

Khurana assails method of sealing polluting units

HT

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By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Expressing reservations on the way the nodal agency was going ahead with sealing polluting units in non-conforming areas, former Delhi chief minister Madan Lal Khurana alleged that the agency had implemented none of what the Prime Minister had promised to city MPs at a meeting on December 16.

Khurana had called a joint press conference on Monday with his party colleague and former chief minister Sahib Singh to make his grievance public. However, Singh failed to turn up.

Khurana said that in the meeting with the Prime Minister, three assurances were given but the nodal agency has overlooked all of them. He said the PM in the presence of Union urban development minister Jagmohan had assured that a clear definition of "polluting industries" would be spelt out, industries would be relocated and not closed, and the Delhi government would approach the Supreme Court for an extension in the deadline. Also, the pleas of the owners would be heard.

He said: "The Union law minister was given the task of coordinating with various agencies involved to work out a clear definition of the issue. He was also asked to file an affidavit in the Supreme Court to ask for an extension on the January 3 deadline set by the nodal agency to shut the polluting units. But it was more said than done."

Commenting on his ongoing agitation against the nodal agency order he said that he would consult the Laghu Udyog Samiti to decide his next move. He said he would meet the PM again to discuss the matter.

Criticising Delhi chief secretary P S Bhatnagar, he



Gautam Singh

An official seals a factory.

said: "The chief secretary is implementing the order haphazardly so that he is not grounded for contempt of court. He does not seem to be concerned with the pollution in the city."

Reacting to Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Subhas Chopra's remarks that he had been shedding crocodile tears and was not really interested in the plight of the industrial workers, Khurana said he had the support of a large number of industry owners and workers which became apparent in his agitation at Rajghat on Saturday. According to him, over 20,000 people turned up to support him in his agitation.

Continuing the war of words with the DPCC, Khurana claimed the Congress

was responsible for today's dilemma. "Former chief executive councillor Jag Pravesh Chandra, who is now a senior Congress leader, was in fact responsible for returning to the Centre 4,000 acres that had been given to relocate Delhi's industries. Had he cultivated this area into an industrial estate such problems would not have arisen," Khurana alleged.

Khurana reiterated his demand that the 'F' category should not be taken as the criteria for shutting down industries. The polluting units should be redefined in a fresh list.

Khurana along with Sahib Singh and former Delhi industry minister Harkishan Singh Balli visited spots in Tri Nagar where sealing operations were being undertaken. Commenting on the scene, Khurana said that the fear, wrath and anguish of the people reminded him of the emergency days.

He said: "The PVC-grain industries which were being sealed do not cause pollution."

70 more polluting units sealed

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, December 21

THE PROCESS of sealing polluting industries continued with Sub-Divisional Magistrate-led teams visiting 422 units in the Mangolpuri, Rohini, Kanjhawala and Narela areas of North-West Delhi. The teams sealed 70 units today.

But little thought is being given to relocation of those industries which have been closed. The industrial plots in the Bawana area will be ready only by the end of 2002. And these can accommodate only about 14,000 industrial units.

In Narela, where 956 plots are ready for construction and where the government has also issued allotment letters to the industrialists, only 12 industrialists have come forward to begin construction.

This is attributed to lack of funds. The government is demanding that before taking possession of these plots, the industrialist should pay the full price of the land since all the infrastructural development had been completed.

However, for the plots in Bawana, where basic infrastructure yet to begin, the industrialists have the option of making the payment in instalments and can also take loans from banks.

The only concession being made

Exaggerated list

OVER 50 PER CENT of the factory units which have been inspected during the ongoing action against polluting industries exist only in the list prepared by the Delhi Government or are residential premises.

This is attested by the fact that of the 3262 factory units inspected so far, only 960 were found to be existing and polluting in nature.

Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan today said that the action so far reveals that the list prepared by the Delhi Government is highly exaggerated and that many applications were spurious and were filed with the intent of getting more plots. He said genuine factory owners will thus be easily accommodated in the NCR region.

