

# Resolve crisis with open mind

**T**HE CONTINUED unrest and tension emanating from the decision of the Delhi Government to close down industrial units in the non-conforming areas has generated a heated debate on the issue. Not just political leaders, but opinion makers as well as common people have expressed their views candidly.

However, the final word rests with the Supreme Court which, during its next hearing on Tuesday, would determine whether more time should be granted to the Government for relocation of these units or they should be asked to shut down immediately. The Apex Court may also take cognizance of the inability of the implementing agencies to follow the court's directions issued in 1996.

Three persons have so far died and at least 120 vehicles have been damaged in the course of spontaneous protests by the agitating workers and owners of the affected industrial units. At the same time, there has been no let up in the drive launched by the Delhi Government and its allied agencies in sealing units, some of which strangely continue to operate from behind closed doors.

Various political leaders, including Union Urban Affairs Minister Mr Jagmohan, Delhi Chief Minister Mrs Sheila Dikshit, former CMs Madan Lal Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma, and scores of Congress and BJP functionaries have jumped into the fray over an issue which would have wide-ranging ramifications as far as the city life goes.

Even while taking each other off, there seems to be unanimity amongst all that polluting and hazardous industries should be shifted out of the residential areas. In other words, there is no made out for the status quo in respect of polluting units. It is not Mr Jagmohan alone but even Mrs Dikshit, Mr Khurana and Mr Verma & Co endorse the demand and need to move out polluting units.

The differences between them arise when it comes to the relocation of non-polluting industrial units operating from non-conforming areas and which have not been able to shift because the Delhi Government has not been able to provide alternate devel-

oped plots and the required infrastructure.

The situation in Delhi would not have been as tense as it is today if the crackdown by the Delhi Government had been purely on the polluting units in the non-conforming areas. After the Chief Secretary and the Municipal Commissioner were pulled up by the Apex Court on November 14, a decision on the crackdown on all industrial units in non-conforming areas was taken. Teams of officials led by area SDMs started conducting raids leading to complete panic, which forced workers and owners to come out on streets.

Doubts have also been raised on whether the Delhi Government and its allied agencies have legal authorisation to seal units other than water polluting units. While the water polluting units can be sealed under the Water Act, the official agencies at best can serve a closure notice or can cut off the power and water supply in case of others. Available

always been behind schedule. For instance, the present Master Plan should have come into operation in the early 80s but was delayed by almost nine years.

In other words, there was total vacuum as far as guidelines stipulated by the Master Plan go during this period. Surely, the city did grow during this vacuum period.

Should not the Government explain why was this delay? Who was responsible for it? And what action has been taken against those responsible for it?

Mr Jagmohan, on the other hand, has firmly held his grounds and despite immense pressure from all quarters, he continues to main-

tain that all of us have a responsibility to fulfil. There can be no compromise so far as urban discipline is concerned. "What kind of Delhi we want to live in, and what type of legacy do we wish to bequeath to posterity?" he asks.

The Minister has been maintaining that the Master Plan would be amended if necessary to

## BETWEEN US



PANKAJ VOHRA

Even while taking each other on, there seems to be unanimity amongst all that polluting and hazardous industries should be shifted out of the residential areas. In other words, there is no case made out for the status quo in respect of polluting units. It is not Mr Jagmohan alone but even Mrs Dikshit, Mr Khurana and Mr Verma & Co endorse the demand and need to move out polluting units

reports, however, suggest that the sealing was carried out indiscriminately.

Several points of views have emerged on the overall issue of relocation. Majority of elected representatives of the people have been demanding amendments in the Master Plan in order to accommodate non-polluting industrial units in areas where they are located at present. Their argument is that if the Master Plan is meant for the people and it does not serve the people, then it has no sanctity.

They further argue that the finalisation of the Master Plan has

acquire more land for relocation of industrial areas. The Government would also request the Supreme Court to give a little more time for relocation. "I am not the final authority on the Delhi Master Plan. It was produced after a well laid down procedure after taking views of all concerned." He has appealed that a narrow view should not be taken and said that the Government was keen to find an amicable solution, which would be just and fair to all concerned.

The Minister finds himself virtually isolated in his own party with all other city MPs holding a view

that the Master Plan has to be amended and a more humane approach needs to be adopted. It would give relief to over one million workforce employed in these industrial units.

