

# SC concerned over polluting units

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 29.— A three-judge Bench headed by Mr Justice B N Kirpal of the Supreme Court today expressed serious concern over units in the non-conforming residential areas pointing out the gas leak that occurred yesterday as reported in *The Statesman*.

Deferring the hearing of the suo moto contempt against the Chief Secretary of and Commissioner of MCD, the court (Coram B N Kirpal, Doraiswamy Raju and Brijesh Kumar JJ) has listed the case on 1 December.

Senior counsel, Mr K K Venugopal, assisted by Geeta Luthra and D N Gobardhan submitted on behalf of NCT of Delhi that the Chief Secretary has no power to close the industries.

According to the submissions of Mr Venugopal, DDA is the custodian of the violation committed by the institutions under the Master Plan. Any industry which is being run in non-conforming areas are dealt under MCD Act and DDA Act, he said on the instruction of Mr Gobardhan.

The court wanted to know how many licenses were issued to the polluting units, to which NCT replied that no new licences were given after 1996 and clarified that the licenses were issued in accordance with this Court's Order and these ad hoc licences were issued by the MCD.

When the court wanted to know the rate of electric charges, Mr Venugopal told that it was a rupee more from the violators.

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Factory owner allegedly beaten up by police

# 12 polluting units sealed in W Delhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 29. — About 12 polluting units were sealed in Hari Nagar and Tagore Garden in west Delhi while factory owners and workers protested. The protests, however, were low-key and no violence was reported.

A team headed by the area Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Mr Vijay Khanna, sealed 12 polluting units, escorted by one company of the Rapid Action Force and some policemen from the Hari Nagar police station. The sealing drive will continue tomorrow, a senior official said.

Meanwhile, the plastic granule manufacturing factory in Sudarshan Park — from where toxic fumes emissions left several residents breathless — has been locked up by the area police. No action has been taken to seal the unit by the officials. Angry residents of the area said they had asked the Delhi government to seal the unit.

One resident said, "The government is sealing units which are water pollutant but why is nothing being done against the factories which are polluting the air."

In Hari Nagar, owners of some units alleged that the area police beat up one factory owner, Mr Nawrang Pal, when he protested against the sealing of an electroplating unit in the area.

The incident took place when officials were sealing a

unit owned by Mrs Shivadevi, the residents said. "He merely said the factory they are sealing has an Effluent Water Treatment Plant so it should not be sealed," an eyewitness said.

A worker from Mrs Shivadevi's factory said,



Mrs Shiva Devi, a widow, weeping after Delhi government officials sealed her electroplating unit in Hari Nagar, west Delhi and (right) the sealed Juneja Engineering Works at Tihar village in the Capital on Wednesday. — The Statesman.

"Nawrang saheb said our factory owner was a widow with six children and she has no other source of income and two policemen dragged him to their jeep. They beat him up and took him to the police station". The area police were not available for comment.

The owner of one unit which was sealed today, Mr Baldev Singh said, "This is injustice. I have installed the effluent treatment plant and now they have sealed my factory".

Three months ago Mr Singh paid Rs 70,000 for getting the ETP installed in his factory. "I

even got the water samples tested by the authorities and I have a No Objection Certificate from them", he said holding up the NOC to anyone who cared to look.

The distraught factory owner said, "I deposited Rs



50,000 for relocation also and I tried to show them all these documents but they were not even willing to listen," he said. "There is no sense in sealing the units which have installed ETPs as they do not discharge polluted water," he added.

Officials also sealed two factories in Tihar village. One was a chrome plating factory, Juneja Engineering Works while the other was an injection moulding factory.

Eight units were sealed in Tagore Garden, a senior official said and added that only water polluting units were sealed today.

# Centre draws up plan to move units to neighbouring estates

By Rahul Gupta

NEW DELHI: In one stroke, Union urban development ministry plans not only breathe life into the decaying industrial estates of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana, but will also shift out the industries from Delhi, without investing much in infrastructure!

At a high-level meeting on Wednesday, the ministry asked the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) to identify industrial estates in the neighbouring states which can accommodate Delhi's industries. Thursday will see a flurry of activity as officials from Rajasthan, UP and Haryana will reach Delhi to chalk out the implementation.

At the same time, the ministry is also identifying industries which can be shifted out of Delhi. At present,

there are nearly 6,000 industrial plots lying vacant in these estates. The plot sizes range from 100 sq m to one lakh sq m each. These industrial areas are huge enough to accommodate a large number of industries.

Sources said not only are these industrial estates complete in terms of infrastructure, but also have residential accommodation and commercial spaces. But over the last two years, there has been no demand for these areas. Constructed around five years back, many of these estates are now crumbling.

One reason for the non-utilisation of the industrial estates is that Delhi-based industries have not shifted out. Some like the hotmix plants even gave their nod for land in nearby states, but did not shift out of Delhi. Haryana and UP had acquired land for these plants, which is now

lying vacant. The hotmix plants had closed in early 1997, after a Supreme Court order in October 1996. Though these are not functioning, these have not shifted out either.

Similarly, in 1997, nearly 166 Delhi industries backed out of a commitment to set up their units in the neighbouring townships. This was despite the fact that they had paid up the initial amount to the states.

The three NCR states have already invested up to Rs 900 crore in developing industrial estates. A number of state agencies which had provided loans and put in their money are on the verge of liquidation. If the Union ministry succeeds in relocating Delhi's units to neighbouring states, not only will it be one-up on the Delhi government, it also would have done the tedious task of relocating industries faster and without much investment.