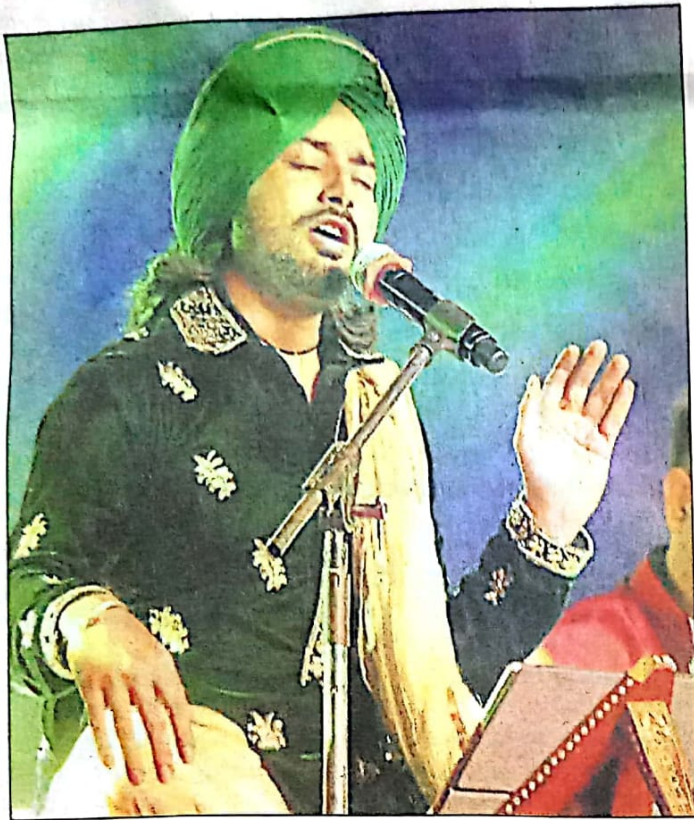
needed to defend our airspace," he growled. Amarinder said it is a matter of concern that the Chinese were making incursions in the eastern sector as well as in Ladakh. "It is unfortunate that even though we had planned to raise two divisions in the East, we haven't even raised one

fully," he grouched. The festival, which saw over 200 authors, historians and gallantry award winners and 33 sessions, ended with a big round of applause for the disciplined army of students who managed everything from the registration to seats for visitors, with a ready smile.

Delivering the valedictory address, Amarinder hoped the festival would motivate more youngsters to join the army. A group of girl students from Shemrock, queuing up to receive the commendation certificates, were all smiles as they nodded. "We will apply for the army now," they chorused.