HTC, New Delhi

by Union Urban Development Minister Jagmohan in this regard is that he is willing to implement the recommendations of the Jagdish Sagar Committee report with regard to household industries.

A notification to this effect was issued by the Union Government on December 18 through the Gazette of India. The notification

said that anyone who has objections to the implementation of the recommendations - namely that household industries utilising 5 kw of power can continue where they are and that the operations can be run from all floors of the house - could bring these to the notice of the government.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Government has demanded that the Nodal Agency file an affidavit on their behalf in the court seeking time till December 2002 for the development of Bawana.

The Delhi Government has further asked for time to allow the Delhi Development Authority to develop industrial estates in the Capital for the resettlement of the industries from non-conforming areas. According to the Master Plan, the DDA was supposed to develop 4,000 acres of land into industrial estates. So far, it has developed only 1,800 acres. In fact, there are 600 fully developed industrial plots where the units have also been constructed, which are lying vacant.

In another development, the members of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, under the leadership of the Chief Minister have sought an appointment with the Union Urban Development Minister tomorrow to impress upon him the problems that have arisen out of the relocation of industries.

Khurana to court arrest on Dec 31

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, December 21

BJP NATIONAL vice president and former Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana today announced that he along with some party MLAs and corporators would court arrest on December 23 here in protest against the sealing of pollution causing industrial units in the city. The venue would be the Mansarovar Garden area in West Delhi.

Talking to newsmen Mr Khurana said that this would be the beginning of his agitation aimed at proper relocation of industrial units and amendment of the Delhi Master Plan. "If the authorities don't stop the exercise of sealing these units even after this then I will announce my future plan of action on Dec 26. We may resort to indefinite fasts and other measures if necessary. It is a question of so many industrial unit owners and even more so the large work force which if the units are sealed would be rendered jobless. I am willing to pay any price for ensuring that the industries are not closed but relocated," he said.

Present at the Press meet were East Delhi MP Lal Bihari Tiwari, former Delhi Industry Minister Harsharan Singh Balli and Laghu Udyog Kutrif president Sudarshan Sareen.

BJP, Cong plan protests against closure of units

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 21: — The Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders are vying with each other to score points on the issue of closure of industrial units.

While the Bharatiya Janata Party vice-president, Mr Madan Lal Khurana, today announced that he will court arrest on 23 December along with 22 BJP leaders, the Delhi Congress has decided to lodge its protest tomorrow.

Addressing a Press conference today, Mr Khurana said the polluting units should be given enough time for relocation. To protest against the closure move, he will lead a

protest march by his party men, including eight municipal councillors and several ex-MLAs, after holding a public meeting on this issue.

A few hours after Mr Khurana announced his decision, the Delhi Congress announced the third phase of its "Nyaya Yudha" blaming the Centre for the closure of industrial units in non-conforming areas.

The Congress legislators, municipal councillors and other senior party leaders will march to the Nirman Bhavan tomorrow, to protest against the policies of Union Urban Development Ministry. Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra will lead the march.

The Congress leaders will wear black badges and try to reach the minister, Mr Jagmohan's office, said a Delhi Congress spokesman.

The east Delhi BJP MP, Mr Lal Behari Tewari, today announced that several MPs from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar will participate in a dharna at the Rajghat on 31 December being staged by lakhs of labourers from these states who are being displaced.

Mr Tewari announced his support to Mr Khurana's agitation also.

Several trade and small scale industrial associations are expected to participate in the protest march by BJP leaders on 23 December.

Former DSIDC chief changes role

ARUN ANAND

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 21. — From being a key player in the process of relocating industries, Mr Sudershan Sareen has moved on to a leading role in the protest against it.

Till a few months ago Mr Sareen was the chairman of the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation which was to develop the industrial estate in Bawana, to accommodate industries functioning in non-conforming areas of the Capital.

He now heads the Laghu Udyog Bharti, one of the major associations of industrial units protesting the closure and blaming the Delhi Government for the delay in giving possession of alternative plots to the factory owners.

