

OPINION



Chitvan Gill

# Delhi and the death of dreams

Watching the tumultuous and chaotic proceedings in the grand hall of Parliament, Jagmohan, the Union Minister for Urban Affairs, was, perhaps, inspired by a certain misplaced naiveté in his appeal to the finer sensibilities of his fellow politicians, to their sense of national interest, to their sense of history, when he demanded to know: "In what type of Delhi do we want to live, and what type of legacy do we wish to bequeath to posterity and to our children and grand children? Should we resort to 'short-termism' and keep out of mind the well-known dictum: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish'?"

Within a few weeks, we will witness the annual splendour of the Republic Day parade, a showcase of the nation's triumphant march down the road to prosperity and greatness. Yet, there is a growing feeling of unease that becomes harder to quell with each passing year that this splendid display, this orchestrated pageant, has grown ragged at the edges, soiled at the collar, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". Five decades after Independence, Delhi speaks eloquently of the rot that has come to pass; of the great betrayal of a young nation that has been swamped over by an oppressive, uncaring air of corruption. It manifests itself in the sad, tawdry air that has overtaken all the trappings that exist to give a people a collective sense of pride, of joy in their nationhood. A nation's search for self-definition is partially met by such symbolism. Yet what—where—are the trappings? The shifty, shuffling pomp of Rashtrapati Bhawan? All ceremony today seems to showcase a pathetic imperial legacy gone waste, rather than to embody the vibrant pride of freedom and nationhood. Delhi has failed as a symbol and a city. It has been failed by its rulers.

Every great city reveals its virtues in its town planning, in the lyrical power of its architecture, which approximate to the essential endeavour to embody man's arduous journey from the savage to the civilised. The city stands defiant in the face of the random, powerful, uncontrollable forces of nature and speaks of its enviable place

in the history of civilisation: a spiritual accomplishment set in concrete. In the ruins of the Indus Valley civilisation, we see the stratified evidence of a great and ancient culture, of a noble, imaginative people and of a vision that transcended the age they lived in. The cities they left behind in the sands of time tell us this.

If the Delhi of today were to be discovered centuries later as a petrified calcination of buildings, roads, alleys, slums and sewers, the truth would be read as sad and horrific. Petty meanness, spiritual inadequacies would mark every touch, every brick where the 'great' elite who led this city lived, and wretched smallness, the rest. The truth of this phase of our history would be uncovered: only the venal brutality of our elite will outlive us. To destroy all that was good and to create nothing whatsoever in return, is the legacy of modern Delhi. Casting covetous eyes on the old, the historical, its great monuments were taken for granted, and architectural legacies turned into semi-slums, and in return? It is ironic that buildings that were paens to British imperialism are all we have available to light up and proclaim faith in the new nation. What could be held aloft as symbols of a new, young, dynamic people—free and looking forward in hope? What works commemorating institutional might? What houses the edifices within which a new spirit, culture and heritage could be fostered?

Even the tatty puppet regime of Bahadur Shah Zafar—cash-strapped and devoid of military and political power—spawned another kind of heritage. We remember Zafar for giving us some of the greatest poets, for cultivating a golden era in Urdu literature. He knew and understood the value of learning, the world of wisdom, and drew his immortality out of it.

Today fifty years into a democracy the elite "rule" over their hapless "subjects" with a shallow, imperious arrogance and leave their dev-

astating mark on the city. Their constricted vision has spawned an intellectual vacuity, a lust, a greed, without responsibility which feeds off a frenetic, frenzied, out-of-control energy.

"Energy" is that brazen, driving force behind the economy. But where is it reflected? In the uncontrolled, rapacious avarice of the grasping, insecure outsider. In the sheer brutality of exploitation that marks the endeavour to create its wealth. In the black pits of Shahdara and Seelampur, those large open sewers inhabited by, not rats, but multitudinous humans who work in excrement and filth to produce the abundance which this city feeds off. A thousand Shahdaras and Seelampurs breed in the city. Moving through these hellholes makes the Dickensian city seem a pleasant dream. This is where 70 per cent of Delhi's wealth-generating residents live. And squalor and disease are their rewards.



The "blood" that flows through the city is a dark slime. Like the once magnificent river now slowly dying, choked by gallons of ordure, swimming in effluent waste. On these very banks Shah Jahan built his dream, his vision. A vision now turned leprous as oozing sores scar crumbling, dying *havelis*. Indifference mars the edifices once renowned the world over for their exquisite beauty. Shahjahanabad is now a warren of black, broken, buildings. These ruins cannot inspire the imagination, there is no history here. The hysterical, indrawn breath of downbeat white tourists cannot erase the reality that an emperor's dream, the imperial city, has been officially declared a slum by modern India.

Away from this abandoned dream lies the carefully laid out city of New Delhi. Lutyens with his peculiar touch of lightness, strength and grace, created a quaintly indigenous stamp celebrating British might. His ethereal creation now lies quaking in its final death throes, progressively stamped out by the compromise between

corruption and commercialism.

