

Khurana plea for meet on polluting units

Our Staff Reporter

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NEW DELHI, DEC. 9. The former Chief Minister of Delhi and BJP vice-president, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, has written to the Prime Minister urging him to convene a meeting of all concerned to find an amicable solution to the ticklish issue of relocation of polluting units in the Capital.

Releasing his letter to the Press here this afternoon, Mr. Khurana said he had sent his request to the Prime Minister on Friday, a day after the Supreme Court order giving a month to the Delhi Government for relocation of polluting units. Keen not to be seen as an opponent of the Supreme Court ruling, Mr. Khurana accepted the logic governing the apex court's decision but said more time was need for relocation as the alternative plots were yet to be developed.

In his letter, Mr. Khurana urged the Prime Minister to convene a meeting of the Union Urban Development Minister, the Chief Minister of Delhi, members of the Lok Sabha from Delhi and all representatives of small scale and cottage industry units to find a "middle path" out of the current stalemate.

Setting the agenda for such a meeting, Mr. Khurana said: "It should identify the polluting units. Only those units whose samples fail should be declared polluting." This said, the former Chief Minister in-

sisted only 3,000 of the small scale and cottage industrial units in the Capital were polluting.

Further, in his opinion, the affidavit filed by the Delhi Government before the Supreme Court on November 28 had complicated the situation. "The affidavit has stated that out of approximately one lakh small-scale and cottage industrial units of Delhi, all but 24,000 would be sealed."

According to Mr. Khurana, relocation of units alone would not free the City from pollution. Advocating a multi-pronged assault on pollution, he said action should be taken against a large number of vehicles running on diesel and petrol. "These vehicles account for 75 per cent of the pollution in Delhi. Effective steps should be taken to stop vehicular pollution."

Also, he was critical of the Delhi Government for not carrying on the work launched by its predecessor in setting up 16 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to address the problem of water pollution. "When I was Chief Minister, we had launched a comprehensive Rs. 300 crore plan to cleanse the 16 major nullahs that open into Yamuna with an equal number of STPs."

Asked to comment on the Union Urban Development Minister's position on the issue, Mr. Khurana dodged the question. Instead, he said the "Prime Minister is sure to find a way out of this situation".

The Supreme Court has the final word!

M.S. 10/11/2004
THE SUPREME COURT order on closure of all polluting industries operating out of the Capital's non-conforming areas is expected to have wide ranging ramifications as far as the city life goes. There has never been any dispute over the closure and relocation of polluting industries which had been functioning from residential areas.

Therefore, the Supreme Court order essentially also reflects the popular opinion in the Capital and makes it extremely hard for any section of the society to either oppose or criticise the clear cut directions. The apex court apparently issued the order after giving enough opportunity to the Delhi Government and its allied agencies to implement the court's concerns in respect to polluting industries.

The court's order has further vindicated the stand of Urban Development Minister Jagmohan who has all along been maintaining that inaction on part of the Delhi Government was the major hindrance in the shifting or closure of polluting industrial units. Defending his stand of not amending the Master Plan on the floor of Parliament, the Minister had stated that his was not the final word on the relocation issue.

The Supreme Court has consequently sealed this argument in his favour by giving its final word on the matter. A Division Bench headed by Justice B N Kirpal has directed the Delhi Government, the MCD and the DDA to shut the polluting units, under the supervision of the Urban Development Ministry whom the court has designated as the nodal agency for shifting out of industries within a period of one month.

The nodal agency will be at liberty to direct closure of all polluting units under its supervision. In other words, the Delhi Government and its allied agencies will implement whatever instructions they receive from the Union Urban Development Ministry in respect of closure of polluting units. Significantly, the Supreme Court bench has stayed the operation of any order of the lower court which was in conflict with the authorities directions to shut such industries. In simple terms, it means that no injunction whatsoever can be obtained from any lower court by the affected industrial unit owners.

Another significant observation made in

the apex court by counsel Ranjit Kumar, who was assisting the court, was that non polluting industries refusing to be relocated should also be closed. Obviously, all developments in the matter have gone in favour of Mr Jagmohan, who can now monitor the implementation from a position of advantage since his Ministry has been asked to give the compliance report to the apex court within five weeks.

The Minister would have done on his own what the court has now asked his Ministry to do, if he had been allowed to have his way in the first place. Now armed with the court's directions, he may be able to fend off any kind of criticism from his party colleagues as well as the Opposition much more effectively. However, the Delhi Government, Congress and

to be politically embarrassing. The concern of the politicians is that the shifting of industries without proper relocation infrastructure would have a bearing on their electoral fortunes in the future. Therefore, various leaders and political parties have decided to cope with the situation as per their respective wisdom.