A large number of Delhi BJP leaders feel that if the Government was unable to stand by workers and owners of industrial units, the party, which has considerable hold over the city, would suffer a major setback. It is a question of BJP's survival. It is perhaps keeping these sentiments in mind that Mr Khurana has threatened to lead an agitation if the Master Plan was not amended.

Equally distressed over the developments is Chief Minister Dikshit, who has also threatened to take to the streets if the Central Government did not review its decision of not amending the Master Plan. Her statement in the Delhi Assembly, which had the rabble-raising ingredients, appeared to be slightly inconsistent with the responsible office she holds. However, the compelling reason for her to have made such uncharacteristic remarks is not difficult to guess. It is a question of not only her party's survival but also her own.

Politically speaking, there appears to be a pattern, which has emerged both within the BJP and the Congress. While Mr Jagmohan finds himself being accused of being the villain of the piece by his own party functionaries, Mrs Dikshit too is the intended target of many of her own party colleagues. In order to ward off criticism directed at them, both Mr Jagmohan and Mrs Dikshit have now locked horns with each other.

The Union Minister has held successive Delhi Governments responsible for the present mess and for dragging its feet over the implementation of the Supreme Court order. Mrs Dikshit has accused him of being unable to recognise ground realities and making impractical statements.

Much, therefore, depends on the view that the Apex Court takes on Tuesday. However, a solution needs to be found to end this crisis, which already has its impact on normal city life. Major players should approach the problem with an open mind and meet to resolve this complex issue. Between us.

# Manufacturers call for bandh tomorrow

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, November 25

DELHI MAY be heading for more unrest with the Delhi Manufacturers Federation (DMF) announcing today, a Delhi bandh for November 27 to protest against the closure of industrial units in the Capital. The DMF said that they were being supported by 45 other similar associations.

The last such call by the owners and workers of industrial units being closed down had resulted in two days of violence in the city which claimed three lives and left about a 100 persons injured.

DMF president Ajit Chowdhary said that instead of finding a solution to the problem, the authorities were adamant on closing down industrial units, which were functioning from non-conforming areas. He said that factory owners and workers would stage a demonstration at the Parliament House on November 27.

In a statement issued today, factory owners said that

the authorities' decision to move non-conforming and polluting units to Bawana was not practical. Bawana, they said, was an agricultural area and would be ruined if the units were shifted there. Besides, the non-availability of infrastructure facilities and transport had made running a unit in Bawana impossible.

The shutting down of so many units also did not make economic sense as the Capital would stand to lose about Rs 4,000 crore which units functioning in non-conforming areas were generating. The move would also render lakhs of labourers jobless.

DMF officials refuted the Urban Development Ministry's claim that industrial units were causing major air pollution. They said that studies had revealed that 70 per cent of air pollution in the city was being caused by vehicles, 18 pc by powerhouses and another 12 pc by coal furnaces. Units, they claimed, contributed very little towards air pollution. They pointed out that 1,300 highly polluting units had already been closed down by the Government in 1997.

## Tihar inmate's bid to escape foiled

AUTHORITIES ON Saturday foiled an inmate's attempt to escape from Tihar Jail. The accused, Mohammed Irfan, is said to be a drug addict and had been arrested in a case of theft and house trespassing.

The incident occurred at 11.50 a.m. when Irfan, an inmate of jail number three, clung to the under carriage of a truck, which was headed outside the jail. The truck was supplying flour to the jail. He was detected by jail staff warden Inderjeet and sepoy B Ambalagam of Tamil Nadu Special Police (TSF) when they were conducting routine checking.

HTC, New Delhi

# File-movement ploy may come a cropper

The Delhi chief secretary has to reply to a Supreme Court contempt show-cause notice why the government has not followed orders on the closure of illegal industrial units in non-conforming areas. ALOKE TIKKU examines how rules have been made and circumvented



A polluting foam-manufacturing unit at work in a west Delhi residential locality.

TABLE I

Table showing categorisation of industries according to survey by Delhi government teachers for Delhi Pollution Control Committee during January-February 1996.

Group	Conforming	Non-conforming	Total
Industries	28,807	97411	126218
A Group	13531	5986	19517
AI Group	75	178	253
B Group	6274	23574	29848
C Group	90	1250	1340
D Group	120	796	916
E Group	3202	16710	19912
G Group	3637	38936	42573
G Group		2	2
GI Group	1878	8636	10514
H Group		1343	1343

DELHI industry minister Narender Nath was in the middle of his statement on a discussion on the closure of industrial units in non-conforming areas, when an Opposition MLA interrupted him. "Don't read out the file movement," Harsh Vardhan said, "but make a statement". The minister continued. He had little choice but to put his best foot forward.