Nehru was perhaps the only leader who understood the true significance of a city and embodiment of a great, new modern spirit, a tried to express these through the Chandigarh experiment. Today, what breadth of vision is reflected in what passes as town planning? The chaotic randomness, the confused proliferation only serve to reflect indifference. Stinking, maddening, odorous slums. Housing colonies for the "privileged" situated by the banks of great, open drains, stinking sewers. Workplaces flung far and unevenly about. A complete lack of any humane mass transportation system. Where's the thought for a revolution in housing—affordable and livable? And for a precious one per cent, impossibly luxurious, grotesque mock palaces from within which the fruits of greed without responsibility are enjoyed. The rich fence off, wall off, their acres of estate and are unwilling to pay for services they require, perpetuating a cycle of cynical and brutal exploitation.

Today, devoid even of a melancholy beauty, Delhi is cloaked in a choking air of meanness, a city without a heart. It presents the devastating process of change without any single redeeming feature. Every stone tells its story, the story of a nation: the sad wastelands of the "refugee colonies" where victims of indulgent brutality exist in a wretched, forgotten world; the ghost-like appearance of the loom centres of Nand Nagri; the liberal spread of shanties; ridiculous pipe fountains said to "rival the fountains of Rome"; narrow, mean streets, flanked by gigantic private fiefdoms; the acrid pall of smog and smoke that hangs over the residence of the President of India—it all speaks of an uncontrollable loss, of unspeakable violence, of the collapse of imagination and civilisation.

Delhi is the site of seven magnificent cities spanning centuries, bound together by the continuum of history. They have gone, been erased, and no pathways exist to take us from what was to what could have been. The immortal dream has died: we live in a mortal city.

(The writer is a journalist and filmmaker)

# Clean operation

The peaceful progress of sealing operations against polluting industrial units in the Capital must be welcomed. The Union Urban Development Minister, and the judiciary, which have made this operation successful, are to be complimented for doggedly pursuing the issue of environmental degradation in the Capital. Delhi has earned, over the years, an unenviable reputation as one of the most polluted cities in the world. It is urgently necessary, therefore, that measures to protect its urban environment be speedily put in place. The successful commencement of the sealing operations goes a long way in demonstrating that a lot can be achieved if the Government can conjure up some political will. A lack of political will has been the bane of governance in this country ever since independence. The example that has been set in Delhi should now be emulated in other cities in the country, in which the urban environment is being degraded at an alarmingly fast pace. State governments need to show some measure of political will to arrest degradation of the environment, especially keeping in mind the fact that ever-increasing migration to the cities, a result of unchecked democratic growth rates, will impose even greater burdens on the urban infrastructure as time progresses. Governments have to be pressured by the people to be more sensitive to environmental issues. But that can happen only if a greater awareness is generated among common people about the environment. Schools in Delhi have played a sterling role in this respect; their example should inspire other organisations in the country.

While there can be no quibbling with the concern for the environment, the relevant authorities must also count the human cost of sealing industrial units in the Capital. A large number of people are dependent on jobs in the unorganised sector for their livelihood. The fact that these were threatened is precisely why Delhi witnessed unprecedented protests against sealing operations. Great sensitivity has to be shown to the plight of this large and disadvantaged segment of the urban population, especially because the state is not in a position to provide them with social security nets, given the financial difficulties to which it is subject. In concrete terms, the Government will have to be careful about the logistics of relocation operations. It must take care to ensure that the new sites where the sealed units will be located have adequate infrastructural amenities in terms of housing, health care and educational facilities and arrangements for transport and communications. It is also imperative that the infrastructure for preventing pollution be laid in the new industrial areas. Otherwise, the Government will just have succeeded in exporting Delhi's pollutants to other areas, which, needless to say, will be a travesty of the original purpose of the exercise undertaken by Mr Jagmohan. But the Urban Development Minister has displayed signs of some honesty of purpose; there is ground for optimism, then, about a successful outcome.

# Delhi is doomed, as is any other city

*Only when the process of urban development gets transparent will the rot be stemmed*

**H**UNDREDS of workers poured out onto the streets of Delhi several times last month violently protesting against the proposed shifting of over 100,000 non-conforming and polluting industrial units. Supporting them were unusual allies: Their employers. Both threatened by an unmoving and firm Supreme Court tired of playing ball on the issue with the state government since 1996. 'Shift or close down', was the loud and clear message the court was sending out, for too long had the Master Plan been violated jeopardising the health of the 12 million residents of this increasingly chaotic capital city. Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit even expressed sympathy with the workers. But without real action on that front it was a case of passing the buck. But who was really responsible for things having come to such a pass? Environmental justice demands that the livelihood of the workers need to be protected. Yet again, the environment was being used as a fall guy for the real culprit! In this case a miserably failed urban development process. The question being posed — of a clean environment verses jobs — does not focus on the core problem and lets the real culprits off the hook.

While everyone — workers, politicians, unions, employers — are fighting each other, the perpetrators of the crime remain unscathed. Early in the sixties, Parliament had reposed its confidence in urban planning institutions and set up the Delhi Development Authority, as one of the largest landholders in Asia. It was evidently meant to provide housing and planning to a growing number of cosmopolites — less than half a million then. Today things could not be more wrong, for not only do 40 per cent people here live in slums without water, electricity or sewage disposal, new development is being promoted along shamelessly commercial lines. For example, in 1997, 315 hectares of some of the best forest land on the Vasant Kunj Delhi Ridge was being auctioned off, not for "public purposes", but for building 13 five-star hotels!