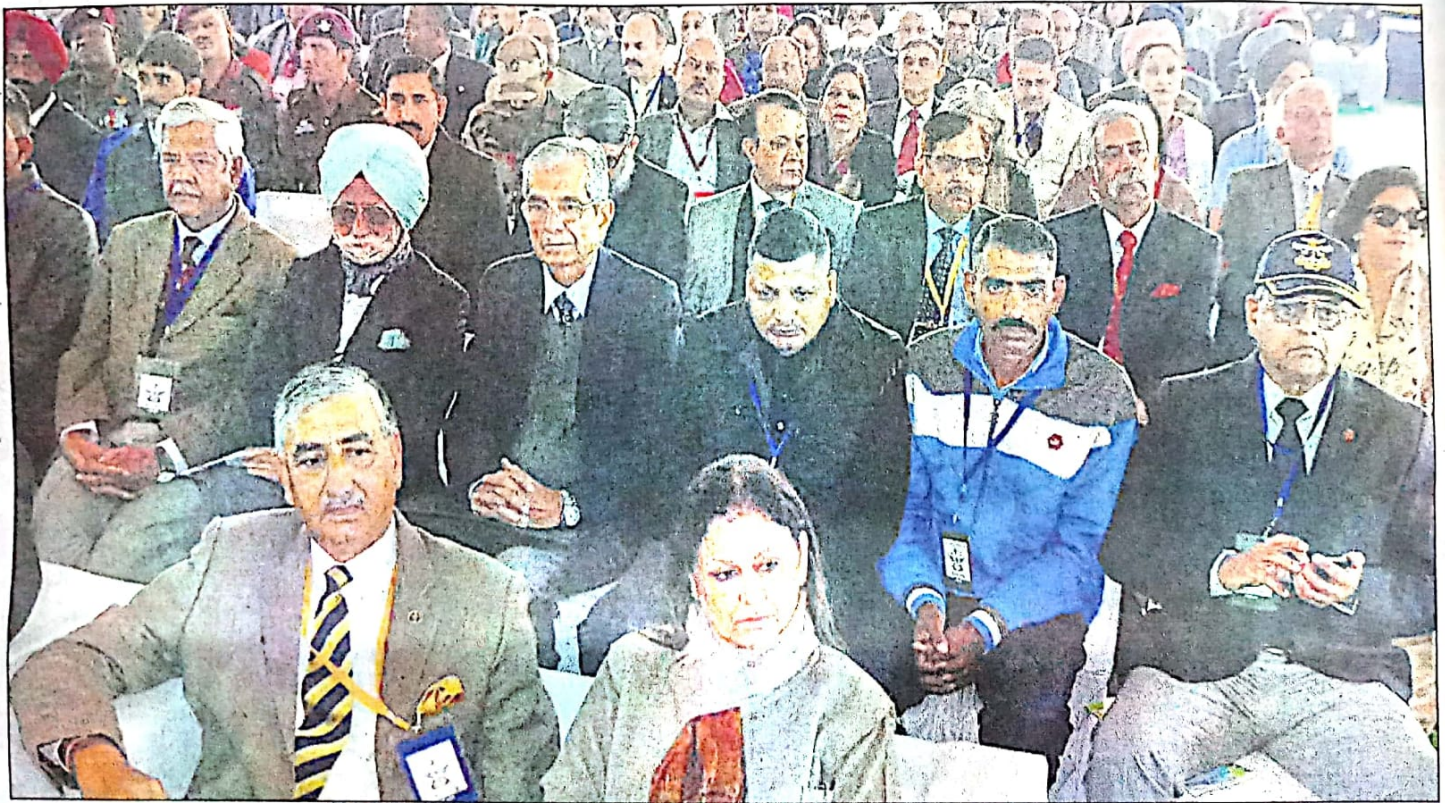


# MUSIC, DISCUSSION... IT HAD IT ALL



■ Sufi singer Satinder Sartaj during his performance at the Capitol Complex, and (right) senior journalist Vir Sanghvi during a session on Friday.

ANIL DAYAL/HT PHOTOS





# India's first Military Literature Festival concludes

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Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh presenting certificate to students late on Saturday night. DP

**WRITER-HISTORIAN WILLIAM DALRYMPLE GAVE THE AUDIENCE AN INSIGHT INTO THE INTRIGUES IN MAHARAJA RANJIT'S DARBAR**

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India's first-of-its-kind Military Literature Festival on Sunday concluded in Chandigarh, with Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh expressing hope it would prove instrumental in motivating the youth to join the Army.

Delivering the valedictory address at the festival; Singh said though he was in favour of organising a historical literature festival, Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore wanted a military literature festival in Chandigarh to raise awareness among people about the legacy of the armed forces, and rekindle among youth the motivating spirit to join

the Indian Army. Singh, a former Army captain, said being a part of the defence forces was a matter of pride and every youngster should be imbued with the spirit to join the forces. He highlighted the contribution of the Armed Forces in safeguarding India's unity, integrity and sovereignty.

Noting that as a student of history he has always been passionate to relive the major episodes relating to the role of Punjabis, Singh promised that the festival would be scaled up in coming years to reach out effectively to more people and help imbibe a sense of patriotism and nationalism among the people, including the youth.