It was a ploy that the bureaucrats knew will not work in the Supreme Court where chief secretary PS Bhatnagar has to reply on 28 November to a contempt show-cause notice why the Delhi government did not act on subsequent directions of the court, beginning 1996. The court wants results. And as senior government officials admit, there is none.

Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit initially blamed the ubiquitous rumour-mongers and lumpen elements, then Municipal Commissioner SP Aggarwal and finally the rival BJP in the Delhi Assembly, for the protests witnessed in the city earlier this week. They created panic among unit owners and workers, she said. Three people died and many were injured during the rioting in many parts of the city. In private, she is learnt to have blamed the chief secretary for his order of 16 November. The order, *inter alia*, directed government officials to get down to business; close illegal units in non-conforming areas which were not going to be

relocated, beginning with water-polluting units. The problem became serious soon after. *Prima facie*, not because of the chief secretary's order but because the government had tried to circumvent another order of the Supreme Court.

There are two main cases pending before the Supreme Court which have a direct bearing on industries in Delhi — authorised and unauthorised — one pertaining to pollution in the Jamuna and the second, a 1985 petition filed by lawyer MC Mehta

relating to industries in violation of the Master Plan.

The focus shifted to industrial units in residential areas after a report in *The Statesman* on the then Delhi Industry Minister HS Balli running an illegal factory from his house in west Delhi.

The Mailey Jamuna case started in the mid-1990s, when the court took *sub motu* notice of a news item based on a report of the Central Pollution Control Board which highlighted the deteriorating water quality of the Jamuna. On being informed that many industrial units were

responsible for directly releasing hazardous effluents into the Jamuna in 1999, the court pulled up the government for not constructing the common effluent treatment plants in industrial estates.

The government was also directed to ensure that industrial units did not release effluents without waste treatment. The government was quick to designate two sub-divisional magistrates as SDM (environment) for the purpose, empowered to seal the water-polluting units.

The two SDMs got cracking and soon the politicians had owners of the water-polluting units knocking at their doors. In the meantime, the other 27 area SDMs were also involved in the task of closing water-polluting industrial units and the pressure got too much for the politicians to handle. Having sealed hundreds of units, the Delhi Pollution

conforming areas.

A 1996 DPCC survey put the number of industrial units outside the 28 industrial estates at 97,411. Not everyone in the government thinks the figure is authentic but it is the only one the officials or the Supreme Court have to go by. Of these, 6,164 units were under group A and AI (pertaining to industries permissible in residential areas). That leaves about 91,000 units which will either have to shift to notified industrial estates, commercial areas if the nature of activity is permissible there or close shop.

With the Supreme Court issuing a contempt notice to the chief secretary and municipal commissioner, bureaucrats were forced to take action. But the DPCC did not have the required data either. The process of closing industrial units had to begin. Quickly.

The first list that the DPCC could hand out to the SDMs was the ones against which action had been initiated earlier. Many SDMs admitted as much. As one of them put it, "this was the second time we were sealing many units. We had taken action against 80 per cent of the units mentioned in the list earlier. Ideally, we should have targeted other polluting units first but we had to go by the lists we were given".

Factory owners who protested on the streets against the sealing of their units contended that the government should not have told them about the second case earlier. The SDMs contended that the factory owners had a point.

ance Secretary KS Baidwan said.

"The apprehensions that shifting of these industries outside Delhi will lead to unemployment may be only partly true because unskilled labour which is generally engaged in these industries stay in JJ clusters and in case such clusters move out of Delhi, it should be a welcome step," he said. Mrs Dikshit is not the only one keen on distancing herself from the report. The bureaucrat who prepared the report now says he disagrees with his own report. He holds charge as secretary, industries department, and was the one who prepared the proposal for *in situ* regularisation of illegal industrial units.

On 9 December 1999 her government told the court about the new proposal. The provocation was a court order of 8 September 1999 in which the government was directed to relocate industries in residential areas before 31 December 1999. The government asked the court for time till 2004 to complete the relocation process. The court was unwilling to be as patient. The government had been given enough time. The first comprehensive order on the closure of industries had been passed in April 1996. It had directed the closing down of industries operating in non-conforming and residential areas with effect from 1 January 1997. The Sahib Singh government started identifying industries needing to be relocated and acquired land for them.