Things could not be more warped. An incredulous Supreme Court, remarking on a plea by eight NGOs, challenging the project said that it might have been willing to consider it 'development' had the proposal even been for hospitals, but hotels? The project thankfully did not go through, owing to an alert and persistent public. But then no one really knows how many such projects, landuse changes and authorizations are being given on a daily basis. It is all this that has made Delhi the unlivable city it has become.

Everyone accepts that such violations go hand in hand with a lack of transparency. Public land is diverted for commercial purposes routinely. Parks have given way to religious places or marriage halls, houses to factories, pavements to shops, and riverfronts have been converted into flyash ponds. Each one has some rationale, duly noted on files, which are subsequently untraceable. The rot runs deep and includes architects, planners, contractors, and inspectors of all types. The house next to yours could get an authorisation as a household industry and you will not even know about it. In a jiffy noise and toxic chemicals would be your new companions.

A whole market came up in Jwalapuri, the largest in Asia, selling used plastics in a residential area. It then burnt down.

Was anyone held responsible? Nobody! Non-accountability and associated corruption has become the biggest protector of the rot and perpetuated the state of urban non-planning. In this particular case in Delhi political parties have in their wisdom suggested that the Master Plan itself be amended effectively rendering the Supreme Court order invalid. However redrawing the lines will not change much the lives of Delhiites or the processes which cause them misery. The process of urban development needs transparency. Neighbors need to know and agree to what is being proposed. Public knowledge is, ultimately, the only effective watchdog.



## INTERVENTION

RAVI AGRAWAL

# Closure: Huge losses for FIs

S K Jha

New Delhi

EVEN AS the Delhi government is gearing up to start a fresh crack-down on the polluting industrial units from Monday, financial institutions are set to suffer a huge loss of over Rs 400 crore due to the impending closure of all these units in the residential area of the Capital.

The Delhi State Cooperative Bank will alone face a loss to the tune of Rs 75 crore, while the Delhi Finance Corporation (DFC) might incur the loss of Rs 92 crore.

Almost all the industrial units in the Capital have obtained loans from different financial institutions. Usually, the minimum amount of loan taken by these industrial units is Rs 2 lakh.

According to sources, since the Delhi State Cooperative Bank has given loans to the industrial units through the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation (DSIDC), it will realise the invested amount from the latter.

Meanwhile, Cabinet meeting of the Delhi government held on Friday afternoon could not take a decisive stand on the closure of industrial units.

According to sources, Chief Secretary Mr P S Bhatnagar is drafting a plan of action on the basis of the orders issued by the Urban Development Ministry's nodal agency and Lt Governor Vijai Kapoor. Ministers in the Delhi government are sore due to non-inclusion of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) by the Urban Development Minister as one of the implementing body to effect the closure of industrial units.

They said, apart from the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the DDA is one of the important body named by the Supreme Court to

act as a part of the nodal agency to supervise the closure operations.

The Delhi government officials, as well as ministers are also apprehensive over the tough posture of the Supreme Court that any lapse on their part may invite summons for them.

Industries Minister Narender Nath has summoned Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB) and Delhi Jal Board (DJB) authorities on Saturday morning to discuss various orders issued by the Urban Development Minister Jagmohan in the last one week and arrive at a conclusion to initiate action.

# Over to a summer of plenty hopefully...

By Lalit K. Jha

NEW DELHI, DEC. 14. The impending closure of polluting industrial units in the Capital this winter in the wake of Supreme Court directives will admittedly mean untold suffering for thousands of factory owners and workers, but on the flip side it will bring much needed relief to citizens on the power and water fronts this coming summer — besides, of course, bringing down pollution levels substantially.

Though the exact quantum of power being drawn by all these unauthorised industries cannot be assessed as no industrial load has been sanctioned in the first place, rough estimates indicate that the closure of these units would result in availability of 700 MW of power and 50 MGD (million gallons a day) of water. Also, sewage disposal — a colossal problem by itself — is likely to be reduced by 40 MGD.

City planners, experts and officials of the Union Urban Development Ministry, Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Delhi Vidut Board (DVB) and Delhi Jal Board

(DJB) assert that the water and power situation in the Capital will improve, particularly during summer when the city faces major crises on both fronts.

For instance, if this year's peak summer demand of 2,670 MW is taken into consideration, then Delhi would have excess power. "It will definitely improve the power situation. But precisely to what extent depends on the actual number of units shut down," says a DVB official.

As for water, even though the relief is unlikely to be of the same magnitude as power, DJB officials say additional availability of 50 MGD after the closure of these units will help cater to a population of over 12 lakhs. In fact, the total water requirement for the sub-city of Dwarka in South-West Delhi when it is completely developed is expected to be about 50 MGD. "It will bring immense relief to citizens who are starved of water during the summer months," says the DJB Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Pradeep Mehra.

What's more, with a survey under way to identify industrial units in the non-

conforming areas, DJB and DVB officials are preparing to impose "misuse charges" on these factories and force them to obtain industrial connections. Operating on domestic connections, these units have been causing huge revenue losses to DVB.