BETWEEN US



PANKAJ
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The Congress controlled Delhi Government is conscious that once the industrial units start closing down, it would have to take the entire blame as affected persons would hold the Congress representatives responsible for their plight. This realisation perhaps has resulted in the hurried decision to reconvene a one-day session of the Delhi Assembly on Monday where certain clarifications, politically significant for the party in power, could be made for

Various elected representatives are now busy finding an escape route to absolve themselves of any responsibility after the industrial units are closed, leading to possible unrest or other problems which could prove to be politically embarrassing. The concern of the politicians is that the shifting of industries without proper relocation infrastructure would have a bearing on their electoral fortunes in the future. Therefore, various leaders and political parties have decided to cope with the situation as per their respective wisdom.

the BJP find themselves in a very difficult situation. On one hand, they cannot criticise the Supreme Court and on the other they cannot prevent the implementation of the directions. The Delhi Government and the MCD continue to be in a fix since the apex court has reserved its judgement on the contempt proceedings which had been initiated against the Chief Secretary as well as the Municipal Commissioner.

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the consumption of those affected by the order.

The one-day session is likely to adopt a resolution which would perhaps have to be carefully worded so that it does not criticise the apex court but at the same time shifts the entire blame for the current situation on the BJP in general and the Urban Development Ministry and the MCD in particular. The House has already adopted a resolution demanding amendments in the Delhi Master Plan to accommodate non-polluting industries in non-conforming areas.

Therefore, the wording of the resolution

on Monday would have to be different and such that it should be able to deflect all criticism from the Government on to its opponents. The order has also provided an opportunity to the Delhi Chief Minister, Mrs. Sheila Dikshit, to refurbish her image within both the CLP and the party.

The CM had to face embarrassing moments during the last Assembly session when her own party MLAs appeared divided on crucial matters. In fact, 18 Congress MLAs had courted arrest to demand amendments in the Master Plan much before a large number of other party MLAs led by the CM went to call on the Prime Minister with a copy of the resolution. Subsequently, the CM did not attend a meeting of the CLP where her own minister and the chief whip tendered their apologies for a communication gap.

Astute and political as she is, Mrs Dikshit will certainly use the Assembly session to also project to the high command that she was in total control of the situation and the whole party stood behind her unitedly. The one-day session could possibly give another lease of life to the CM who has been under a lot of fire from her own party colleagues.

The BJP MPs from Delhi too are conscious that the elections to the Municipal Corporation are not too far away and if proper posturing is not done now, the party's prospects may diminish. Therefore, the entire BJP leadership would target the Congress and the Delhi Government for the plight of the workers. At the same time, some of the leaders would try and bypass Mr Jagmohan by urging the Prime Minister to convene an all-party meeting to find a way out.

The fallout from the implementation of the order as per intelligence reports hints at a possible breakdown of law and order situation in some areas. The Delhi Police on its part has already started preparations to meet any eventuality and meetings of senior officials and the district staff are being held at regular intervals. Much would also depend upon how the workers and industrial unit owners react to the implementation of the order. Instead of scoring political brownie points, various parties and agencies should meet and evolve a strategy for peaceful implementation of the Supreme Court order and rehabilitation of the affected workers. Between us.

Khurana seeks PM's help to resolve issue

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 9

BJP NATIONAL vice president and former Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana has sought the intervention of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to resolve the contentious issue of polluting industrial units in non conforming areas in the Capital.

Mr Khurana in his one-page letter to Mr Vajpayee urged him to convene a meeting of

various concerned groups to formulate a definition of polluting industries. According to him those to be invited for the meeting should

include Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan, Chief Minister Ms Sheila Dikshit, Delhi MPs and representative of small scale as well as cottage industries in the city.

Former Delhi Industries Minister Harsharan Singh Balli and representatives of industrial units were also present during the meeting. Mr Khurana said that in a few days the Delhi MPs would also meet Mr Vajpayee and urge him to seek a solution to the problem. He felt that the one-month

time given by the Supreme Court to close the polluting units was too brief a time frame. "We cannot just shut down these industries. First we need to be clear about which industry comes under the ambit of pollution causing unit and then we need to provide alternate space for shifting the industry. All this will take time - may be six months to an year. In one month no land can be developed with necessary services like water and electricity, so the one month time frame is definitely impractical," he added.

Accusing the Congress led Delhi government of not being serious about reducing

pollution levels in the city, Mr Khurana said that industrial units only lent a small percentage to pollution graph. Two major pollution contributors are vehicles and the Yamuna river. The Delhi government should take drastic steps to control pollution of the river and vehicular pollution, but it seems to be doing nothing in that direction.

Mr Khurana has cautioned against sealing these units as did earlier and said the law and order situation in Delhi could worsen critically.