On the basis of information provided to it, the court observed

that the Delhi government was "seriously processing" the project and decided to "step aside while leaving it to the government to extend the time for closure of the industries if necessary". The government set up a committee to scrutinise the 51,851 applications received from industrial units for relocation. But the government let down the court. "Since December 1996, little or no action was taken," the court observed this September, recalling the sequence of events which indicated the government's unwillingness to implement court orders. The court noted that only 547 units of Group F, which *prima facie* appear to be polluting, had been allotted specific plots. There are about 38,000 units in this group.

But the government's plan to opt for the softer option of *in situ* regularisation did not go far. The Union urban development ministry informed the court it was against the plan. "Changes in the Master Plan or its norms to accommodate illegal activities would not only put premium on lawless activity but would also cause injustice to the law-abiding citizens," the ministry said.

The court observed the ministry's stand was commendable and castigated the state government's role. "One thing is quite clear," it said, "there is a systematic effort which has been made in seeing that this court's orders are not implemented or complied with and somehow there is *in situ* regularisation of the polluting

industries. In other words, the wrong doer should not be punished but they should be helped to retain the advantage of their wrongful acts. There is obviously no will or effort either on the part of the NCT (Delhi government) or of the MCD in implementing and maintaining the rule of law." Exasperated at the government's inaction, the court stripped the Delhi government of its responsibility to implement the court orders. The urban development ministry was asked to take charge. It tried but on the next date of hearing pleaded it may not be able to play a "meaningful role" since the administrative powers are vested in the Delhi government.

The ball was again in the Delhi government's court which had, for four years, ensured that the directions were not implemented. Probably, history will not repeat itself. The bureaucrats are determined not to land themselves in the mess they have again and hope the court will empower the chief secretary to take decisions independent of the Council of Ministers and Lieutenant-Governor. As in the Jamuna Mailey case where the court directed earlier this year that any interference in the implementation of the court's orders will be construed as contempt of court.

(The author is Chief Reporter, The Statesman, New Delhi.)

## WIDE ANGLE

### Looking East

SALMAN HAIDAR

PERIODICALLY, India rediscovers the world to its East. We do so in our own way, at our own speed. South-east Asia was for a decade a magnet for the world before the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's visit to Singapore pioneered a route to Asean. Our slow course since then seems to have been quickened with the recent visit of External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh to Laos and the framing of the Vientiane Declaration.

This brings India together with five countries of the region in cultural and economic activities. A vague historical memory is evoked by associating in this fashion the peoples of the Ganga and the Mekong, the latter name itself being a variant of "Ma Ganga". It acts as a reminder that India is the great mother civilisation of Asia, whose influence spread throughout South-east Asia and beyond. While this is all quite quite gratifying, the new initiative

# DE-CODING DELHI'S MASTER PLAN

To I No V *Rahul Gupta looks at the document that is in the midst of all the controversy.*

The Master Plan for Delhi tackles issues concerning the urban setup. It excludes rural areas, even though it originally acquired land from the villages. Attempts by planners to integrate villages with the urban areas that surround them have not been successful.

Instead, people from urban areas have encroached into the villages to set up businesses, offices, factories and shops in rural settings on a large scale. This is amply proved by a huge list of non-conforming areas, almost as big as the industrial areas, itself.

**Residential areas:** These are clearly demarcated as these areas have flats and plotted housing. These include plotted areas like Defence Colony, flatted houses like Vasant Kunj and societies like Mayur Vihar and Patparganj. Apart from living spaces, they have permitted shopping centres and house-

dustrial areas in the city. These include Okhla, which has PVC and other activities, Naraina and Wazirpur which house pickling units and Anand Parbat with its mixed industries.

**Commercial areas:** These include areas like Bhikaji Cama Place, Nehru Place and the Janakpuri district centre. These areas are marked out for offices and small shops which provide support activities to the offices here.

**Public and semi-public areas:** Educational and medical facilities mark these areas. Religious institutions, too, fall under public and semi-public areas. Land given to schools and a university also comes under this banner. Even the friendly neighbourhood police post comes under this land use.

**Recreational land use:** All green areas in the city come under this category. Parks — from the smaller

DDA picnic huts in Mehrauli belonging here. Any water sports, boating and even *baraat ghars* are placed under this category.

**Circulation area:** One of the important areas of a Master Plan is the circulation area. It has the roads, pavements, footpaths and parking lots.