Though the exact number of industrial units that would be shut down is not yet known, officials are optimistic. For instance, of the 1.6 lakh estimated industrial units in residential areas, only 50,000 have a valid power connections. According to unofficial estimates, at least one lakh such units are indulging in massive power thefts. And in residential areas with 70 per cent concentration of industries, officials say as many as 80 per cent are misusing household power connections. Instead of an average monthly bill of Rs. 3,000 to 5,000, they pay just about Rs. 1,000 causing a loss of at least Rs. 20 crores every month to DVB, officials say.

All that would change if the anti-pollution authorities have their way.

# Chaos over closure orders

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, DEC. 14. The two separate notifications issued by the Union Urban Development Ministry and Delhi's Lt.Governor, Mr. Vijai Kapoor, detailing action for closure of polluting units in the Capital has led to total confusion not only among industry owners but also among the agencies connected with sealing of units. Insiders in the Delhi Government say the two notifications contradict each other and if both are to be followed then it would lead to total chaos. Under the orders issued by the Lt.Governor, all polluting industries have to close operations by December 17. But the catch in the order is that the action suggested under the various sections of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, clearly indicates that industries falling under the "H" category of the Master Plan should be closed down.

However, what is interesting is that if the teams, led by the SDMs go by the orders of the Lt.Governor, very few industries would be closed down. In addition, such guidelines could lead to much corruption as people could flood the Deputy Commissioners control room with all sorts of complaints leading to harassment and bribing. What is surprising is that the "H" category industries—large and medium—have already been closed in Delhi five years ago and there are few units presently in operation.

Sources said this order by Mr. Kapoor was against the very spirit of the directions issued by the Supreme Court and was one more attempt by the Delhi Government and its agencies to subvert the law by interpreting things to suit their ends. In fact, while the Nodal Agency under the Urban Development

Minister, Mr. Jagmohan, had issued instruction for sealing of industries, the Delhi Chief Secretary, Mr. P.S. Bhatnagar, is still to go ahead with the implementation of these orders. It is learnt that the Chief Secretary will discuss the issue with the senior officials before deciding on how to go ahead.

On the other hand, the Nodal Agency has indicated clearly that all polluting industries in the "F" category of the Master Plan would have to close down. Mr. Jagmohan has made it clear that more than 38,000 units would be closed under the operation and has given time up to January 4 to comply with the orders. This is in contradiction to the Delhi Government's orders asking polluting industries to close by December 17. There is utter confusion as to which agency is right and what course should the officials take.

The confusion has been further compounded with a delegation of BJP leaders, led by the Delhi unit president, Mr. Mange Ram Garg, claiming that Mr. Jagmohan had assured them that the Nodal Agency would not rush into with the closure, and give ample opportunity to the affected party for appealing. But nothing has been said about deferment of action, including sealing operations, against the polluting units which fall under the "F" category.

In fact, officials felt that the Lt.Governor and the Delhi Government could have come out with these orders long ago to satisfy the court. But now the Government could well find itself in the hot seat as the Nodal Agency would be over-seeing all the operations as it has to submit a report within four weeks to the Supreme Court.

# L-G asks auto service stations to adopt anti-pollution measures

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, December 14

**W**HILE THE mass-scale sealing action on polluting industries of Delhi, scheduled for today, was kept in abeyance, Lt Governor Mr Vijai Kapoor reiterated the need for voluntarily closing industrial units that do not adhere to emission norms specified in the Environment (Protection) Act.

In what should come as a relief to automobile service station owners, the Lt. Governor has said that service stations would be allowed to operate without causing any dislocation to citizens, provided clean processes and all pollution reducing measures are implemented.

It may be recalled that Mr Kapoor, while laying down emission norms in his notification on

action against non-conforming polluting industrial units, had given industrial owners time until December 17 to take measures on their own. He said that if owners and their associations do not make efforts to meet pollution norms on their own, then all defaulting units will be closed and action will be taken if they are found to be violating norms. The teams constituted for the purpose in this regard will carry out site inspections.

A team of automobile dealers' associations who met the Lt Governor today was also instructed to take effective steps to ensure that automobile service stations are revamped and to ensure that discharge of pollutants is checked. The



dealers were pleading that closure of service stations under the sealing action proposed in pursuance of Supreme Court orders would hamper the services they provide to vehicle owners near their residences. It was pointed out that service stations were also assisting the Government in checking pollution levels of vehicles and by installing other pollution control devices in automobiles as prescribed by law.

As per a press communiqué from Raj Niwas, the automobile associations would now be installing effluent treatment plants for treating grease discharge etc, insulating generating sets with silencers and canopy and also constructing chimneys and exhausts beyond the

height of their structures for gaseous emissions.

Mr Kapoor also urged automobile associations to form their own squads to visit service and repair stations to ensure that pollution norms are not violated and to create general awareness on observation of clean processes.

Meanwhile, a number of industrial unit owners downed their shutters in Vishwas, Nagar, Samaipur Badli, Tri Nagar and Shastri Nagar to protest against the Union Urban Development Ministry's announcement that all 38,936 polluting industrial units will be closed down by January 3. The Delhi Manufacturers' Federation said that all its affiliated associations kept their units closed in protest. They have threatened to stop payment of revenue if their units are closed without proper relocation programme.

Relocation to take more time

# Factory owners feel cheated

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 14. — It is hardly surprising that it will take more than 20 months before the Dr S P Mukherjee Udyog Vihar in Bawana will be ready for industries to shift in.