A well known figure in BJP and RSS circles, Mr Sareen has emerged as one of the

prominent leaders in the ongoing agitation on the industries' issue, said a BJP leader.

He has been part of the BJP delegations which have met senior party leaders and ministers on this issue.

Yet it was during Mr Sareen's tenure that DSIDC could not achieve the aim of speedily developing the land acquired for relocation at

Bawana, said a senior Delhi Government official.

Now the DSIDC is developing the infrastructure in Bawana area, almost four years after the process of land acquisition began. "The plots in Bawana could not be developed in time due to the multiplicity of agencies which took a very long time to clear the projects," is Mr Sareen's explanation, "that is why I quit the DSIDC, the present govern-

ment in Delhi did not seem interested in expediting the development process."

Mr Sareen accepts that the Bawana Industrial estate should have been ready last year. He, however, defends the delay during his tenure in the erstwhile BJP government by saying, "during BJP's tenure 1000 acres of land was

acquired," said Mr Sareen.

The BJP leaders, including the leader of the Opposition, Mr Jagdish Mukhi, and former industry minister, Mr Harsharan Singh Balli, had alleged in the recent Assembly session that the delay in developing relocation sites was at the crux of the existing crisis. But after the Supreme Court directions in 1996, when the BJP was in power, the Delhi Government had

assured the court of the development of Bawana Industrial Area for relocating unauthorised units. Mr Sareen was then occupying the crucial position in the DSIDC. He continued to head the agency for almost three years, including more than a year when the Congress had formed the government. While BJP leaders have accused the Delhi Government for delay in developing the industrial plots at Bawana, they continue to rub shoulders with Mr Sareen who has participated in agitations launched by the former Delhi chief minister, Mr Madan Lal Khurana. Mr Balli confirmed that Mr Sareen is one of his "fellow leaders".

Defending the DSIDC's inertia during Mr Sareen's tenure, Mr Balli said, "Mr Sareen is not responsible for the delay in developing plots as it was the industry department which had to look after

RELOCATION ISSUE

276 polluting units sealed

By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: The closure of polluting industries went on smoothly on Tuesday as the Delhi government sealed 276 units, out of the 689 premises visited.

Chief secretary PS Bhatnagar said: "There were no major incidents in any of the localities where sealing were carried out. Our teams are sealing only those premises about which they have definite information that a unit mentioned under the 27 categories exists."

Bhatnagar said this list was given by the nodal agency and was being strictly adhered to.

The teams formed under sub divisional magistrates (SDM) comprised of Delhi government, MCD, DDA and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) officials. More than 40 teams are doing the rounds of non conforming areas in north west Delhi where thousands of industries exist. The areas where seal-

ing took place on Tuesday include Keshavpuram, Tri Nagar, Samaipur, Badli and Rithala.

The enforcement teams found that a number of factory owners have either vacated the premises or changed their business. The teams also found that many factory owners have stopped their activities, without switching over to a new line of business.

As per court directions, the sealing of industries is being monitored by the nodal agency — the Union urban development ministry. The nodal agency asked the Delhi government cell, comprising the chief secretary, the divisional commissioner, the environment secretary and other city government officials, to implement its directions.

The factory owners launched protests against sealing by putting up stages in their areas and staging dharnas. Delhi Manufacturers Federation (DMF) president Ajit

Singh said, "by Wednesday, the factory owners will stage dharnas all over the city."

Delhi Factory Owners' Federation president J R Jindal has written to the Lt Governor to publish a list of those industries which have to be shut down. He also stressed upon the government to de-seal those units that had been sealed in November, immediately after Supreme Court orders.

Still, the affected people said the teams are closing units indiscriminately. Ishwar Bansal of Rithala village, whose unit has not been sealed but figures on the list of industries to be sealed said, "Today, even godowns were sealed. Some of the sealed godowns contained machinery which had been placed there recently, after the likelihood of the unit getting shut increased. But such godowns are not being used as factories, merely storing place for machinery."