**Mixed land use:** The concept of mixed land use is relatively new. DDA is still experimenting with mixed-land use. Primarily, this land use is residential, but allowance is given to residents to start professional practice. The DDA is toying with the idea of having shops and markets in houses located on the main roads in newer and upcoming colonies like Dwarka and Pappankala.

But in a mixed-land use area, residents still have to obey building byelaws, setbacks and other building plans.

**Lal dora:** Then there are areas

Plan. These are villages not governed by the Master Plan, but have a similar setup as the urban areas. Villages have the lal dora land, which was created so that a village could grow. The lal dora is extended from time to time for the use of villagers as their land was acquired.

A factory which is polluting is liable to be sealed and shifted from the lal dora area. And as there are no rules as such for such areas, other industries cannot be shifted. Beyond the lal dora is the village agricultural land. It is called revenue land as it is from this land that taxes were paid by farmers in earlier times.

**Urbanised villages:** Many villages have seen a lot of development in the form of shops, commercial activities and other units. The government has categorised these villages as urban villages and brought these under the purview of the MCD. These include Hauz Khas, Kotla and Katwaria Sarai.

These villages do not have the lal dora, as they are completely urbanised.

## Land Acts governing the city

Delhi Land Reform Act - 1954

Delhi Panchayat Act - 1954

Delhi Land Revenue Act - 1954

DDA Act - 1957

MCD Act 1957

Punjab Act

The Limitation Act

Delhi Land (Restriction on Transfer) Act

# Villages in the wilderness

*Bhadra Sinha travels to Narela and Bawana to find the two villages barren, dusty and completely lacking in infrastructure.*

**Narela:** A dusty blue board welcomes entrepreneurs to the Narela industrial area in north Delhi. But the moment factory owners step into Narela, a vast empty expanse meets their eyes. Acres and acres of wilderness. Despite the Supreme Court initiative, nothing has moved in Narela, as far as infrastructure is concerned.

A group of unit owners argue as they try to identify their 250-sq meter plots. "Mera plot kahan hain," asks Rakesh Kumar Puri rummaging through sheafs of papers. "The plot was somewhere here in the midst of shrubs when I saw it last week. But after the Supreme Court order, they have cleared the land," Puri said thoughtfully.

There were several like Puri who wandered in the rural settings of the Narela industrial area. Though demarcation of plots had been done, there were no numbers to guide plot owners. Puri has already submitted Rs eight lakh. A dyeing unit owner, Ashok Kumar, has also paid Rs three lakh to the government for their industrial plots.

Predictably, the owners bad-mouth the bureaucracy and the government. They have been waiting since 1996 to shift their factories from non-conforming areas. Plastic recycling unit owner, Sanjeev Kumar said, "It does not make a difference which party is in power. Both the Congress and the BJP have been tortuously slow."

# The start of the trouble

*A chronology of how events in December 1995 snowballed into the current controversy.*

**December 30, 1995:** In response to a PIL filed by lawyer M C Mehta, the Supreme Court directed MCD not to grant or renew any licence in non-conforming areas.

**April 19, 1996:** The apex court modified its earlier order after a representation was made by the Subhash Nagar Small Scale Industrial Association. A High Power Committee was formed to review the matter and those industries that have not obtained permission from the committee shall stop operating from January 1, 1997.

**May 8, 1997:** The committee decided that the licences of only those units will be renewed which had applied for alternative plots.

gave a deadline of December 31, 1999 for the entire relocation process.

Delhi government asked for an extension till March 2004. The court turned down the application and issued notices to the authorities concerned to show cause why appropriate orders should not be passed for directing compliance of the earlier order.

**September 12, 2000:** The court appointed the Ministry of urban development as the nodal agency to ensure the enforcement of law.

**November 14, 2000:** The Supreme Court issued notices to the chief secretary, Delhi and the commissioner MCD, asking why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them.

**September 8, 1999:** The court

# State of perpetual confusion

**'Only non-polluting units to be closed'**

Unit owners allege the government has not followed the Supreme Court order. A cast-iron unit owner claims that those industries which are not polluting should not have been sealed.

**"What about those who have been allotted land?"**

Kapil Khandelwal, a textile unit owner, says that the government should have spared at least those who have got land for the relocation process. "We have got the relocation letter this year. Give us time. The government can apprise the Supreme Court about it," suggests Puri.