“One levelling machine and 16 tractors” is all the equipments which the Delhi government is using to level 2,000 acres of land acquired in Bawana, Naya Bans, Holambi, Poot Khurd, Sannaut and Kheda Khurd villages. Senior officials at the site confirmed this.

Understandably, people visiting the site where their industries are to be relocated say they feel cheated.

The government plans to allot over 65,000 plots to relocate polluting industries in Udyog Vihar in Bawana. A senior official at the site said the plans were ready and mapping had been carried out but at least 20 months were needed for the site to be ready.

There will be five sectors and “once the ground is levelled, construction of roads will begin,” he said. There will be at least 12 roads dividing the plots according to the plan.

That, however, is no consolation to the owners of the factories which are being relocated in “the middle of nowhere”. “The government will close our industries and relocation will take almost two years,” complained Mr S P Gupta who owns a textile dyeing unit in Hari Nagar.

Peeved at the slow speed at which work was progressing in the area, factory owners who have already paid the first instalment for the plot blame the government for “destroying small scale industries of Delhi”.

“We thought as we are in the category of polluting industries, the government will relocate us. So we paid the instalment but they are targeting us first. This is unfair,” said Mr Nirmal Singh. His electro-plating factory in Vishnu Garden had been sealed last month.

He contended that the government should have first made arrangements for “alternative sites and issued clear guidelines on the rules to be followed by us before they shut down our factories”.

The owner of a fabric dyeing unit, Mr Jagjeet Arora said, “First the government asked all water polluting units to install Effluent Treatment Plants. I spent Rs 70,000 to install one. Then they said my factory has to be relocated, so I paid Rs 65,000 as the first instalment for a plot. Now they have sealed my factory”.

Mr Gupta whose factory was sealed last month said, “I have suffered a loss of about Rs 2 lakh and now all I have to show for it is the number for a plot. And that too will be allotted to me only after a year”.

A Delhi government official at the site said, “We have one levelling machine and 16 tractors to level 2,000 acres of land. It will take at least six months to complete levelling alone”.



# Closure confusion continues

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

## CABINET MEET ON POLLUTING UNITS TODAY

NEW DELHI Dec. 14. — The closure of polluting industries has been deferred. The Delhi Cabinet will meet tomorrow to take a final decision on the closure of polluting industries but it will not have too many choices.

"The Cabinet will decide tomorrow," the Delhi Industry Minister, Dr Narendra Nath, said, refusing to elaborate on the government's plan of action.

Officials contend that the Cabinet will find itself bound by the Nodal Agency's directions. "The directions are clear in this regard. To close group F industries, which are prima facie polluting," the official said.

It is being pointed out that the

clarifications by the Nodal Agency yesterday were technically "insignificant". The Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party had yesterday claimed credit for getting the Union Urban Development Minister, Mr Jagmohan, to soften his stand yesterday.

Mr Jagmohan had asked the Delhi government to give a hearing to factory owners before closing their units, take the decision to close industries after keeping in mind the ground situation and not merely go by the list and left it to the discretion of the Delhi government to take "appropriate action" in cases where units have to be sealed.

"Read in context of the original directions — which

directed closure of 38,000 group F industries — Mr Jagmohan has really not conceded anything," an official of the Industry Department said. That, however, was not the way the Delhi BJP had projected. It had described the clarification as a "major reprieve" for the industrial owners.

Industry Department officials are, however, trying to work-out a strategy to reduce the number of industries which might need to be closed. There are 13 types of industries which fall in group F but are included in the green category chalked-out under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986," an official said.

■ See CONFUSION: page 4



Children of factory owners protesting against the sealing of polluting units, by begging for alms in Central Park, Connaught Place, in the Capital on Thursday. — The Statesman.

# CONFUSION

(Continued from page 1)

"But we are still seeking the opinion of the experts... Let us see if it works out. If it does, it will reduce the number of industries to be closed by a few thousands," he said.

Left with little option but to close down at least about 30,000 industries, an official said the agencies concerned had been directed to develop the proposed industrial areas in Narela and Bawana. Dr Narendra Nath said the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation had awarded contracts for Rs 57 crore for construction of roads. Dr Nath said he had decided to review the progress on the development of industrial estate in Bawana at weekly meetings.

# Children turn to begging bowls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 14. — "I am begging because the government has sealed my father's factory and now we have to beg for alms if we have to eat," five-year-old Samiya told passers-by in Central Park, Connaught Place, this afternoon.

Dressed in school uniforms, about 50 students — children of factory owners — assembled in Central Park to protest against the closure of factories by begging for alms.

The children also marched around the Outer Circle of Connaught Place holding aloft placards and shouting anti-

government slogans. "*Hum bheek maang rahey hain kyon ki humhare papa ki factory seal ho gayi aur ab ghar mein paisa bhi nahin hain* (we are begging because our fathers' factories have been sealed and now there is no money left at home)," explained eight-year-old Majid Khan.

A three-year-old girl who was holding a begging bowl, stopped in front of an ice-cream vendor and demanded "main pehle ice-cream khaongi".

The vendor did not oblige and her father had to fish out his wallet. "Tell me will I be able to indulge her for long," he asked and added, "My fac-

tory was sealed last week.

Mr Mohmed Shakeel, who owned a dyeing unit in Shakarpur said, "The government sealed my factory about four months ago. I have now no money left to support my family. We are not big industrialists with big bank balances and we have to eat. My children will have to beg if they are to survive."