Speaking at 'National Security Strategy' panel discussion earlier in the day, former Army chief Gen V P Malik called for the involvement of civilians to prevent terrorist attacks. Gen Malik touched on multiple aspects of security, including internal and external, infiltration from Pakistan, new challenges posed by

The CM said being a part of the defence forces was a matter of pride and every youngster should be imbued with the spirit to join the forces

China and cybercrime, the expensive combat conventional strategy, insurgency and the role of the three armed forces.

A session on the 'Indo-Pak War 1965' saw the main speakers debate the rights and wrongs of the war, with state Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal joining retired Army officers in highlighting some of the key developments of that time.

Writer-historian William Dalrymple gave the audience an insight into the intrigues in Maharaja Ranjit's darbar. He spoke about the military techniques adopted by the British and Indians during the 17th and 18th centuries.



# Henderson Brooks report not being declassified to save political skin: Capt

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**CHANDIGARH:** If the who may have youngsters to j would undoubtedly commando who team that condu strikes last year

The 28-year-old stood out in his the pride of the was mobbed by boys for selfies barded by the m

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**THE STRIKE**  
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Using a r strategy, the surprise ar losses. Their almost five h they were ur they manag cessfully. T enemy was where it hu

**A SPECIA**  
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**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh was a fauji first at the Military Literature Festival here on Friday when he minced no words, saying that the Henderson Brooks report on the Sino-Indian War of 1962 was not being declassified "only to save political skin".

"The Henderson Brooks-Prem Bhagat report should have been made public long back. It is an open secret. It has not been declassified only to save political skin," Capt Singh said.

"After the government order, the defence minister (Krishna Menon) was literally shifting platoons. There was a compliant corps commander who didn't give brigade commander Hoshiar Singh a chance to fight. It was not the army fighting, it was a faulty government policy at work," said Capt Singh, who was wearing his medals. He was commissioned in 2 Sikh Regiment in 1963.

He was interacting with veteran journalist Vir Sanghvi and military historians Thomas Fraser, Alan Jefferys, Lt Gen TS Shergill (retd) and Ed Haynes at a panel discussion.

Asked about India's provocative foreign policy in 1962 despite no preparedness, Lt Gen Shergill said, "It was the lack of understanding by the government on what it takes besides the lack of spine of certain officers to admit what can't be done."

There was unanimity among the panellists that then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru "died a disappointed man". Then defence minister Krishna Menon and he clearly misread the situation despite intelligence inputs



(From left) Lt Gen A Mukherjee (retd), Brig MS Gill (retd), Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh, The Tribune editor-in-chief Harish Khare, Brig IS Gakhil (retd) and Maj Gen Shiudev Singh (retd) at the Military Literature Festival 2017 at Lake Club in Chandigarh on Friday.

ANIL DAYAL/HT

## PUNJAB CM ADMITS ARMED FORCES NOT CAREER OF CHOICE FOR TODAY'S YOUTH, SAYS NEED TO INTROSPECT

as far back as 1959 that China was planning an offensive.

### WINNER OR LOSER?

Lt Gen Shergill said that military history has taught that only a force that endures can win. "The perception is that military his-

tory is written by the winner but who is the winner in a counter-insurgency situation? There is no clear winner or loser. The lexicon of conflict is changing and caution should be exercised in usage of terms," he said.

Asked who had won the 1965 India-Pakistan war, Capt Amarinder Singh said, "It was more or less a draw. We had no ammo left and if it continued any longer, we'd be fighting each other with stones. It was a pathetic situation. India may have gained territorially but it

was a negligible gain."

### 'NO POLITICS IN FORCES'

The CM denied any politicisation in the armed forces but declined comment on political interference. "The forces are disciplined and will always be," he said.

Like most participants at the session, Capt Singh agreed that unlike the past, today's youth were not drawn to a career in the armed forces. "It is a concern that many don't want to join the forces and we need to find out why," he said.

## 'POLITICIANS SHOULD BE GIVEN MILITARY TRAINING'

Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh prescribed one-year military training for all those seeking to fight an election.

"All MLAs should be put through military training. Only then will our politicians and leaders know how to treat soldiers and the armed forces," he said to applause.