**Loans from Delhi Finance Corporation are not easy.**

Rakesh Kumar Puri had to cough

up Rs 8.30 lakh because he could not wait for the delayed procedures of the Delhi Finance Corporation. "I got the form 10 days back, after waiting for 45 days. Now it will take three months to be processed. How do they expect me to prepare a unit so fast," asks Puri.

**"SDMs are not following the procedure."**

The SDMs who are on a drive to seal the premises are not following the procedure to give a *suptnama* to the unit owners. "Since a unit owner does not have any proof of the sealing, anybody can go and de-seal the unit. We are being served with a notice only and our signatures are not being taken by the SDM," alleges a unit owner from Samaipur Badli.



Buffaloes emerge from a pond that is being filled up with sand. This Narela area has been acquired to set up industrial units.

**Bawana:** Narela has seen a spade and shovel, at least. But Bawana is really unlucky. Nothing has moved here, even after the Supreme Court order. A lone DSIDC office stands in the vast expanse.

A farmer said, "the government acquired 1,800 acres in 1997. Neither has it done anything, nor have we been allowed to till it."

"After acquiring the land, the government disconnected power supply to the tubewells and filled these with stones so that we dared not use these," complained Sukhbir. Still, others could not resist farming. Some farmers sowed *jowar* during the monsoon to feed their cattle.

The farmers have another complaint. They feel cheated. Their land was purchased at Rs 12.17 lakh per acre.

But the government is charging Rs 4,200 per sq metre which roughly amounts to Rs 2 crore per acre.

Even the would-be settlers are critical. Mohita Tandon, who has been allotted a plot, said, "At least there is a board in Narela which directs you to the industrial area. Here, we have a blank board and acres of barren land where one can get lost."

Even as the government told the court that 23,000 units will be relocated, it does not have anything in the name of infrastructure to show for it. Karol Bagh resident, Babukam Jani, who had a hosiery manufacturing unit, before it got sealed laments: "I am willing to come here. But when I do not know."

# Delhi's non-conformists

Mahipalpur  
Rangpuri  
Mehrauli  
Palam  
Babarpur  
Vishnu Garden  
Nangal Rai  
Dabri  
Sagarpur

Nangloi  
Hastsal  
Shashtri Nagar  
Uttam Nagar  
Jwalapuri  
Badarpur  
Nand Nagri  
Kalkaji  
Motia Khan

Bahadurgarh Road  
Shadipur Depot  
Trinagar  
Samaipur  
Libaspur  
Narela  
Brijwasan  
Azad Market

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A TALE OF TOO CROWDED CITIES

# No escape from the great urban sprawl

Urban India is stretching itself out like naan — “with bulges here and there, thin at the edges”. Shapeless, running out of space, water, even clean air. A landscape ripe for the kind of mayhem Delhi witnessed this past week. The Sunday Times tracks the spread of the urban expanse, and the chaos

Chandrika Mago

When was the last time anybody in authority had “a serious look” at urbanisation? If experts in the field are to be believed, it was way back in 1988, when the National Commission on Urbanisation gave its report. But urban India hasn't waited to hear from planners — it has raced ahead, squeezing itself into any congenial environment and expanding any which way, legal growth merging with an unauthorised expanse, creating conflict points of the kind Delhi has just lived through.

Almost a third of India — over 300 million people — already lives in its towns and cities. Says Union urban development minister Jagmohan, “Urban India today is as large (in numbers) as the total India was in 1947. In numbers, we will have the second largest urban population in the world, next to China. We are just not paying attention.” The *mera gaon, mera desh* picture may just not hold very much longer.

The urban population is expected to hit the 500 million mark in the next two decades. More worryingly, the growth is uneven. What worries Jagmohan is the complete absence of urban discipline and organised thinking. Cities are cracking, unable to handle the constant influx and the rising pressure on



civic facilities. Water and power shortages are common. Roads are getting more and more crowded, the air more polluted, water sources drier and dirtier. India already has the highest congestion rate in the world — about 44 per cent of families in urban areas live in just one room.

In the nation's Capital alone, more than a third of all residents live in slums, without proper shelter, drinking water, sanitation, or access to health care and good education.

Thousands of illegal colonies have come up, thousands of illegal

industries recently rose in revolt against attempts at control, given a voice by politicians seeking short-term dividends.

Planning has been thrown to the winds, bringing to the fore questions of urban governance and its definition, the nature of planning, the cost of services, public vs private sector involvement in development.