The owner of a water-bottling plant in Ghazipur, Mr Akash Bansal, stopped his car and gave money to about 10 children.

He said, "This will become a reality that the children of factory owners and the factory workers will come to the

streets and start begging

The children who had been brought by the Delhi Vikas Manch, also had a legislator for company — Seelampur MLA, Mr Matin Ahmed.

He said, "The Delhi government is destroying small scale industries in the name of checking pollution. But it is insensitive to the several lakh people who will lose their livelihood".

Mr Ahmed said there were over 400 units which had been sealed so far in Seelampur, Usmanpur and Jaffrabad. "The government is branding these small scale units as factories as if they are big industrial houses."

# 'BJP MPs are shedding crocodile tears'

Staff Reporter

New Delhi

THE DELHI Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) on Thursday alleged that seven BJP Lok Sabha members from Delhi, including Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan, have conspired to divide the industry owners and workers agitating against the closure of polluting industries. Addressing a Press conference to announce a march to Parliament on Friday on the issue, DPCC chief Subhash Chopra claimed, "The seven MPs have hatched a conspiracy to fool the people. Even the Prime Minister is a party to it." Mr Chopra said Mr

Jagmohan had assured the DPCC leaders and Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit that he would be making a statement in the Lok Sabha to address their grievances. The Prime Minister had also assured that a decision would be taken keeping in mind the welfare of the workers and owners of the small-scale industrial units. But in his speech in Parliament, the Urban Development Minister categorically denied any possible change in the Delhi Master Plan.

"The Delhi BJP MPs are merely exploiting the issue for political gains and playing a double game by not coming out in the open in the support of agitators. They are only shedding crocodile tears," he said. Either

they come out on the streets in support of agitators or resign, he demanded. Demanding that the Union Urban Development Ministry come out with a clear-cut policy on the polluting units and their relocation, Mr Chopra said Delhi will lose about Rs 350 crore in the shape of sales tax and excise duty if these units are closed down. He said that Delhi should be offered a financial package of the matching amount and the displaced workers be given a "long-term compensation" as had been done in previous cases.

He said that this will address the problems of workers as well as the Delhi government's financial constraints. Besides, the problem of pollution will also be taken care of.

# Cabinet decides to begin the sealing act

*After much confusion, agrees to meet with DDA, MCD to work out action plan*

By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Amidst much confusion, the Delhi Cabinet has decided to start preparations to seal all polluting industries operating in non-conforming areas. The action plan will be decided over this weekend in meetings with agencies concerned, including the Delhi Development Authority and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Confusion prevailed in the Cabinet meeting convened at Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit's residence on Friday. Said a city minister: "There has been confusion over how the order of the Union urban

development ministry, the nodal agency, should be implemented. It will be decided on Saturday by the Delhi chief secretary at a meeting with the DDA and MCD officials."

According to sources, the closure of the polluting industrial units had become inevitable following the Supreme Court's order. Lt-Governor Vijai Kapoor's instructions to all such polluting industries to voluntarily seal their operations by December 17 has hastened the process.

The Cabinet meeting was called to discuss the strategy of this sealing exercise. But as divergent views were aired, the members decided to

## *MCD report by Saturday*

The MCD, which was supposed to finalise the list of units in non-conforming areas by Friday, will take one more day to finish the task. Sources said although the survey had been conducted in all the 12 zones, information was yet to come in from some zones. The list is now likely to be finalised on Saturday.

revert the issue to the chief secretary and the concerned departments.

Keeping in view the possibility of unrest once the sealing operations start, the Delhi Police and other agencies concerned will also be briefed at the meeting on Saturday. The issue is likely to come up again on the agenda of the routine Cabinet meeting which takes place every Monday.

As the sealing operations start, the axe will fall on all industrial units falling under the F category. About 38,000 industries fall in this category. However, the lists on which these estimates are based have been pre-

pared by the Delhi Pollution Control Board and experts claim that they are outdated.

According to sources, Schedule 1 and 6 of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986, which are to serve as parameters to shut down industries as per the L-G's order, do not match with the DPCC list. "It remains to be seen how this list is to be worked out as it will be the most important yardstick for sealing the polluting industries," a source said.

Despite these discrepancies, the Delhi government had been sealing polluting industries in non-conforming areas over the last one month.

# As units pack their bags, government sees its crores going

*Revenues, via taxes, up to Rs 8,000 cr may no longer come once units shut or relocate*

By Shivani Singh

NEW DELHI: With polluting and non-conforming units almost on their way out of the Capital, the city government may be in the red. Their departure will see a chunk of the government's revenues plummeting, as Rs 8,000 crore of Delhi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from these manufacturing units.

GDP, in simple terms, means value of goods and services produced within a state. With most manufacturing units being sealed or taking time off to relocate, the government is in for a huge loss of income from the industrial sector.

For the Delhi government, this loss will automatically mean a slow down in revenue generation and tax collection.

Says Delhi's finance minister Mahinder Singh Saathi, "Relocation might take up to a year. Till then, most of these units will be un-

productive. This would mean a huge loss of revenue, especially from sales and levy taxes."