Relocation of Polluting Units

Now, Assembly will define 'pollution'

S K JHA
New Delhi

*The Pioneer
10/11/2000*

INDUSTRIES FACING CLOSURE: FLOUR MILLS, DYERS, SPICE FACTORIES, WOODEN GOODS, IRONSMITH SHOPS, ELECTRIC FAN UNITS, AGRO APPLIANCES, BATTERY ACCESSORIES

SHAKEN BY the unyielding stand of Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan, and the mandate given by the apex court, the Delhi government has now sought to create a controversy on the issue of definition of polluting industries.

According to Supreme Court order, all the polluting units in the city should be shut down by first week of January. Urban Development Ministry has been reappointed nodal agency to oversee the implementation of SC order. Mr Jagmohan has also been permitted to report to the court the acts of "non-cooperation" by the Delhi government or any civic body in the implementation of apex court order.

Weighed down by the needs of electoral arithmetic and lacking the wherewithal to relocate industries without rendering thousands of workers jobless, Delhi government now seeks to raise an issue on the definition of polluting industries.

At the specially convened meeting of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) on Saturday, Congress legislators and Ministers raised the issue that there were three separate defini-

tions of polluting industries given by the Central Pollution Control Board, the Master Plan and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

The Supreme Court bench takes into consideration the list of polluting units according to the Master Plan. Even Mr Jagmohan adheres to the same list.

When the city government officials, participating in the meeting chaired by Mr Jagmohan, on Friday tried to persuade him to consider various definitions of "polluting units" given by the DPCC or the Central Pollution Control Committee, the Urban Development Minister reportedly refused to encourage any such suggestion.

Senior Delhi government officials were taken aback at the firm stand of Mr Jagmohan that he was adamant to close down all those industrial units which figured in the 'category F' of the Master Plan.

The category F of the Master Plan includes as many as 81 different industries including manufacturing of electric fans, surgical goods, toilet

One month not enough: Khurana

STAFF REPORTER
New Delhi

BHARATIYA JANATA Party (BJP) vice-president and Member of Parliament Madan Lal Khurana said on Saturday that the a month's time set by the Supreme Court was 'insufficient' to shift out polluting industries. According to him, a survey of all the industries in the Capital can not be completed in one month.

According to Mr Khurana the 'hurried exercise' was encouraging corruption. Mr Khurana said it was very difficult for the Delhi Government to carry out the survey to identify polluting industries within the specified time-frame.

According to Mr Khurana the Apex Court should have given at least a year to shift the polluting industries to ensure a fair classification of the units.

soap, flour mills, footwear, foam piles, lathe machines, plastic products, electrical motors, transformers and generators, fuel gases, polish work, paints and varnishes, spice factory, utensils, X-ray machines, umbrella ribs, vacuum flask, writing ink, wooden structural goods etc.

The Delhi government is not at all prepared for the immediate closure of all the above mentioned industries as it would affect its interest in Congress pocket boroughs.

Finance Minister Mahinder Singh Saathi categorically said on Friday that "elected governments could not afford to become ruthless."

Infact, this was the reason that the representatives of the city government, while pleading in the apex court, advocated the change in the Master Plan. However, the court rejected their contention.

Now, in the face of lurking danger, the Delhi government in its one-day special session of the assembly to be held on Monday will focus on two specific issues: Firstly, the nodal agency should define "polluting

units" before proceeding for the closure of industries and secondly, the nodal agency should have a humanitarian approach towards this issue or else it might create serious law and order situation in the Capital.

Ministers in the city government opined that the necessary expertise to define the "polluting industry" lies with the Central Pollution Control Board and not with the urban development ministry, hence this Board should be authorised to define and prepare the list of polluting units in the Capital before sealing them.

Some BJP leaders including MLAs and MPs from Delhi seem to hold similar view. A senior BJP leader contacted Industry Minister Narendra Nath on Saturday to chalk out a common strategy to protect the industrial units from imminent closure. The BJP MLAs are sore at Mr Jagmohan's attitude and were contemplating to raise the issue with the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

It remains to be seen whether the nodal agency succeeds in executing the apex court verdict.

With the Pushta a 'no-plastic zone,' 15,000 rag-pickers will be jobless

The Times of India
Shivani Singh, 10/12/2000

Dr Walia.

NEW DELHI: Life in plastic, may not be fantastic but it spells livelihood and shelter for thousands of slum-dwellers inhabiting the chaotically-occupied Yamuna Pushta.

The Delhi government's decision to make this area into a no-plastic zone may be a welcome move with regard to fire-safety in this area, but for some 300 scrap shop owners who employ over 15,000 rag-pickers, it will be their sole source of livelihood lost. Notwithstanding the one-lakh slum-dwellers for whom the sheltering roof is nothing but a plastic *chappar*.