Cities are not just growing to “extraordinary” sizes but are changing, socially, economically, physically, unrestrained any more by legal boundaries as urbanisation takes hold of new areas along what

are essentially transport corridors. Not a new phenomenon, maybe, but what's emerging now is an “amorphous, shapeless”, unattractive mass. Not well-defined urban areas — towns and cities — but urbanised stretches along such corridors.

Multi-nodal but not well-connected functionally, running out of land, water, even clean air, distinctions blurring between urban and rural.

One of the more focused projections on this phenomenon comes from K C Sivaramakrishnan, a former bureaucrat now with the think-

tank Centre for Policy Research. CPR, which has been studying the issue in recent months, sees “strong and in some cases, spectacular, growth along (transport) corridors”. Growth fuelled by the Prime Minister's Golden Quadrilateral highway plan to strengthen the links between Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai.

Sivaramakrishnan has some startling predictions for the near future: Half of Maharashtra will be urban, so will 40 per cent of



The figure of cities with a million-plus people is expected to go up from 23 to 51 by next year — 23 of these will be in the south, Maharashtra and Gujarat, 22 in the north and six in the east. Home, in all, to about 110 million, two-fifths of the urban population. Jharkhand's capital Ranchi will be one of the new cities in this group.

In 20 years, the Ahmedabad-Vadodara-Surat-Vapi corridor will have 16 million people, or 57 per cent of the state's projected urban population. The Vapi-Mumbai-Pune corridor will have 30 million people, more than half of Maharashtra's projected urban population. Saurashtra already has 87 towns and is expected to be home to about six million people — despite its water problems. The Bangalore-Belgaum and Bangalore-Mysore corridors will have nearly 70 per cent of Karnataka's projected urban population of 27 million.

In the north, there are the Udaipur-Kota and Delhi-Jaipur stretches. Amritsar to Jhansi is expected to be a “great arc of urban growth” as well — this is already evident in the Amritsar-Jalandhar, Chandigarh-Delhi and Delhi-Agra segments. Delhi-Dehradun and Delhi-Moradabad are becoming similar corridors.

Gujarat and the southern states. There will be “dramatic movement and urbanisation” in the East and

North-East and “significant urbanisation” in Punjab, Haryana and western UP.

Large city growth will remain a distinct feature. This growth is going to pose even more formidable problems for planners — a challenge as well as an opportunity. For instance, says Sivaramakrishnan, a great deal of attention is paid to locating certain sections of society but areas like Saurashtra have assembled a force of one lakh construction workers who will have to be catered to.

Similarly, growth along coastal Tamil Nadu can pose environmental problems. But public transport, he says, may remain the single most important policy failure in managing urban growth.

Through all this, he says, “we have to identify water as a defining envelope”, learning to live within the resources available, recycling and redistributing and gearing for new points of friction such as who is entitled to how much water.

A lot of umpiring has to be done. How livable urban India will be will depend then on the planners and administrators. For Jagmohan the answer lies in “urban discipline, commitment to planning, creativity” — not in blindly aping the West.

And, Sivaramakrishnan himself indicated part of the problem when he publicly confessed that he hadn't found time to read the National Commission report when he was Union urban development secretary. He read it, complete with annexures, only after retirement. Needless to say, the report has gathered dust.

# 'Do I put a barbed wire around Chandigarh?'

## Even independent India's only planned city didn't bargain for the Great Influx

It was supposed to be the city of the future, a symbol of modern India. Now its own future seems bleak.

If Chandigarh was conceived as a great piece of planning, the planners should be blamed equally for not planning for the mess they have created here. Here is a city, built from scratch, which attracted lakhs of migrant labourers because of the construction activity. Did the planners think the work force, mostly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, would go back after the work got finished?

The figures say it all. Over one-third of the city's nearly one million population consists of slum dwellers. And the planners had earmarked no place for them on their drawings. According to the Union Territory administration, nearly 600 migrants enter the city everyday.

"There is no way to check this influx. Can you give me a solution?" asks Punjab governor and UT administrator Lt Gen (retd) Jack Frederick Ralph Jacob. "I cannot put a barbed wire fence all around the city to stop the migrants from coming."

The administration's plans to rehabilitate the slum-dwellers have

boomeranged in the past. The rehabilitated persons simply sold off the new units and settled back in the slums to become 'eligible' again. The policy has now been revised to ensure that no dwelling unit under the rehabilitation scheme is sold. Now the units will only be rented out to the rehabilitated slum dwellers.