The city government has estimated the loss of sales tax alone at Rs 200 crore annually. An sales tax is only a part of the loss, say sources. The income earned by these industries is also taxed, which forms the bulk of the loss. In fact, the recently released Fourth Economic Census Report states that the government earns about Rs 4,000 crore from various taxes.

Also, several of these industries availed of services like power and water from Public Sector Units, pointed out sources. Consequently, their closure will hit the government. Says a senior Delhi government official, "The Delhi Vidut Board is already seeing a slowdown. Once the units are sealed, the DVB's revenue is bound to be hit." The DVB chairman Jagdish Sagar has reportedly asked the Delhi government for financial as-

sistance once the order to seal the 'polluting' units is implemented.

Delhi has about 1,29,363 manufacturing units, of which 35,000 are stand-alone. Most of the manufacturing units are set up in non-conforming areas and therefore face either closure or relocation. The 35,000 stand-alone manufacturing units are single-man enterprises and do not employ any labour, according to sources, since these units cannot afford to relocate, there are chances that they will shut down completely.

In terms of industrial capital loss, the government figures put it at over Rs 2,000 crore. "The closure of these units will result in loss of industrial capital, which includes plants and machinery, at an average cost of Rs 2 lakh per enterprise," a source said.

What is worse is the multiplier effect the closure would have on other sectors of Delhi's economy, a senior official said. Estimates show

that about 10 lakh people will be displaced once the relocation order is implemented. Attached to their livelihoods is the service sector. "This is likely to have a tremendous impact on the economy. A small or a big industry is serviced by so many other enterprises. A simple unit like a dhaba, which runs near a local factory, faces a threat of closure once the unit is shut down," pointed out an official.

According to government officials, the small-scale industry, which already has to cope with globalisation, faces a new threat of decimation if the local units are shut down.

Unemployment is the most serious challenge the Delhi government foresees. "Those who lose their jobs will breathe violence and alienation, giving a fillip to anti-social elements. Their rehabilitation will be the most serious challenge before the government," an official said.

# City Blights

## The Irrelevance of Master Plans

By TATHAGATA CHATTERJI

IT is indeed ironic that while a debate is going on in Delhi about whether the master plan for Delhi (MPD:2001) should be amended or not following the order to relocate polluting industrial units, there has been little attempt objectively to analyse the relevance of the document.

A master plan is an official statement of an urban development authority which sets forth its policies concerning desirable future physical development, with statutory backing. Typically, it projects a long-term view and tries to forecast how the city would evolve in the next ten or 20 years.

The master plan process started in India during the third five-year plan (1961-66) period. During the past four decades, more than 650 such plans had been prepared. But conditions in our urban centres continued to worsen.

In the basic nature of the master plan process lies the dichotomy in the political process within which the plan operates. While the planners attempt to establish a long-term view of urban development, politicians look for immediate gains which may be projected as achievements.

Generically, in India, the process of master plan preparation is completely divorced from resources assessment. Resource allocation is through five-year plans. It is unbelievable, but true, that there is hardly any linkage between the two. The five-year plans allocate economic resources by sectors. These plans are not spatial or location-specific. On the other hand, the local level physical plans or master plans propagate development without any financial backing. The MPD-2001 had long ago suggested the relocation of polluting industries. But from which year's budget did the Delhi government or Centre allocate financial resources for undertaking this massive exercise?

Any plan, to be successful, needs the people's participation. Before being finalised, the plans must take into cognisance the views of the housing associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, traders' associations and other such groups.

Take, for example, the current relocation of industries. At the time of suggesting relocation of non-conforming industries, did the planners ever discuss the methodology or time schedule or any other critical issues with either the industry owners or the workers' organisations? The plan philosophically suggested

that industries be relocated to the NCR towns. But did it implement any consultation mechanism with other such town bodies to facilitate a smooth relocation? Are Rohtak or Ghaziabad Delhi's dump yard, that dirt and filth may be offloaded on them?

The net effect of the inadequacies of the planning system has been that much of the urban growth has been outside the formal planning tools. Migration from rural and smaller urban centres to metropolitan cities is a phenomenon in all major cities of the third world. Delhi is no exception to this. As per the projections of Census 2001, the population of Delhi is expected to be 14.3 million. About 42 per cent of this constitute of migrants who come to Delhi for economic opportunities. Most of this migrant population gets absorbed in informal economic activities. More than one third of this population settles in jhuggi-

Jaisalmer, Benares or the Walled City of Shahjahanabad may have become passe. But the fact is, living and working in close quarters is the essence of Indian urban tradition with deep relevance even today. Living and working in mix-land use, in the same neighbourhood, not only reduces dependence on expensive transportation but also promotes a more sustainable urban model.

The master plans tend to take an unrealistic long-term view. The modern day-city is too complex and dynamic to follow any set pattern based on past trends for the next 20 years. There are forces shaping the city over which the planners have no control. The Delhi master plan does not take consideration the possible impact of liberalisation on the national economy and inflow of foreign capital. Could the planners visualise at the time of formulation of the master plan how the roads from Paharganj to Punjabi Bagh get choked by the newly launched Zens, Santros, Ikon and Astras — funded by easy credit availability? Consequently, vehicular pollution in Delhi today constitutes 67 per cent of total air pollution, compared to 25 per cent from industries.