"*Rozi-roti to jayegi, rehne ka thikana bhi chala jayega,*" (I will lose my livelihood as well as shelter), a lamenting Noor Begum sums up the plight of a thousand others. She has been running a *kabari* shop in Sanjay Nagar for the last 15 years and supports a family of eight while giving employment to another 150 rag-pickers. Her scrap collector Ayub Akhtar lives in a nearby shanty with a plastic-sheet roof and supports a family of six with the Rs 80 he earns everyday.

Following the fire incident in Pushta's Indira Colony on December 3 which killed three and gutted more than 800 jhuggis, chief minister Sheila Dixit and health minister Dr A K Walia announced the decision to make this area plastic-free within one month. The order is already underway and the SDM office is identifying the scrap godowns which have to be sealed in this area.

"Also those living in jhuggis with plastic roofs or *chappars* will be asked to change them to tinned or cemented roofs. Along with the plastic scrap, these sheets are also highly combustible and aggravate fire," says

Taken in view of the frequent fire incidents in this area this is a necessary move, but the government has not thought about giving any financial assistance to these slum-dwellers to replace their shanty roofs or provide alternative employment or compensation to those who would be forced out of business.

"But only a few people are employed in the scrap trade. They can easily shift to other trades. The amount of plastic used to make jhuggis is quite less and can be easily replaced by the jhuggi dwellers," Walia justifies.

However, the slum-dwellers are not willing to buy this argument. Says Jagdish Harley from the Bengali Basti, "Almost all of us are below the poverty line. Without any assistance or relocation, we cannot survive. We understand that plastic scrap should be removed considering the safety of our area. We have no choice but to live with it because we have no options."

Yamuna Pushta which has over 10,000 jhuggis with a total population of over one lakh has always been prone to fires. Since last month, two fires have broken out in this area. Its approximately 300 godowns which stock inflammable plastic waste and also the scrap strewn in the open has often blocked the access routes to the jhuggis delaying fire-fighting whenever fire has broken out in this area.

While most slum-dwellers concede to the problem, they demand assistance from the government to help them clear this scrap. "Each time there is a fire, our hutments are destroyed and there is substantial loss of human lives, but with little financial help from the government or some source of alternative employment, we can agree to this decision," says Pradhan Tapan Sarkar.

The Times of India 10/12/2000

✓ Khurana sticks to his guns, says Master Plan must change

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Saturday carried on with its onslaught on the Congress-led Delhi government over the issue of relocating polluting units and those in non-conforming areas.

RELOCATING POLLUTING UNITS

Addressing a press conference, former Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana reiterated his stand that the city's Master Plan should be changed to benefit industries located in non-conforming areas.

Without mentioning Union development minister Jagmohan by name, Khurana said, "It is only a slogan that Delhi will become a big dustbin.

By changing the Master Plan, the residents will only be benefited and Delhi will not become a dustbin."

Khurana said he had written to

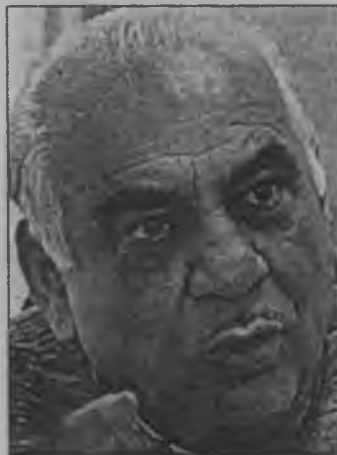
the Prime Minister to convene a meeting of all Delhi MPs, the Union urban development minister and small scale unit owners and find a way out of the imbroglio.

"If the Delhi government and the urban development ministry start sealing the units as they have done before, the law and order situation in Delhi can only worsen. Hence I request that this meeting be called urgently."

Khurana said the Delhi government had complicated the issue by not constructing sewage treatment plants. He said domestic sewage was creating more pollution in the river than industrial wastes. "Had these STPs been completed, the river would have been much cleaner and the blame would not have fallen on industrial units.

The problem of a few thousand polluting industries is far less crucial than the loss of livelihoods that the shutting of units will cause."

Khurana also hit out at the survey being conducted by the Munic-



ipal Corporation of Delhi on the number of units in the city.

"There are allegations that the people conducting the survey are hiding information and are being

influenced." He also said that the time given to relocate the industries was too less. "If the Delhi government could not develop Bawana in two years, how will they do it in a month?"

At another press conference, Delhi BJP president Mange Ram Garg demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit.

"For the first time in the political history of Delhi, there are serious charges of corruption labelled by the lokayukta."

Garg added that the Congress government did not initiate any concrete steps for the relocation of polluting industries.

"Even tenders have not been invited for the development of the Bawana industrial area where the factories have to be relocated.

And because of this, more than 15 lakh industrial workers have been compelled to live in uncertainty," Garg alleged.