Slums are not the only problem. Satellite towns and colonies are choking the city. In utter violation of the city's Periphery Act, Haryana came up with Panchkula and Punjab with Mohali, right on the outskirts of the city. These are full-fledged towns now. Smaller colonies like Mansa Devi and scores of other projects with multi-storied flats are adding to the city's problems. Above all this mess, Punjab is threatening to build the controversial Anandgarh, just one kilometre from the boundary of the city.

The UT administration is opposing this project on the grounds that the infrastructure in Chandigarh will not be able to bear the load of another town with a projected population of one million.

**Jaideep Sareen**

# Confusion confounded

NEW DELHI: It's been a bad week for Delhi. Two lives were lost, crores worth of property damaged, and the city brought to a standstill for nearly four days. The issue at the heart of this unrest: the closure of industrial units in residential areas. The trouble began when the Supreme Court pulled up Delhi chief secretary P S Bhatnagar last week. Delhi government immediately swung into action: sealing all units, polluting, non-polluting and even those which had been closed down. In its enthusiasm to submit a report before the next date of



hearing, on Tuesday, the government sealed small and harmless units too. And even those which had been sealed earlier and those which were complying with norms.

But this was not the first time that the Supreme Court had come out with its observations on the relocation of industrial units from non-conforming areas. The court case has been on for about five years. Time and again, the court has passed strict observations on the government's progress in the relocation of non-conforming units. The Delhi government's report card had nothing to show, but the court chose to wait and watch the government's progress, or the lack of it.

Then, there is a court case on curbing pollution in the Yamuna. This case also has been dragging on for quite some time now. This year, the government had sealed nearly 3000 units for polluting the river. Later, the units installed effluent treatment plants (ETP) and the government re-opened the units. Now, after last week's reprimand, the government closed these units once more. This has added to the confusion.

**Rahul Gupta**

# 'Never compromise on fundamentals'

## Great cities are not made by people with a convenient conscience, says Jagmohan

What went wrong in Delhi over the past week and what lessons does the experience hold for planners and administrators?



Union urban development minister Jagmohan's views, culled from his speeches, statements and responses over the past week...

### On why things went so wrong...

The problem has arisen because of the total failure of the Delhi government to develop even a single plot for relocation of industries in Narela, Bawana and other such areas. The Supreme Court started passing orders from February 1996 and till December 1999, no one talked of amending the Master Plan. The demand came up to cover up the inaction of the Delhi government when the apex court started making adverse comments about it.

### On his objections to amending the Delhi Master Plan...

I am not rigid but I am committed to principles I believe in the six Cs, that one must be creative, con-

structive, compassionate, committed, contemplative and courageous. Great cities are not made by people with a convenient conscience. If you are not committed, have no direction, you can achieve nothing. How can you amend the Master Plan if it subverts the very purpose of planning, destroying its basic structure, soul and fundamental motivation for making the law? If it violates the principles of fair play and justice? There is a procedure for amendment — there has to be a notification, public objections have to be invited and a big issue involving more than one ministry may have to be taken to the cabinet.

### On the solution...

The government is keen on a solution just and fair to all concerned. It has agreed, in principle, subject to observance of safeguards in respect of pollution norms, to redefine household industries in terms of the recommendations made by a committee known as the Jagdish Sagar committee. These norms pertain to the number of persons who can work in household industries, the power that can be sanctioned and the area that can

be used, etc.

The government will amend the Master Plan, if necessary, to acquire more land for relocation of industries in industrial areas and request the apex court for a little more time for relocation. The matter at present rests with the Supreme Court.

### The lessons for the political class...

The best kind of politics is one that does not rely on short-termism but has a vision for the future. Good politics and good governance should never be separated from the ideals of justice, fair play and honesty.

### The lessons for planners and administrators...

You must be committed to the principles of planning and never compromise with the facts and fundamentals. Any deviation noticed should be nipped in the bud and not allowed to assume cancerous proportions. Health, balance and harmony have to be components



of planning. You have to decide what kind of city you want. If the present attitudes and practices persist, Delhi may have as many as 30 million people in the next few years and become an ugly, unhealthy, unworkable and unlivable city.

In the process, a fatal blow would be dealt to the development of the National Capital Region, which comprises a substantial part of the three important neighbouring states of UP, Rajasthan and Haryana.

**C.M.**

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**Polluting units sealed in N Delhi residential areas**