Again, there is no mention of the Internet and the cyber world in the lexicon of the Delhi planners. Now, when a 20-year-old college kid sets up a dotcom venture from his study, how will the planners react? Would they demand that the study room be demolished because it is running a commercial venture? In a rapidly changing world, it is simply not practical to plan for the next 20 years on the basis of past data.

The world's major cities have long jettisoned the way master plans are prepared. To develop a city it is essential to have foresight. Of course we need to take a long-term perspective. The perspective plans as being prepared in Britain are nothing but a simple vision statement, setting out only a few cardinal principles. The road maps to achieve that are prepared on the basis of short-term five yearly and even annual action plans, based on small achievable targets and resource allocation. We need environmental management plans at the neighbourhood level to address ways and means of controlling pollution. We need the involvement of public interest groups and NGOs in planning. Above all, we need plans, which are clear, transparent, target-oriented and easily implementable within a precise budget and time frame.

# True Spirituality

## Lies in Service

By JANINA GOMES

WHAT is of greater spiritual value? Contemplation or service? In a book written recently called "Mysticism of Service", Aloysius Pieris, the Sri Lankan Jesuit discusses precisely this polarity between contemplation and service in the Christian tradition.

When we watch television, most of our activities have to cease and we have to sit in one place. But listening to a radio does not impede us from going about all other activities, including travelling. Pieris says the spirituality of the Christian activist is essentially one of hearing God's Voice in the midst of activities whereas a contemplative reduces all active engagement to the minimum with a view to seeing God's face.

Explaining this concept, Pieris says, according to the Bible, "Hearing God's Word" is another way of saying "Doing God's will". There is a reason for this. In the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the Word of God is not primarily a verbal expression of a divine "idea" presented to our intellect for "meditation".

or of a divine "image" held out to our hearts for our "contemplation". The Hebrew term for Word is "Dabar" and it primarily means a divine command, an executive wish, directed to our human wills for immediate execution. To hear the Word is to do what the Word commands. To hear is to obey.

In the Old Testament, Pieris says that images of Yahweh (the word used for God in the Old Testament) were strictly forbidden. In the New Testament or section of the Bible written after the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Audible Word becomes a Visible Image. Therefore, "seeing" became possible together with "hearing".

In the New Testament, the apostles of Jesus both heard and saw. But for those Christians whose faith is based on the witness of the earlier apostles, although seeing is not totally excluded, hearing assumes the key role again. Does this mean that any attempt at "seeing" God in contemplation is contrary to the New Testament?

According to Pieris, Christians hold firmly that it is not only legitimate but even desirable to seek the vision of God already on earth in keeping with their strong mystical and monastic tradition. However, many theologians hold that "seeing" God is to come only at the end of time. In the present life, faith

which comes from hearing dominates, while in the afterlife we shall perceive God through vision.

However, straining our eyes to see God as our Future looming on the horizon is essential for picking up the verbal directions that are spoken by God, maintains Pieris. These verbal directions require us to meet the needs of our neighbours and the victims of history.

Pieris states that Jesus who said he was one with the Father also declared himself visible in every neighbour in need. He seeks solidarity and service in the present times as a requirement for our eternal salvation.

There is the parable of the Good Samaritan which Jesus narrated where the Jew attacked by robbers and left abandoned by the wayside was taken care of by a Samaritan passing by (Jews and Samaritans were enemies in those times though he had been ignored by passing priest and Levite from the Jewish community).

Pieris draws from this a lesson. He says the disciples of the Word



of God "saw" the victim but did not "hear" the Word summoning them to service. The despised Samaritan on the other hand, heard the Word in the one that he saw. He began to act. It is his obedience to the Word that Jesus recommended to scripture expert who asked him a famous question: And who is your neighbour?

Pieris says, when Jesus commanded "Love your God" and "Love your neighbour" to constitute the substance of all that the Scriptures teach and demand he seems to have implied that salvation rests on our service to God expressed through our service to neighbour. For it is by loving our neighbour whom we see that we love God whom we do not see.

Even in the Old Testament, Pieris points out, true worship service was advocated by prophets speaking in God's name who sometimes ridiculed the ritual offerings, fasts, animal sacrifices and other forms of temple worship. Pieris concludes that while ritual worship has its rightful place in a religious community, true worship service of God and neighbour cannot be limited to a place, a ceremony, a rite, a formula of prayer. Oblation alone is true worship alone is essentially Christian discipleship and authentic spirituality.

### IN BRIEF

- The preparation of the master plan in India is divorced from resource assessment
- Urban growth has been outside formal planning tools
- Relocation of industrial units will lead to the growth of new slum colonies
- We need workable plans which can be implemented within a precise budget

jhonpris, lal-dora areas and other slum rehabilitation colonies. These settlements typically come up near places of work. Consequently, the so-called non-conforming industrial areas have large slum populations.

After relocation, what will happen to these people? True, industrial effluent treatment may be better organised in a newly-planned industrial park or power supply may be better. But what about the factory workers, the daily wage earners, or petty workers? Do we expect the small-time businessmen who run these units by employing 15-20 people to build low-cost housing. The answer is no. Relocation of the industrial units in the present form will simply lead to the growth of new slum colonies.

The vision of an urban India is completely at odds with the centuries of Indian tradition or ground reality. Indian cities have thrived on chaos. The romantic examples of